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**Present:** Cllrs K Hayes (Chair), N Woodcock, R. Lea, E. Jackson, E. Houghton, P. Cocker, T Hewitt, Clerk Miss A. Evans

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Cllr A. Taylor

1. **Declaration of Interests and Dispensations:**

Cllr E. Houghton declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 7.

1. **Minutes of the previous Meeting**

Cllr A. Taylor had requested an amendment to the minutes via email ahead of the meeting. It was requested that the minutes under Item 23 be changed from “Cllr Rainsbury from SRBC opposes the application going ahead as there is enough housing land available in South Ribble for the next ten years” to “Cllr Rainsbury from SRBC opposes the application going ahead and said that SRBC had enough housing land available for the foreseeable future.” It was resolved that the amended minutes of the MHPC meeting held on the 11th November 2024 were agreed to now be a true and accurate record. Proposed by Cllr R. Lea, seconded by Cllr E. Houghton and unanimously agreed. Chair, Cllr K. Hayes signed the amended minutes.

1. **Public Time**

There were no members of the public present.

1. **Correspondence from members of the public.**

One email received regarding the footpath signs on Town Lane and response provided to confirm that the signs on FP25 have recently been fitted. It is only a short PROW, (public right of way) and that both signs signal the start and end of the footpath. The dirt track is part of the PROW too.

1. **Reports from other meetings and information on future events**

No meetings have been attended nor plan to be.

1. **Village Hall**

The council noted Cllr E. Houghton’s report on the village hall for the past month. The Village Hall is almost fully booked every day of the week and bookings are still coming in with four weddings booked in for next year. The Christmas market went ahead on the 7th December despite the poor weather as extra stalls were accommodated in the scout hut, with a terrific atmosphere. On the following day (Sunday 8th December), Eccleston Brass Band performed, the concert was a great success, of a high standard and was sold out.

1. **Off Road Cycle Track**

The Council noted with pleasure that the previously reported flooding near the cycle track on Smithy Lane, raised by a parishioner, is now being effectively managed. There is evidence of completed work and flood management appears to be under control.

The cycle track continues to be well used and is featured in the Much Hoole Village Calendar for 2025.

1. **Finance**
2. The Bank reconciliation for the month of October 2024 was agreed to the bank statements and was signed by Cllr E. Houghton and unanimously agreed.
3. **It was resolved** to authorise the following payments, proposed by Cllr E. Houghton, seconded by Cllr R. Lea and unanimously agreed:
   1. Lengthsman H Jackson invoice for November in the amount of £206.33 (£112 wage and £94.33 invoices).
   2. Clerk’s November gross salary in the amount of £662.90.
   3. Clerk’s November reimbursements in the amount of £31.17 (£28.67 for mileage & £2.50 for Lebara PAYG Sim).
   4. Clerks ILCA training at the updated 2024 amount of £144.00.
   5. Final payment for Christmas trees in the amount of £30.
   6. Invoice from P Cafferkey for advice & training in the amount of £84.58.
4. **Budget and Precept for 2025-26**

The Clerk began the discussion of setting the budget and precept for 2025-26 by reviewing the expenditure against budget for the current year and highlighting areas where spending has been less than anticipated (as per the financial monitoring statement circulated with the agenda). Council reviewed and reduced next year’s budget items that were deemed appropriate. **It was resolved** that the council pay a donation of £100 each year to Royal British Legion which includes the cost of the poppy wreath, purchased annually for Remembrance Sunday. This was proposed by Cllr E. Houghton, seconded by Chair, Cllr K. Hayes and unanimously agreed.

**It was resolved** that the precept for 2025-26 be set at £18,770 and using a council tax band D household as an example would be an increase from £23.64 (2024-25) to £24.94, a rise of £1.30 per annum. The increase in the precept was considered necessary due to inflation.

The budget for 2025-26 also factors in inflation, the increase to the Clerk’s salary agreed by NALC this year, and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies received as well as reserves. The Council considered the financial requirements for the coming year, including the essential requirements to keep the council running. After discussion, **it was resolved** and agreed that the precept should increase by 7% from £17,530 to £18,770 to cover inflation and essential running costs of the council.

The agreed precept and budget were proposed by Chair, Cllr K. Hayes, seconded by Cllr N. Woodcock and unanimously approved.

1. **Much Hoole Village Calendars**
   1. Cllr R. Lea provided an update on the Much Hoole Village Calendars for 2025 and that invoices have been issued to six business sponsors, each covering sponsorship for one month of the calendar, totaling six months of sponsorship, which the council noted. In addition to this, Cllr R. Lea confirmed that together with Cllr T. Hewitt, the photographs to be used in the calendar were selected from 89 photos which were submitted by 19 people in total.
   2. Council noted Cllr R. Lea’s update on distribution and sales of the calendars, confirming that 500 copies had been printed and these were selling well so far. Copies of the calendars had been allocated to the scouts, two local junior schools, church, locals lunch, WI, Hoole Village Hall and Ribble Court to sell in aid of their charities. Copies had also been given to the six sponsors to give away as they see fit. Council noted that calendars were a great way to market the village and recognise the talent of local photographers. **It was resolved** that the council create a calendar again for 2026, proposed by Cllr T. Hewitt, seconded by Chair, Cllr K. Hayes and unanimously agreed. Photos would be invited to be submitted throughout 2025.

A vote of thanks was extended to Cllrs R. Lea and T. Hewitt for their invaluable contribution in organising the design, printing, selecting photographs, securing business sponsors and distribution.

1. **Parish Clerk and Financial Officer**
2. The Council noted that the Clerk will take the Chairman’s Chain of office to be restored in the coming weeks but that the jewelers cannot complete the work until the New Year.
3. Cllr E. Houghton, in her capacity as a member of the Village Hall, confirmed that the parish council can use the Village Hall’s address for all future parish council correspondence. The Clerk to contact Messrs T Brown and H Davidson to tell them what is to be done with Parish Council post received.
4. **Footpaths & Gardens**
   1. Council noted Cllr P. Cocker’s update on the pavement on Brook Lane/Liverpool Old Road and that a conifer tree is blocking street lighting leaving a long section of the pavement unlit,which has been registered on the Love Clean Streets app and is now registered so will hopefully be dealt with soon. The issue has now been resolved. Council also noted that no further work had been done on the public footpaths due to weather conditions.
   2. Council noted that currently there hasn’t been a sign added to FP27 but it is now clear that it is a public footpath.
5. **Community Orchard Project**

Council noted Cllr R. Lea’s update on the Community Orchard project and that the project team have now ordered the trees which have been paid for. Expected delivery date is between Thursday 16th January – Friday 17th January. Cllr R. Lea proposed a Community planning project be scheduled for Saturday 18th January at 10.00am, subject to suitable weather, and that 11 trees will need to be planted with the suggestion that the two junior schools meet at Trafalgar Garden with parents to come together as a community to plant the fruit trees. It was agreed that the Community garden project team will talk to the two schools to arrange and confirm the date and ensure all necessary equipment is provided on the day (spades, trees, bags of compost, plastic and bark).

1. **Tree Planting (Microforest) and Flooding Issues – Northern Avenue Football Ground**

It was noted that Ian Wright of LCC has informed us that SRBC do not support the planting of a microforest at this location and therefore, Ian will not be attending the next parish council meeting in January.

1. **South Ribble Allotments**
2. Council reviewed the resident’s concerns about lack of allotment sites in the area and asked if the Clerk could return to the resident and ask if he has any suggestions in relation to available land. The council acknowledged that one of the biggest issues will be finding land owners who will be willing to give up land.
3. It was agreed to discuss the matter further at the next parish council meeting.
4. **Christmas Trees**
5. Council noted that both Christmas trees ordered this year have been erected and decorated at the Village Hall and Trafalgar Garden and James Nelson, who carried out the work voluntarily, is to be thanked.
6. Cllr R Lea provided a photograph of a live Christmas Tree that has been offered to the council by parishioner James Nelson free of charge. The Christmas Tree is currently 8 foot tall and can be provided to the council in January for planting at the same time as the Community Orchard fruit trees in the Trafalgar Garden. It was proposed by Cllr T. Hewitt that we accept the live Christmas tree being donated and this was seconded by Cllr N. Woodcock and unanimously agreed.
7. **A59 Crossing**

Cllr T. Hewitt advised the council that Highways LCC have said ‘no’ to replacing the crossing with either a crossing patrol or with traffic lights. The Clerk advised that updates have been received from Little Hoole Parish Council to confirm that their Chair is looking to speak to LCC to confirm why the crossing was withdrawn in the first place.

1. **Bus Routes in Much Hoole Village**

It was agreed that the council should defer to the next meeting.

1. **Footpath map pamphlets**

It was agreed that the council should defer to the next meeting

1. **Fallen Soldiers Plaques**

It was agreed that Cllr N. Woodcock's pass the details of the Croston historian to the Clerk to investigate further.

**22. Planning**

Council noted planning application 07/2024/00844/HOH Chez Soi Smithy Lane Much Hoole Preston Lancashire PR4 4QJ to add a Single storey extension to front side and rear together with raising the ridge height and replacing front roof slope.

1. **Items for next agenda**

CIL income and expenditure

Community Orchard Project

Bus routes

Footpath map pamphlets

Fallen soldiers plaques

South Ribble Allotments

1. **Date of the next meeting**

The council unanimously agreed to the date of the next meeting being held on Monday 13th January 2024 at 7.30pm at The Venue, Hoole Village Memorial Hall, Liverpool Old Road, Much Hoole, PR4 4QA.