

Contact Details

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Your Parish Councillors are:

- Andrew Beeston
- Carol Blackledge
- Andrew Chanter
- Roger Clayton (Chairman)
- Diane Ingrey

All contact via the Clerk

Meetings are currently being held using Zoom conferencing due to restrictions on holding public meetings.

If you have access to the internet you can find the regulations and supporting documents for holding flexible, remote Parish Council meetings at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/392/made>

Please contact the Clerk (details above) to raise any items you wish your Parish Council to discuss.



Newsletter

No. 27

Autumn 2020



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GUIDING

THE WAY



How the Pandemic has affected your Parish Council

A Parish Council is funded mainly by you, the residents. The Councillors work on your behalf to protect and enhance your Parish.

Meetings in the past have always been held in a public place so that any resident who wishes to can attend and watch decisions being taken.

Unfortunately, this year's pandemic forced a change in how we work for the time-being. We are working under the legislation detailed below: **The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels, (Coronavirus), (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police & Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020** but we hope to return to public meetings in the parish as soon as possible. In the meantime, please contact the clerk if you wish any item to be raised and discussed or if you wish to watch a meeting remotely using Zoom conferencing.

The legislation provides flexibility for meetings at any time of day and on any day, to alter, move or cancel them without notice. The Statutory Annual Meetings were not possible this year, so all current appointments will continue until the next annual meeting or such time the Parish Council determines. These regulations last until the 7th of May 2021 though the government may legislate to bring forward this date if medical and scientific advice leads to the relaxation of social distancing rules.

Our nearest is : Woodlands Animal Sanctuary
Holmeswood, L40 1UE
Call them on : 01704 823293.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS QUICK GUIDE

West Lancs Together, for practical support during Covid 19, whilst self-isolating. Mon—Fri 9am-5pm

0800 616 667

National Gas Emergency Hotline

0800 111 999

Electricity Northwest power cut **105**

United Utilities burst pipe, blocked drain
Except on highways **0345 672 3723**

Highway Issues/Public Rights of Way

LCC Report It system online
or phone **0300 123 6701**

Flooding – Lancashire County Council
If flood water is entering your house, or is over halfway across the road, please telephone

Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm **0300 123 6780**
Out of hours – (police non-emergency). **101**

Be a Hedgehog Hero!

Nearly a quarter of all hedgehogs die before leaving their nest, and half of the rest do not survive their first hibernation. So what can we do to help?

- Provide a small corner of the garden as a wildlife sanctuary
- Leave materials suitable for nests such as leaves and wood, and perhaps buy or make a hedgehog house
- Provide food for the hogs—meat based pet food or hedgehog food and a bowl of water
- Don't use slug pellets which are eaten by hedgehogs
- Check garden rubbish before burning it, and carefully check bonfires.
- If you have a garden pond, please ensure that hedge hogs can escape if they fall in by putting some rocks or wire etc at the edge of the pond
- Please avoid all netting as hedgehogs get tangled in it— and cut the plastic rings that hold cans together
- Most importantly when mowing or strimming grass—please check for hedgehogs then cut the grass a little lower, then check for them again; many hogs suffer from terrible strimmer injuries—please be careful.

If you see a hedgehog out in the daytime it needs help. Put the hog in a box and take indoors. Keep him warm, offer food and water and call your local hedgehog rescue.

Covid 19 has had a serious impact upon the work of the Parish Council since March.

Generally, Parish Councillors have had to avoid face to face contact with residents, meaning that informal discussions have almost completely ceased. Meetings have had to be held on Zoom, rather than in the cricket club but actions involving suppliers (e.g. fingerposts) have been hampered significantly.

We have tried to ensure that all public footpaths remain accessible and passable, which has cost considerably more money than previously, and some landowners have been very co-operative. It does not help them, though, when some people abuse their right to use the public footpaths by trespassing on non-footpath areas and by leaving litter of all sorts behind.

Please respect their land by keeping to the paths and never leave litter behind – take it to a council bin at the roadside or take it home, recycle what you can and put the rest in your grey bin.

Along Footpath 101/147 has been considerably improved by re-opening the original section that starts at the Neverstitch Road/Old Engine Lane junction and clearing vegetation right through to Stanley Way. We are grateful to West Lancs Borough Council (WLBC) and to Trelleborg UK for undertaking this work on their land at our request.

Borough Councillor Ian Rigby gave us significant help with the WLBC section starting at Old Engine Lane.

We are trying to enhance our network of public footpaths generally, following receipt of a report which we commissioned over two years ago. A copy appears on the Parish Council website. It is too long for us to print for general consumption, unfortunately. We have obtained a capital grant from WLBC to pay half of the cost of producing three information boards to locate at strategic trial points within the Parish and work on them is reaching a conclusion, following production delays.

Other work has involved negotiations to acquire a small area of land for environmental and ecological reasons but they have progressed only slowly due to many of the people involved shielding or home working. We hope to have more to report in the Spring of 2021 (or even earlier) but in the meantime the details are confidential and confined to discussion among Parish Councillors and the Parish Clerk, because of commercial sensitivities.

A successful funding application was made to West Lancashire Borough Council for money to install trail information boards on two public rights of way and at the community orchard, and LCC funding has been obtained to assist with the maintenance of public footpaths.

With Community Infrastructure money available more fingerpost signs and way-markers have been installed to guide walkers on their way, and help to ensure that none stray off the designated routes.

As part of a new campaign to promote the work of their highways service, Lancashire County Council is encouraging everyone to complete the National Highways and Transport (NHT) survey, which measures public satisfaction.

The campaign focuses on maintaining roads, this year the team will fix around 36,000 potholes and resurface 175 miles of roads. But following a wet and stormy winter the council are finding more potholes than usual this year, so they are also asking people to help them by reporting potholes their website.

In 2020/21, the county council will spend £26m to maintain our 4,600 miles of highways and 5,300 miles of footways. They are continuously introducing new techniques to fix potholes and supplement the traditional repair teams. They have also introduced a new deep insitu recycling process for resurfacing and this year will recycle 19,000 tonnes of asphalt in resurfacing our roads. At 20 tonnes per wagon load that's an amazing 900 loads diverted from landfill and 1800 return journeys eliminated.

Find out more about how Lancashire's roads are improving and complete the survey at

www.lancashire.gov.uk/roads-parking-and-travel/pothole

Highways & Pavements

Often a hot topic for complaint, even recently, these remain the responsibility of Lancashire County Council (LCC). We encourage you to report any issues using the Report It system on LCC's website:

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/roads-parking-and-travel/report-it/>

If you are unable to access the website reference you can call 0300 123 6701

"LCC Highways" asked us in July to use the following article and this is our first opportunity.

"LCC Highways" is keen to engage with residents and provide a good service to maintain our roads and you can help support their digital campaign by sharing and commenting on social media posts:

Follow on Twitter @lancashirecc and search #LancsRoads for messages to re-tweet from your Twitter account.

Like on Facebook from your Facebook profile and share #LancsRoads posts.

You can have your say on your roads and transport locally by completing a short survey. satisfaction with services across different local authorities.

We want to give walkers confidence that they won't get lost and are on a legal public footpath.

The work has not gone unnoticed, with praise given from local walking groups and appreciative letters on The Champion letters page. So many people have turned to the outdoors during the periods of furlough or working from home, so we hope to have enhanced their experience.

Surveys continue to try and find a circular route to upgrade the surface so that wheelchair and pushchair users can enjoy the outdoors.

Undertaking this exercise though has made us more aware of problems land owners have when walkers stray ,or allow their dogs to stray off the designated footpath.

Lathom has abundant fields with commercial crops growing. It can ruin a crop to allow dogs to roam so please do keep yours under control. Worse still is the ridiculous practice of picking up dog faeces in a plastic bag and then hurling that bag into a hedge, field or waterway.

Farmers and anglers are picking these out of fields and ponds and it is unforgivable. Please hold onto your waste until you reach a public bin. Any public waste bin can now be used for poo-bags.

Firwood Road

Covid 19 issues seem to have affected the situation from several angles.

Firstly, the Champion newspaper dated the 20th October, reports that a full application to build another 130 homes with vehicular access solely from the road was submitted earlier in the month. However it does not appear on the Council's on-line weekly list of validated applications carrying the same date.

Secondly, the Bellway development ("Lathom Pastures") south of the railway bridge is nearing completion but construction work continues and some built properties have not yet been occupied. Thirdly, the expected application by Bellway Homes to develop the remaining area of the allocated land has still not materialised and, fourthly the road has shown, during the main lockdown period, a return to its previous quiet rural nature which made it such a pleasant place for people to live and exercise. The result was that people found its suitability as a pleasant walking and cycling area to be invaluable at exactly the right time. It looks as though that situation will resume very soon.

Unfortunately, there has been an opportunity for irresponsible dog owners to discard used doggie bags along the public footpaths 22 (unnamed track

from Firwood Road towards Plough Lane) and 24 (Slate Lane), causing a major nuisance to the fishery and to residents of Slate Lane. It is difficult to understand why some dog owners think that this behaviour is acceptable; bags discarded in this way **anywhere** are a major nuisance and a health hazard, especially to children. Of course the plastic eventually disintegrates, leaving raw dog faeces to lie, or fall from, wherever they left the bags.

South Lathom Residents' Association (SLRA) has continued to complain to Lancashire County Council Highways about its advice regarding the Wainhomes application and especially about road safety hazards being increased substantially by the addition of 130 houses gaining road access only from Firwood Road. No road safety measures have been required away from the immediate access point, even though the extra traffic will impose pressures along the whole of the road. Pedestrian safety, residents' amenity and the rural character of the area, all supposedly being protected by the design guide, have been ignored completely.

This design guide was presented to the borough councillors who approved it as guaranteeing that only around 100 homes would be allowed access onto Firwood Road, as the least favoured option, and that such access would only be allowed from a single point to the south of the railway bridge.