

## Minutes of Parish Councils' Liaison Committee

Meeting Date: Thursday, 25 March 2010 starting at 7.15pm  
Present: P Young (Chairman)

### Councillors:

D Berryman	I Sayers
R Hargreaves	G Scott
S Hore	D Taylor
E M H Ranson	J Waddington
C Ross	

### Parish Representatives:

G Sowter	Billington & Langho
B Dowles	Bolton-by-Bowland, Gisburn Forest and Sawley
K Winstanley	Bowland Forest (Higher)
H Douglas	Chatburn
R Connor	Clitheroe
M Robinson	Clitheroe
A Yearling	Clitheroe
B Redhead	Clayton-le-Dale
T Hoyle	Dinckley
J Cowling	Grindleton
D Hicks	Longridge
N C Walsh	Mellor
P Boardman	Ramsgreave
C Law	Read
J G Waterhouse	Read
A Ormand	Ribchester
A Howarth	Sabden
M Breaks	Slaidburn
R K Jackson	Waddington
C Cherry	West Bradford
M J Highton	Whalley
M Robinson	Wiswell

In attendance: Chief Executive, Director of Development Services, Street Scene Manager, ICT Manager.

Also in attendance: Jo Turton, Director for the Environment LCC, Brian Cook Area Manager East LCC

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### APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Borough Councillors T Hill and B Hilton and from the following Parish Representatives:

E Miller	Bowland Forest High
R Carr	Bowland Forest Low
B Green	Chipping

F Priest	Longridge
A Dales	Mellor
S Rosthorn	Paythorne and Newsholme
B Whittaker	Rimington and Middup
I R Hirst	Simonstone
K Staines	Waddington

944 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

945 MATTERS ARISING

Minute 770 Provision of Dog Bins

The representative from Bolton-by-Bowland praised the work carried out in his Parish by the two Ribble Valley dog wardens.

946 WINTER GRITTING AND PROPOSED CLOSURE OF PETRE ARMS HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE

- (a) The Chairman introduced Jo Turton, Director for the Environment and Brian Cook, Area Manager East from Lancashire County Council who had been invited to speak to Committee on the above two issues.

Jo thanked the Committee for the invitation to attend and to meet with a number of different Parish Councils. She introduced Brian Cook who gave an overview of how LCC carried out its legal responsibilities in relation to keeping highways clear of snow and ice. He pointed out that it was impossible to clear all highways with an average of one third being dealt with as a priority, although the Ribble Valley figure was current at 48%.

Details of costs and budgets were provided to Committee. Brian recognised that this winter had been particularly problematic with low temperatures which negated the use of rock salt at very low temperatures. The Government had ultimately rationed the use of rock salt which meant some secondary routes did not get treated. He assured Committee that all grit bins had been filled before the onset of winter. Ribble Valley Borough Council had provided some much needed help in clearing pavements in Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley and this was both welcomed and recognised.

Brian then answered the six questions raised by Committee at its January meeting.

*Question:* Should LCC and RVBC have an emergency plan for coping with future heavy snow fall?

*Answer:* Brian stressed LCC already had plans in place and had worked well with the Borough Council. Jo informed Committee that the

emergency planning team had been activated and the countywide emergency services had also been engaged. Isolated areas had been targeted for treatment.

*Question:* Why were gritters not employed in Longridge until a critical article had appeared in the local paper?

*Answer:* Brian did not accept that Longridge had been ignored for gritting purposes; all main routes had been cleared.

NB: It did transpire that this criticism was about pavements rather than the highway.

*Question:* Why was Eaves Hall Lane not gritted?

*Answer:* Because it was not a priority route although it would have been treated as a secondary route had not the rock salt supply been rationed.

*Question:* What contractual arrangements does LCC have with local farmers for snow clearing in rural communities.

*Answer:* Brian traced the history of working with farmers and dealing with snow fencing and the fact that, in economic terms, the milder winters had proved the matter to be a waste of money. However, discussions were now underway with local farmers to revive this arrangement during bad weather. Health and safety issues would need to be considered and it was acknowledged that LCC had “missed a trick” by not engaging with local farmers much earlier.

*Question:* Policy on refilling grit bins.

*Answer:* Grit bins were always refilled. There was a policy on deployment and any Parish could apply for extra grit bins but would need to satisfy specific criteria. Brian also confirmed that if a Parish Council bought their own bins LCC would not fill them with grit because of the cost related issues. He also confirmed that grit could be provided for car parks but the cost would fall on the Parish Council.

Jo commented that there was a lot of misuse of grit bins and LCC were keen to speak to Parishes about better deployment and the possibility of setting up a warden scheme to ensure appropriate use within villages.

*Question:* Use of volunteers. Young people not in employment and education and prisoners to help with snow clearing.

*Answer:* Brian admitted that there had been some reticence on the part of LCC to engage voluntary help with snow clearing. Schemes such as community payback had approached LCC offering their help but this had not been taken up. There had been issues of insurance and liability. LCC would consider publicising to the public that they could clear their own footpaths and shop fronts without fear of any liability for subsequent accidents.

Other issues discussed included the use of sugar beet in rock salt, the forthcoming review by LCC of “lessons learned” from the recent winter gritting programme, the judicious use of the LCC Who Does What document on gritting, the repair of pot holes by LCC and the circulation of the highways bulletin to all Parishes.

(b) Petre Arms Household Waste Recycling Centre – Proposed Closure

The representative from Billington and Langho referred to Minute 771(b) of Committee dated 28 January 2010 and questioned the rationale behind the proposed closure of the Petre Arms Household Waste Recycling Centre. He claimed that it was the best used site in Ribble Valley with the highest recycling rates in Lancashire. He felt that the proposed closure sent all the wrong signals in terms of encouraging people to recycle. Many of the items currently taken by the Centre would not be suitable for kerbside collection.

Jo Turton explained the rising cost of such centres which was currently running at £40m but was likely to rise to £100m per annum and this was the main driving factor behind the review of the centres. She commented that there had never been a wholesale review of household waste recycling centres and that some centres probably were not in the best location. Consultants had been engaged to undertake a thorough review and this had been reported to the County Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2010. A series of options had been presented to the meeting, all of which entailed some level of closure. Overview and Scrutiny Committee felt that there needed to be more community engagement in the process and she encouraged Parish Councils to make their views known to the County Council in time for them to be included in a report which was to be considered by the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 29 May 2010.

Members also discussed a number of other arguments including reducing opening hours, charging for users of centres, number of staff employed, cost of keeping the Petre Arms Centre open, the lack of consultation, where would rubbish be taken if Petre Arms was closed and the impact on Ribble Valley budgets.

RESOLVED: That Jo and Brian be thanked for their attendance and for the information provided.

947 PETER HOTHERSALL – ICT MANAGER

The Chairman introduced Peter Hothersall who gave a brief resume of how IT had grown during his employment at Ribble Valley Borough Council. He commented that in the 1980’s this Council had been wholly dependent on Lancashire County Council for its IT services but with Peter’s appointment had seen a gradual move away from this dependence to one where RVBC now controlled its own networks and software systems. There were currently over 200 pcs operating in the Borough Council as compared to five less than 25 years

ago. Peter gave details of work done with networks, the Internet and stressed the importance of firewalls and virus checking software.

He also referred to the improvements made to the Ribble Valley website in relation to tourism and planning information. Peter commented that a separate tourism website was about to be launched and acknowledged the problems currently being experienced in relation to planning applications but stressed they were currently being addressed. He also referred to the work done with Parish Councils on website links and initiatives such as Parents in Partnership.

RESOLVED: That Peter be thanked for his informative presentation.

#### 948 MATTERS BROUGHT FORWARD BY PARISH COUNCILS

1. Communications Strategy.

Councillor Hicks asked when this report would come before this Committee.

The Chief Executive promised to include this matter on the next meeting of this Committee in June.

2. Gritting

A Town Council representative asked that LCC be sent a note of this meeting to remind them of the debate and their promises in time for next winter.

3. The Community Development Officer again urged all Parish Councils to submit items for inclusion on this Agenda and promised to send a list of both meeting dates and circulation dates for Parish Councils' information.

#### 949 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The Community Development Officer announced that the next meeting of this Committee would be held on Thursday, 10 June 2010. He also reported that the number of meeting cycles had been reduced from six to five leaving a two month gap in July and August. The next meeting of this Committee would, therefore, be held in September. All dates would be circulated to Parish Clerks in due course.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm.

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact Stewart Bailey (414491).

BA/JS  
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