

CLEE ST. MARGARET PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting on Monday 27th November 2023.

Attendance: Cllrs Helen Robinson (Chair), Ian Heighway, John Heighway, Ken Jackson, Tamsin Osler, Richard Morgan and Scarlett Penn. Cllr Cecilia Motley (Shropshire Council) and H Coonick (Clerk/RFO).

1. **RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** None
2. **TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** Cllr John Heighway item 7.1., he was asked to remain in the meeting during this item to answer questions on the scheme.
3. **TO APPROVE the MINUTES of the PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held on 23rd October 2023:**
RESOLVED: to accept as a correct record. Signed by the chair.
4. **PUBLIC SESSION:** No comments.
5. **PLANNING**
 - 5.1. **Update on 23/03727/FUL Proposed Affordable Dwelling to The West of Cockshutford Clee St Margaret:** The planning officer had not accepted that Cockshutford was a settlement, so it was put before the Planning Committee which unanimously supported the application. As a result, Shropshire Council planning will be drafting a supplementary planning document for officers on dealing with application in very rural areas and how to identify a settlement.
6. **REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES**
 - 6.1. **Shropshire Council** – Cllr Cecilia Motley reported in further detail on item 5.1 as she had made representation to the planning committee in support of the application. Shropshire Council (SC) has made £38 million savings by reorganising its services. Trying to save the remaining £13 million will be very challenging, especially with the demands in adult and children’s social care increasing. Discharges from hospital is a major task but SC are putting in place a prevention programme to prevent hospital admissions and to improve the discharge process. Many councils are struggling financially, and there was nothing in the Government’s Autumn Statement to increase financial support for councils. Brown Clew Medical Practice has advertised the GP vacancy and other GP practices are interested in supporting Brown Clew.
 - 6.2. **Village Hall** – Cllr John Heighway reported that there was a Christmas party at the weekend and a New Year event is planned.
 - 6.3. **Commoners Association** – Cllr Ian Heighway reported that there had been a short meeting on the 15th November. More training for volunteers in use of the Robocutter is planned for July. The overflow pipe on the Yeld Pond will be cut to enable the overflow to function correctly (see item 7.6). The ash trees and overhanging branches bordering the Stone Road will be removed by the owner with the assistance of Mr Chomeley on a voluntary basis on behalf of the Parish Council (see items 7.7).
7. **THE COMMON**
 - 7.1. **Update on the Countryside Stewardship Scheme Including Update the Agreement Regarding Fencing on the Common:** Cllr John Heighway was asked to remain in the meeting to answer questions as no decisions are to be made at this meeting regarding the scheme. Mrs Peake and Mrs Sue Steer are working with Natural England to finalise the application. Mrs Steer has informed the Parish Council that the proposals for the scheme, which Natural England will recommend to The Rural Payments Agency, should be available shortly. Once available the Parish Council, as owners, will need to consider the scheme.
The Parish Council has provided financial information to Natural England to inform them that the Parish Council is able to pay for fencing which will be reimbursed by the Rural Payments Agency at a provisional rate of £7.74 if the application is successful. The main graziers are concerned that due to the poor boundary fencing in some areas it might not be possible to prevent sheep from accessing the common during the fallow period required by the scheme.
RESOLVED: To hold an Extraordinary Parish Council meeting on the 18th December to discuss the scheme if the relevant information is available in time. Contact the landowners neighbouring the common to request stock proof fencing is erected.
 - 7.2. **Repairs to the Tank on the Quarry:** Council would like to thank Mr Rob Woods and Mr Guy Cholmeley for lowering the tank. Reinforcing rods are needed to prevent the sides from collapsing.

CLERK/RFO: Heather Coonick, Hopton Gate Cottage, Haytons Bent, Ludlow Shropshire SY8 2BE

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RESOLVED: Mr Chomeley to purchase the reinforcing rods up to a value of £100.

7.3. Consider the Vehicle Access Policy: The access for emergency vehicles needs to be clarified.

RESOLVED: to adopt the vehicle access policy with the changes as agreed.

7.4. Update on Pole Gutter Cottage: The owner is aware of the dangerous state of the cottage and is looking at improving the fencing. Building Control has been informed.

7.5. Mr Chomeley's Report and Turf Cutting: Mr Cholmeley and Mr Wood laid some turf and replaced the mesh guards on Nordy Bank. The gorse on the Nordy Bank ramparts has largely been destroyed but there are bare patches. More turf is needed to make permanent repairs, this could potentially be taken from an unobtrusive area on the Common. The various archaeological excavations have been filled in and the replaced turf has become established to hide the scars.

RESOLVED: Cllr Ian Heighway to discuss the matter with the Commoners Committee. If they are in agreement Mr Chomeley will hire a turf cutting machine for a day (£45 per day) to provide strong and uniform repair material.

7.6. Overflow of the Yeld Pond: The Commoners Committee support reducing the length of the overflow pipe to enable it to function again (see item 6.3).

RESOLVED: Cllr Ian Heighway will arrange for this matter to be dealt with.

7.7. Update on Work on Trees Beside the Stone Road: Mr Cholmeley, as a Parish Council volunteer, will assist the landowner to remove and cut back the trees (see item 6.3).

8. GENERAL COUNCIL BUSINESS

8.1. Update on a Request for a Contribution to the Brown Clee Medical Practice Community Initiative:

RESOLVED: To inform the initiative that this is deferred to March 2024.

9. FINANCE

9.1. Investment Advisory Group Report and Investment Strategy: Cllr Jackson reported that there is a steady income of approximately £500 per month from the investments. The investments are in approximately 20 different companies.

RESOLVED: Defer adopting the Investment Strategy until January 2024. Cllr Jackson to invite those interested to join the Advisory Group and bring a review of investments to the January 2024 meeting.

9.2. Update on Investment Signatory Changes: Emails and post are now largely coming to the Parish Council address. Hargreaves Lansdown have struggled to deal with the request to remove the previous signatories and add new ones.

RESOLVED: The Clerk will check if this has now been resolved.

9.3. Consider the Options for the Website: To continue with Hugo Fox if the volunteer, Ms Karen Slater, is happy to use the site in the future.

RESOLVED: The Clerk to liaise with Ms Slater. Deferred to the next meeting.

9.4. Authorise Payments: C Rowe (Environmental Maintenance invoices 1074 and 1066) £144, Hugo Fox (website inv 3437) £11.99, H Coonick (reimbursement for computer service and postage) £54.20, H Coonick (salary October-December plus backpay for pay award to 1/4/23) £1209, H Coonick (travel) £22.95, Guy Chomeley (Turf cutter and reinforcement for tank) no more than £145 in total.

10. ITEMS FOR POSSIBLE INCLUSION IN THE NEXT MEETING at 7.30pm 15th January 2024.

a. Budget for 2024-25 b. Investment Strategy c. Review of investments d. Countryside Stewardship Scheme e. Fencing on neighbouring properties f. Biodiversity statement. g. Future website provider.

Signed by the Chair:

Date: