

Hannington Parish Council, Hampshire – Minutes of Meeting

Date and time of Meeting: 7.00pm, Tuesday 7th March 2023.

Present: Chair, Alex Lowrie (AL),
Cllr. Simon Taylor (ST),
Cllr. Jon Whitfield (JW)
Cllr. Jo Keogh (JK)
Borough Cllr. Stuart Frost (SF)
Apologies: County Cllr: Rhydian Vaughan (RV)

Clerk: (Acting Clerk) - Sue Wright (SJW)

Members of the Public: One in attendance.

1. Welcome by the Chair, apologies for absences and declarations of interest.

Meeting opened at 7.02pm – attendance and apologies given, as noted above. No declarations of interest were made. (All).

2. Draft minutes for approval.

The minutes of the HPC meeting held on 14th February 2023, were approved and signed.

3. Parish Clerk – confirmation of appointment

Having confirmed with HALC and Internal Audit that the following approach is acceptable; AL confirmed the proposal to appoint SJW, as ‘acting clerk’ through to 31 March 2023 and then formally as ‘clerk’, thereafter, with effect 1 April 2023. It is hoped this approach will permit sufficient time to resolve outstanding matters, with the outgoing clerk. AL further reported that he has investigated several different payroll service providers; DM Payroll Services and Charlton Baker, used by Pamber Parish Council and Silchester Parish Council, respectively. DM Payroll services charge a slightly lower rate of £120.00 pa. Member approval for DM Payroll Services, was given. Parish Clerk contract was duly signed by SJW and AL on behalf of HPC, to commence on 1st April 2023.

Action: AL/SJW to circulate DM Payroll Services, engagement letter and their terms of business.

4. Borough Councillor’s report.

SF was welcomed to the meeting and in a change to the published agenda, SF was invited to give his latest report, ahead of HPC policy review and update.

SF reported;

- In a meeting taking place at the same time as [this meeting], BDBC had met and passed their proposed budget for the next tax year, which would result in no increase to the BDBC Council Tax precept. The LibDems had voted to increase the precept – but this was successfully opposed. SF also reported that there would be no increase in Borough car-parking charges and no increase in charges for the Borough’s Garden Waste collection service, for the next Council Tax year.
- Development of Aquadrome: SF reported that development strategy for the site and the estimated £140M cost of the redevelopment, was to be reviewed by BDBC cabinet in the new financial year.

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- BDBC are to allocate an additional £1M to the local hardship/cost of living crisis fund. As a result of these additional funds, applicants previously turned down are being re-reviewed and new applications to the fund, are being encouraged. To date, BDBC has spent £880,000, helping 1300 families and it is hoped that the additional funds will be able to help, many more. Further information is available via the BDBC website.
- At tonight's BDBC Cabinet meeting, recommendations are being heard to enter new negotiations with 'Grey Wolf Developments', in relation to the proposed development of a new water, theme-park on a site adjacent the Aquadrome and Leisure Park (on the site of the existing 'pitch and put'). Grey Wolf Developments are an American/Canadian company with 6 existing sites in the Americas and 1, in the UK. Typically, their sites attract 600,000 visitors per year and the development proposals are to include a proposed hotel and extended visitor parking. JW asked SF to confirm whether the 'Grey Wolf' proposals are in addition to the existing proposals to upgrade the Aquadrome and Leisure Park: SF confirmed – yes. Overall investment in the proposed site is estimated to be £250M.
- Applications to the King's Coronation Grant fund should be made by 31 March 2023. Grants of up to £500 are available to individual businesses and public/community groups, with up to £1000 potentially available to applications from joint interests.
- Kingsclere Swan Street: SF reported that the sale of a property located in Swan Street had been successfully made to a Community Interest Group. Sale price is reported to have been in the order of £750,000 (tbc).
- SF reconfirmed his interest in standing for re-election at the forthcoming May elections. A successful re-election, would confer upon him the honour of becoming Deputy Mayor for BDBC – (in recognition of his length of public service to date), a position he would be honoured to serve in.
- SF further commented on his continued work to ensure proposed housing developments in the HPC area were subject to sufficient scrutiny and opposed as needed, including the proposed sites at Porch Farm and Yew Tree farm, which he reported on in detail, during the last meeting of HPC held 14th February 2023. *(See minutes of previous meeting)*.
- A question from the public audience, commented on whether there was any benefit to HPC in making a Neighbourhood Plan. Members present noted that such an idea had previously been explored by Members of the Parish serving at the time. ST noted that the principal reason for not pursuing a Neighbourhood Plan, was the difficulty presented by identifying suitable areas for development in the Parish – partly due to the location of the Parish within a designated *Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty*. Members confirmed there was no real desire to currently revisit the idea. SF noted generally that those Parish Councils that are interested in completing a Neighbourhood Plan, are being advised to complete and submit one under the existing rules, given the uncertainty surrounding Michael Gove's/the Government's proposals for Neighbourhood Plans in the future.
- SF confirmed that he had recently the opportunity to meet with Kit Malthouse MP to discuss issue of speculative house building in the ward and to emphasise the continued need for such decisions to be made locally – and not subject to national government quotas (Michael Gove's proposals). SF also reported that in the last year, BDBC had completed the building of 750 new homes in the borough of which 350 were deemed

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affordable homes. As a result of these figures BDBC is currently the no.1 housebuilder in the South of England.

5. County Councillor's report.

A written report was received and circulated prior to the meeting, in lieu of RV attending.

Topics of note include:

- HCC spending plans for 2023/2024, for which a budget of £2.6bn has been approved.
- RV has also reported on the provision of school places within the county,
- the maintenance of the Lengthsman scheme, which is offered to all parishes, after being reintroduced by HCC (for this county) in 2010,
- grants to fight rural crime,
- a consultation on post 16 years transport for young people within the county
- and the availability of coronation grants.

Action: SJW to post a copy of RV's report on the website, together with the draft minutes of this meeting.

Matters arising from the meeting held, 14th February 2023.

6. Policy review

a. **Website Update- items outstanding for upload:**

- A holding statement has been placed on the landing/home page of the website, advising that we are in the process of updating all aspect of the website, including compiling, and uploading missing documents from past meetings and updating outdated web-links.
- AL noted that Members are already aware that the Annual audit last year had noted large gaps in information – and the above is the beginning of the work to correct and update.
- SJW advised that she had already started to review the different webpages.

Action: SJW/AL – to agree an action plan, which prioritises the most urgent work required, first.

b. **Update on the Lengthsman Scheme**

AL confirmed he had spoken to the administrators of the scheme and been advised that HPC has in fact a credit with the Lengthsman of £4770.00 which means, in addition to the known funds and this year's grant – a total balance of £5770.00 is available. Members noted that effort should be made to engage the local community to identify what works need doing, including footpath and highways maintenance and to the village green.

Action: AL/SJW to draft a communication to be sent out with the Village Weekly newsletter, inviting people to suggest works which the funds could be used for.

c. **Engagement with the Parish regarding Councillor positions and forthcoming elections in May.**

- SJW reported that the BDBC leaflet 'Get Involved, Get Informed' had been circulated with the Village Newsletter, together with an election-announcement in the newsletter, inviting would-be-councillors to volunteer and step forward. Further information is available on the BDBC website.
- Deadline for the publication of the *notice of election* is 24th March 2023.
- AL confirmed that with Cllr Larminie's passing, we have a total of upto three positions to fill.
- Deadline for receipt of nominations is 4th April 2023.
- AL commented that an example nomination pack had already been circulated to members and would be circulated again – and is otherwise available on the BDBC

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website. *Action: SJW to continue circulating PC notice requesting nominations, in the Village Weekly Newsletter and also to resend the BDBC leaflet 'Get Involved, Get informed'.*

d. IT & Security – email addresses

AL reported to the Members that further progress had been made on this topic, with the help of former HPC member Jan Hertz, including resolving the auto-storage of HPC emails on the Cryoserver (now set up) and resolving AL's access rights to the HP clerk email account and website administration rights for SJW, (to enable website updates). All being well – HPC clerk email traffic will be accessible by SJW, with effect 1st April and the present diversion to AL, can cease.

AL noted that an old notice advising the need to re-register with the ICO, in respect of our Data Protection registration, had been found in the outgoing clerk's inbox and was being actioned.

AL noted that HALC membership for 2023 was up for renewal (discussed at previous meeting) and that as a resource it would be useful for the website update. *(Note: invoices for Cryoserver, HALC and the ICO are discussed further below).*

The Council reiterated their thanks to Jan Hertz for his time and assistance in these matters

7. Finance

a. Bank accounts - additional signatory

JW confirmed he was still waiting to hear from Lloyds Bank confirming online access. AL reported that the bank's address had been successfully updated to the Chair's address – and that it would, over time, be updated again to the new Clerk's address.

AL to follow up with Lloyds Bank regarding the 'new signatory request' status

b. VAT

Further to the discussion of VAT in the last meeting, AL confirmed the availability of the HMRC portal for use to reclaim VAT owed to HPC. It should be possible to go back three years. *Action: AL to speak to Chris Pottinger regarding previous VAT registration and VAT number and AL/SJW will attempt to complete the VAT claim by the time of the next meeting in May.*

c. External Auditor

AL confirmed that our previous external auditor (PK Littlejohn) had now been replaced with BDO LLP, as part of a cycle which sees the external auditor changing every five years. AL has made contact to discuss our continuing exemption for 2022/2023, accounts and we are awaiting their 'next steps' information.

d. Payments for approval

The following invoices were approved for payment:

- Play area invoice 2022: (dated Sept 2022) £300
- Play area invoice 2021: (dated Sept 2021) £249.60
- ICO Data Protection registration fee: £40
- HALC Membership April 2022-March 2023: £221.86
- Cryoserver 2022-23 – invoice 07593 £272.16
- Clerk payment 14.02.23 – 31.03.2023 £602.74
- Payroll provider set-up - £150
- Cryoserver Invoice 2023/2024 - £272.16 – (to be paid after 1 April).

AL confirmed that with the payment of the above invoices; all outstanding payments should now be up to date.

Action point: JW to sign and issue all cheques.

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e. 2023 Budget

- An updated version of the Proposed Budget, tabled last meeting, was reviewed.
- A few amendments had been made following discussion during the meeting of 14th February 2023, including new figures for the payroll services provider, Cryoserver, HALC subscription, ICO renewal, the cost of Playground inspections and the cost of the next external audit.
- Members agreed to leave the figures for the May election un-changed and based on the assumption that seats would be contested.
- AL reported that the draft final accounts for the year ending 31 March 2023, are essentially ready – with the only variances of note; the former clerk's salary and the last external audit, which had come in a little higher than budgeted. AL confirmed that once the final accounts are ready for sign-off, any variances would be detailed in the notes.
- All members present confirmed they were happy to approve the proposed budget for 23/24 (AL and JW signed) and in principle, the draft final accounts for 2022/23, as tabled.
- AL noted; JW has to date been the RFO – once the new clerk's role has been formalised, RFO duties will transition to her, going forward.

f. Annual review of asset register

AL commented that there had been no change to the asset register, other than the addition of the flagpole, an addition of which Members are aware. Asset register was last updated in 2017, so an update is overdue. *Action: AL to update the register with details of the flagpole/flag.*

8. Matters arising and not appearing elsewhere on the agenda.

Risk Management Procedures/Governance Review

As part of the website review, various documents and links relating to the above will be reviewed and updated. Members noted that parts of the website are considerably out of date. Most of the material needed to complete the update should be obtainable from HALC. An updated Risk Register will be uploaded to the website as part of this exercise.

9. Open spaces.

a. *Michael's Field*

AL confirmed he had spoken to BDBC regarding payment of the outstanding invoices and to confirm the continuation of payments for inspections of the playground located at Michael's Field.

10. King's Coronation celebrations.

a. *Village based events*

All: still no awareness of any events being planned for the village.

11. AOB.

No other matters were arising.

12. Date of next meeting.

- a. Proposed **Annual Meeting** of Hannington Parish Council, followed by the **ordinary quarterly HPC meeting** – Wednesday 17th May 2023 at 7.00pm.
- b. HPC Quarterly meeting – 12th September 2023 (TBC with new Councillors in May).
- c. HPC Quarterly meeting - 12th December 2023 (TBC with new Councillors in May).

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End.

Approved as a true record of the meeting.

Signed:..... Date:.....
Cllr. Alexander Lowrie, Chair.