**Minutes of Ramsgreave Annual Parish Meeting Held May 17th 2022**

**at 7.00pm at Wilpshire Church.**

**ITEM** 1 **Election of Chair Kathryn** Berzins was elected Chair

**ITEM 2 Election of Vice Chair.** Lindsay Wright was elected Vice Chair

.

**ITEM 2 Declarations of interest,** no members made declarations of interest.

**ITEM 3 Apologies-** Apologies were received from Cllrs Hirst and Bibby

**ITEM 4 Ramsgreave Parish Council May 2022- Chair’s report by Kathryn Berzins**

I’d like to take this opportunity to summarise the past year’s activities of Ramsgreave Parish Council.

Despite covid being very much still with us we have managed to hold all four meetings this year in person and continue to meet in Wilpshire Methodist Church, primarily for financial reasons, we still intend to move to a venue nearer to our parish in due course, hopefully next financial year.

**Council Members and employees**

The current members of council are: Kathryn Berzins (Chair), Kathryn Webster (Vice Chair) Lindsay Wright, Peter Ainsworth and Pat Young. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for all their support over the past year.

The Council continues to employ Rachel as clerk and Responsible Finance Officer. She has continued to manage our business behind the scenes, keep us on track financially, finding solutions to challenges, always with good humour and patience. I know we all would like to take this opportunity to thank her for this work.

Our lengthsman Phil retired and we have employed another local resident Adam Pearson of Shore Farm. We thank Phil for his hard work (and his continuing efforts as a volunteer) and we look forward to working with Adam.

**Finance**

Our financial position is still not strong but we have remained solvent within our core precept funding and our financial situation is gradually improving due to the measures we have put in place and through generating external income that we can then reclaim VAT on. We have kept our precept as it was this year in order to demonstrate value for money for residents. It might be that we need a small increase next time to cover our basic running costs, including things that have not been included before like councillor training, but our general model is likely to remain that of using the precept to run the council itself and applying for grant income to support specific projects.

**Planning**

We have commented on 21 planning applications this year. We have refined our process for responding to planning applications to make sure we record how we responded is accessible to all councillors. We became very involved in the objections to the major development proposed for Salesbury View which would have significant impacts on our Parish. We have communicated with lots of people over this, I attended the public meetings and was also quoted in the Lancashire Telegraph which in turn raises the profile of the Parish Council.

**Training**

We have made progress with training this year. Two councillors and the clerk attended code of conduct training, three councillors have attended introductory courses and we will continue to treat training as a necessity as we go forward always allocating funds to it in our forecast.

**Liaison**

We have linked in with Ribble Valley Borough Council via the Parish Council Liaison Committee, Lancashire Association for Local Councils via their AGM and Lancashire County Council via their themed Parish Council conferences. We have worked with the Peak and Northern Footpaths Society, Community Rail Lancashire, the LCC Public Right Of Way team, the community police, our local borough councillors, county councillors and made links with neighbouring parish councils to share knowledge, resources and support. I have met with other parish councillors from Clayton le Dale, Salesbury, Wilpshire, Balderstone and Mellor over the past year.

**Commemoration**

We have consulted, commissioned and are about to instal our war memorial for use at this year’s Remembrance Day. For the first time the eight residents of our parish killed during the world wars will be commemorated here in the parish in which they lived. Our webpage gives more details about these residents and we have linked in with the wider Ribble Valley remembrance project to make sure our war dead are listed there. We are thankful to Stan Bamber for his research to support this project.

The planting of the memorial has been carefully thought through by Lindsay Wright which I would like to highlight. The plants selected and the reasons why will also go on the webpage so that they can be more widely appreciated.

We have also arranged our commemorative bench and new tree for the platinum jubilee. This was an opportunity to acquire something that residents had requested but we couldn’t fund and we look forward to installing it soon and using it as a basis to improve the Moorfield footpath verge.

**Footpaths**

After our full survey of footpaths last year we have embarked on a programme of PROW improvements, some were minor, for example, replacing waymarker signs but we had our first major success with the completion of improvements to footpath four including the wall rebuilding, resurfacing and gate, funded by the PNFS for which we are hugely grateful. Our celebratory picnic was a lovely occasion and a story about this project is being published in the PNFS newsletter and LCC PROW team also requested photos. We will now target the footpath next to the reservoir which is boggy and impassable in winter.

**Environment**

We have reported four flytips and as usual, cleaned some up ourselves. Our community litter pick has run every month, now in its fourth year, and we even had the station jet-washed when there were contractors working there. Our increasing visibility made this possible as Community Rail Lancashire knew to contact us to ask for our input.

Our community gardeners have continued planting around the parish. We had a wonderful display with a previous neglected verge on Moorfield. The barrel planters are about to be renewed for summer in red, white and blue for the jubilee and of course the war memorial adds to this overall display, as eventually will the allotment garden and the Moorfield footpath verge.

We are in the midst of No Mow May and our embankment is thriving, as usual we will survey species and share the findings with residents.

**Highways**

We continue to campaign for a sensible speed limit on Higher / Ramsgreave Road. We have had some very disappointing set backs and false promises – despite the support of all agencies, except notably LCC Highways. We will continue our fight and hope that we can eventually make our parish safer for the pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders that are so vulnerable to speeding traffic.

**Communication with residents**

Through chatting to people in person or telephone, via facebook, or email we hear lots of thoughts, views and concerns.

Our facebook and website, although both initiated last year, thanks to Lindsay and her digital strategy, have gone from strength to strength. We have settled into habitually using them although are constantly reflecting on their usage.

We have kept the noticeboard and the noticeboard at the station up to date and have seen many people stop to have a look. Noticeboards are often overlooked in this digital age but the footfall there is large, especially for our older residents who are less likely to use social media.

The star of this year in communication terms has been the newsletter. It involved a lot of hard work by Kathryn Webster for which I thank her, but the result was beautifully produced and very well received by residents. I’ve lost count of the number of people who have referred to it. It will definitely have to become an annual publication, we can fund next year’s edition from the Lottery Grant as it will focus on the allotment but after that we will budget for it. The parish map Kathryn created was particularly notable, I look forward to us reusing the map in other ways.

As a result we have reported numerous faults to LCC and RVBC either through our own concerns or those residents have told us about. We have had street signs and bollards replaced. We have reported blocked drains, potholes and flooding. Some of these faults have been addressed, although it often takes several attempts.

**Allotment**

It is hard to believe we only got access in late October. It has been brilliant to see how many people are prepared to drop in and help out. We have 21 regular volunteers and probably about 20 visitors. It’s moved on quicker in some ways and slower in others and feels like it’s developing organically with different people suggesting all sorts of things, making it a collaborative community effort. I’ve been delighted and touched by peoples’ generosity, all the items and advice we’ve been given, and when we’ve needed people to help they’ve done so willingly and with good humour. I thank them all and look forward to seeing the project develop over the next year.

**Plans and Priorities for 2022/23**

In my view, the Parish Council’s main priority in 2022/23 will be to continue to develop the allotment as a community resource. Alongside this, I hope we can continue to respond to residents’ concerns and enhance our wider environment, including promoting biodiversity and supporting action in response to the climate emergency.

**Conclusion**

It has been incredibly rewarding to see projects come together this year. In all of this, I have heavily relied on Lindsay Wright and Kath Webster. As fellow residents they are out in the parish everyday with their ears to the ground. They have brought their varied skills and commitment as well as good humour to everything we’ve done and I can’t thank them enough.

Finally, I want to thank all the residents of Ramsgreave and beyond, we’ve seen a lot of community spirit over the past couple of years and peoples support for the efforts of the Parish Council is really appreciated.

I look forward to the coming year and what we can achieve.

**ITEM 5** – **Subcommittees**, all members are on the planning committee, the allotment committee will be Lindsay Wright, Kathryn Berzins and Kathryn Webster.

**ITEM 6 Minutes of the meeting** held May 2021 were signed as a true record.

**Appendix**

Summary of activity for notice board and website

**Graphical user interface, text, application, chat or text message

Description automatically generated**