

PRESTBURY PARISH COUNCIL

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Annual General Meeting 2020

Year End Reports received for 2019 – 2020

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website: <https://prestbury-pc.gov.uk>

PRESTBURY PARISH COUNCIL

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1. Chairman's Report

By any yardstick the 2019/20 session of the Prestbury Parish Council has been a very eventful year. I have said it on various occasions but is deserves repeating, Prestbury Parish Council has over the last 18 months evolved into a Council with a very positive can-do attitude when it comes to supporting the Parish.

Without exception every member of the Council has made a positive contribution to work of the Council, for which I thank you.

There have been a number of key issues throughout the year which do require special mention.

Cllr. Langrish and her team ably supported by the Parish Clerk have worked tirelessly on two projects.

The Barley Road Field.

The Barley Road field was gifted to the Parish as part of the section 106 agreement with Messrs Bloor and Bovis. To protect the field suitable railing were sourced and installed. Cllr. Langrish's persuasive negotiating skills encouraged Bloor Homes to provide addition trees for the field, and a large sign, yet to be installed welcoming people to Prestbury. The Parish Council has purchased a number of wooden benches to go around some of the trees.

Evidence suggests the field is being well used, particularly by dog walkers. The field has however presented a challenge to the Parish Groundsman, as the uneven terrain is not ideally suited to the mowers currently owned by the Parish. Trials of different types of mowers are underway.

Prestbury Road Playing Fields.

As part of the section 106 agreement Prestbury Parish Council received a cash sum to make improvements to the Prestbury Road Playing Fields. Conditions were attached as to the facilities that should be provided. Cllr. Langrish and her team were able to negotiate a degree of flexibility so that the facilities provided were more aligned to what the Parish required.

What followed was an intense period of discussions with possible suppliers, including visits to other parishes. Throughout this whole process Cllr. Langrish has kept the Council fully informed, including an Extraordinary Council meeting. The project team also appreciated the importance of communications with the public. Leaflets were circulated and a public meeting arranged.

The culmination of all this work was the granting of Planning permission by Cheltenham Borough Council and the awarding the two contracts, one for the car park and one for the playing fields.

As we all know everything has now come to a sudden stop thanks to Covid-19 – when work will start is anyone's guess.

New Website.

For many years the Parish had a very basic website, which to be fair was not fit for purpose. However, the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulations forced the Council to address the problem of its now non-compliant website.

Cllrs. Singh and Kennard 'volunteered' to take on this task. They investigated the market and made recommendations to the Council which were accepted. The website, together with a dedicated email system went live in July 2019. The result, in my opinion is one of best Parish Council websites I have ever seen – good job well done.

Celebrating Prestbury

Celebrating Prestbury was all about promoting Prestbury and its businesses and was the brainchild of Cllr. Beach. The event exemplified the can-do attitude now exhibited by the Council. Cllr. Beach drove this project very hard given the very short timeframe. All the shops and businesses were contacted and a brochure promoting Prestbury was produced and funded by businesses. It was hoped that the Kings Arms would be open for inspection, but due to a delay in the work this was not possible. The event on the 30th November was rewarded with a really sunny day, and residents responded well to the event – a real success.

The Parish Clerk

In recent years Prestbury Parish Council has benefitted from hard working dedicated Parish Clerks. Simon fits that description, whilst he had no experience of being a Parish Clerk when appointed he has in my opinion grown into the role and have provided crucial and effective support to the work of the Council.

Covid-19 has brought new challenges and Simon has responded well, and has provided a vital link between residents, volunteers and businesses.

Personal note.

As I am sure you are all aware 2019 was not a vintage year for me. I am today still undergoing treatment for an open wound on my chest following open heart surgery in October 2018, a wound that is at last showing signs of healing. In June my little dog Doris died of meningitis, she was eleven and I had had her since my wife and I retired. The loss of Doris however paled into insignificance when my wife Janet died from a heart attack in August. The support of the Council at that time was greatly appreciated.

As a consequence of the above I take the view that my Chairmanship of the Parish Council has not been as supportive or constructive as it should have been, and for this I apologise. I would like to put on record my thanks to all the councillors, but I would like to mention in particular Cllr. Hunt (Vice-Chair) and the Parish Clerk, Simon Dove for their support.

Covid-19 has had a dramatic effect on all our lives and will continue to do so even when the restrictions have been lifted. It is in my view vitally important that local government in the form of Parish Councils continues to provide support and guidance to residents. In this situation the Council needs strong leadership, something I feel I am unable to commit to at the moment. It is therefore my intention to stand down as Chair at the end of the 2019/20 session and invite nominations for Chair, to be decided at the Annual Meeting in May.

At this point in the Chair's report it is customary to look forward to the coming year. I must confess that my crystal ball is very cloudy, which makes predictions difficult. I would hope that the Prestbury Road Playing Field project could be completed, but whether that is this year or next is uncertain, assuming of course that our contracted suppliers are still in business.

Climate change has been put on the back burner for obvious reasons but will re-emerge. I would like to see the Parish Council form an Environmental Sub-group to consider what changes can be made locally and to liaise with both CBC and GCC in the county wide plans.

The management of Council finances is a key function of the Council, and in discussions with the Parish Clerk there is an ambition to refine the accounting system so that costs can be more accurately attributed to the various functions of the Council.

As a Council we have tended to work one year at a time, but I take the view that the current Council is more ambitious and would want to take on large projects, these need to be planned for. To accommodate these plans the Council needs to develop a 3 to 5 year plan.

John Payne
Chairman Prestbury Parish Council

1st April 2020

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2. Report from the Chairman of the Allotment Committee.

The Parish Council regards the Blacksmith's Lane Allotment Gardens as one of its prime assets. Allotment gardening is still proving popular and demand for plots continues.

The role of the Committee is to oversee the management of the Allotment Gardens, to do this there is a heavy reliance on the role of the Tenant's Representatives. They not only provide advice to tenants but are the Council's eyes and ears, alerting the Committee to any issues that require its attention.

Garden inspection form a major part of the Representatives role. In order to be more proactive and to prevent gardens from becoming overgrown a new system of inspection has been introduced. The inspection will now be carried out by one or more Representatives accompanied by an Allotment Committee member. The idea is to take action more quickly and so prevent the deterioration of gardens.

Due to a poor growing season and a lack of forward planning the 2019 Produce Show was cancelled. Learning from past experience plans are now in place for 2020 produce, which may or may not go ahead depending on the Covid-19 situation. It is planned that the produce Show will be a combined event with the WI's Craft Show.

Maintaining an attractive and safe environment for tenants is very important, and this year the Committee has sanctioned improvements to the roadways and has had a concrete running strip put in place to make the main gate easier to open and close.

There are many benefits to Allotment Gardening, whilst it is hard work, it also has a number of well documented health benefits. Prestbury is very fortunate that the Blacksmith's Lane Allotments are in such an attractive site, and it is an ambition of the Committee to maintain a well ordered and peaceful environment. However, rules are necessary, and this year a new version of the Terms and Conditions has been developed and will be distributed to all tenants.

Finally, I would like to extend my thanks to the Committee and the Tenant's Representatives, with a special thanks to David Storey who had to step down as a Representative following the death of his wife Rachel.

John Payne
Chairman Allotment Committee.

2nd April 2020.

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3. Report from the Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Prestbury Parish Council has always prided itself on its prudent management of the Parish's finances, and this year is no exception. This report should be read in conjunction with the Financial Statement prepared by the Parish Clerk.

This year the Parish Council has adopted the latest version of the Financial Instructions issued to Parish Councils, and whilst there are a couple of relatively minor changes that will be made in order to fully comply, the Parish exceeds the requirements in many important areas, particularly the regular reporting at Parish Council meetings of income, expenditure and council reserves.

The Parish Council receives funds from various sources, rental from the Allotments, the Tennis Club, the Little Explorers Nursery and the Football Pitch. However, the largest contribution to the Parish's finances comes from an element of Council Tax called the precept. It is the role of the Finance and General Purposes Committee to assess each year the level of the precept. The Committee is always mindful of the burden the precept places on residents and makes every effort to keep increases to a minimum consistent with supporting the functions of the Parish Council. The Parish Council is always looking to improve and enhance services it provides to the Parish. This year the Parish signed up to a new website provider. This was necessary because the existing website did not comply with the General Data Protection Regulations. The new system has placed an additional financial burden on the Council, but it was judged to be necessary, and has proved to be an excellent website.

A significant percentage of the Council's finances are allocated to maintaining the Parish Council's Estate, this includes the Barley Road Field, The Prestbury Road Playing Field, the Robson Field, the War Memorial, the Village Green and a surprisingly number of bus shelters.

Next year will be financially challenging. The outbreak of the Covid-19 virus will have a marked impact on the income of the Parish, for two reasons. There will clearly be a loss of rental income from the Nursery, Tennis and Football Club. The Covid-19 outbreak has led to the suspension of the £200k development planned for the playing field. It is hoped that the development can be completed as soon as restrictions are lifted, hopefully this year, but a more realistic view would be Spring 2021. Any delay may result in an increase in costs, and whilst the Parish has assigned an appropriate level of contingency, any increases need to be considered in relation to the range of facilities provided.

In conclusion I would as Chair like to thank the member of the Finance and General Purposes Committee for their hard work and support during 2019/20.

John Payne
Chairman Finance and General Purposes Committee. 2nd April 2020.

4. Finance Statement 2019/2020

Prestbury Parish Council closes 2019/20 with £83513.50 in the Treasurers Account (current account) and £52539.03 in the Business Banking Instant Account (deposit account). This compares to previous years as follows:

	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18
Current Account	£83,513.50	£100,649.02	£87,916.31
Deposit Account	£52,539.03	£48,078.52	£46,646.08
Total	£136,052.23	£148,727.54	£134,562.39
Income	£81,651.42	£84,541.22	
Expenditure	£94,258.87	£70,918.47	
Total	-£12,607.45	£13,922.75	

Outstanding payments for the year include:

- Payment to PPC from CBC as the first instalment from the S106 fund of £4732.50.
- VAT re-imbursement for the period September 2019 – March 2020 of £2,869.11.
- Payment of up to £1000, match funding, from CBC Community fund against the expenditure on Barley Road tree benches project.

The completion of the acquisition the Barley Road public open space has been a significant step for PPC this year and the fencing required to secure the area costs cost £11500 (ex. VAT).

The Pavilion's Main Hall has had a new vinyl floor laid at a cost of £3345 (ex. VAT). Little Explorers contributed £1000 towards this and the facility is much improved.

The purchase of the Mower and Brushcutter cost £924.17 (ex.VAT) and the Fleming Transport box (hydraulic) £765.02 (Ex.VAT) has enabled work to be carried out at more efficiently, especially at the allotments. In addition, emergency repair works were necessary on the Gang mower £499.70 (Ex. VAT).

In addition, a new PC to support the new website capability and laser printer, total £771.85 (Ex. VAT) was purchased.

Annual expenditure: Employment costs £41392, insurance £3688, Public Works Loan Board £3338.90 were all as predicted. Both PPC subscriptions and electricity cost exceeded budget slightly.

In terms of income Little Explorers are fully paid up for the year, but Prestbury Rovers have had to curtail their season due to the Corvid -19 situation and this has led to a short fall of £300 for PPC. PTC are fully paid up.

Overall, our reserves and current account are in a strong position after a busy year where investment has been required.

Simon Dove, Parish Clerk - 7th April 2020

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5. Report of the Sport and Recreation Committee

Having only been the Chair of this committee for part of the year it has been difficult to formulate proper plans, but I would like to thank Jeneth, Kate and Linda for their support - filling Katherine Simpson's boots is a big ask. I would like to welcome Charles Taylor to the committee.

There have been productive meetings with the Tennis Club and Little Explorers. We have formulated what we all need and hope to achieve going forward with all the site developments and plans. It is understood that the MUGA will be offered to clubs, societies, and schools on a rental basis. Prestbury Rovers FC are fully supportive of the MUGA development. Our most recent discussion was postponed following the curtailment of the football season due to Covid-19 situation, but this will happen as soon as possible.

Simon and I had started discussions about the letting out of the Pavilion Hall during the football off season and the term holidays of Little Explorers. Potentially this could be offered as a package with various sporting activities as well as parties and other general usage by the public. We were considering booking, fees, deposits, and key management plans.

At present with the development of the sports facilities on hold and business planning ongoing the arrangements for hiring out the Hall is something that will need to be looked at and addressed in the coming months

I would like to thank Craig for his care and attention to the playing fields and Robson memorial field Robson Memorial field seems to be a neglected area of our Parish and is one that we should consider for improvement and development to hopefully encourage better usage.

Hopefully come June we will be able to properly develop all our plans at the committee and we can draw up a proper strategy for the forthcoming 12 months.

Thank you

Cathy Hunt
Chair Sports and Recreation Committee.
April 2020

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6. PRESTBURY PARISH COUNCIL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Total number of applications	58
PPC - No Objection	52
PPC - Objection	6
Total Permitted by CBC	56
Awaiting CBC Decision	2

Note.

To date 4 of the 6 applications to which the PPC registered an objection have been permitted by CBC. The final two later applications are still awaiting a decision from CBC.

Ian Bassett-Smith

9th. April 2020

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7. Report for Barley Road and Sports Field.

BARLEY ROAD.

Transfer of Public Open Space from Bloor Homes to PPC took place in 2019. PPC installed black metal fencing around the perimeter. This was paid for out of Parish Funds.

Bloor/Bovis donated and installed 24 mature trees on POS. They have also committed to pay for a large Welcome to Prestbury Playing Fields sign to be erected on corner of Barley Road and Prestbury Road.

2 Dog Fouling bins installed.

3 Octagonal wooden tree guard Benches have arrived. In the process of being teak oiled and will be erected shortly. A secure base will need to be agreed on for benches to sit on to avoid soft ground that may cause rotting to wood and will also help with securing them to the ground.

SECTION 106 FUNDS. SPORT FIELD.

Prestbury Parish Council has agreed on and approved the following:

MUGA with floodlighting. Planning permission submitted and approved.

Outdoor Gym

Daily Mile Track

30 space Car Park.

Construction due to start May 18th, 2020 but is currently on hold due to Covid-19 crises. We await a confirmed installation date.

Kind regards

Linda Langrish and Project Team.

THE PRESTBURY UNITED CHARITIES
REGISTERED CHARITY 202655

8. REPORT FOR THE PRESTBURY PARISH COUNCIL AGM

The Prestbury United Charities provides assistance to those who are in need. Beneficiaries must reside in our area of benefit, which is GL50, GL51, GL52, GL53. Priority is given to applications from residents of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Mary's, Prestbury, and the adjoining Parishes of Swindon Village and Southam.

The Trustees wrote to the Charity Commission and requested permission to enlarge our area of benefit to include those living at addresses in the Royal Mail PostCode areas GL50, GL51, GL52 and GL53 but retaining priority for those firstly in Prestbury and then Swindon Village and Southam. The Charity Commissioners agreed to this subject to the charities conducting a consultation of interested parties. This was done and no objections were received and several welcomed the proposed changes.

The Charity usually has 9 honorary trustees: the incumbent of the Parish of Prestbury; 3 persons nominated by the Prestbury Parish Council; one nominated by Cheltenham Borough Council; 4 co-opted trustees, and has a clerk who receives remuneration.

The Prestbury United Charities uses the income from investments to meet the needs of applicants who we consider are eligible for assistance. During 2019 a total of £20,020.08 was spent, which included £5,000.00 to the Cheltenham Foodbank, £5,000.00 to Cheltenham Open Door and £500.00 to the Prestbury Memorial Trust. The balance went to help individuals. Examples of requests granted are: purchase of essential home equipment, furniture and carpets etc, counselling and items for children.

We are here to help individuals who are in need and welcome applications directly from individuals or from a third party, e.g. social workers, independent and professional carers, or health visitors. Direct applications must be supported by a third party (social worker, carer or health visitor).

Further details of the Prestbury United Charities, and a link to the application form may be found on our website www.puc.org.uk

April 2020