

# **CLEE ST. MARGARET PARISH COUNCIL**

## **Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

**Attendance:** Cllrs Helen Robinson (Chair), Ian Heighway, John Heighway, Ken Jackson, Richard Morgan, Tamsin Osler and Scarlett Penn.

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Cllr Cecilia Motley (Shropshire Council).
- 2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** None
- 3. MINUTES of the PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2022:** Item 5.5 should read Cllr John Heighway. Item 7.5 should read Cllr Ian Heighway.  
**Resolved:** Approved with the alterations and signed by the Chair.
- 4. PUBLIC SESSION:** P1 asked when the Alternative Fuel Payment will be made – the Clerk will respond. P1 also reported that in other areas defibrillators have been stolen from public sites – the Clerk will use the SmartWater registered to her address to mark the defibrillators.  
The Chair introduced Sergeant Jenny Price and PCSO Stephen Grant from West Mercia Neighbourhood Policing Team who gave a brief presentation about what members of the public can do to prevent thefts from their properties including CCTV, security lights and SmartWater. It is important that members of the public report any crime or suspicious activity/vehicles to the police. PCSO Grant reassured those present that the crime rate in Clee St Margaret parish is very low but understands the effect of crime upon a rural community.
- 5. GENERAL COUNCIL BUSINESS**
  - 5.1. Review the SmartWater Roll Out, Consider Involvement of the SmartWater team and Sign Positions:** A further 8 kits need to be registered for signs to be installed by the SmartWater team.  
**Resolved:** To request that the SmartWater team contact those who have not registered for a kit and explain the benefits. The signs on entrances to the parish should be A3 and at the Red Furlong junction, Cockshutford/Marshgate crossroads, Cockshutford telephone box and The Yeld car park. Signs within the parish should be A4.
  - 5.2. Review changes to the Risk Assessment:** The Clerk has contacted the Fire Service to request their Risk Assessment of Clee Liberty Common and is awaiting a response.  
**Resolved:** To defer to the next meeting.
  - 5.3. Consider the Installation of Electric Vehicle Chargers:** Information on a company called TRE who install and manage EV chargers had been distributed to Councillors to consider.  
**Resolved:** The Clerk should contact the company and investigate the potential for installation in Clee St Margaret. Deferred to the next meeting.
  - 5.4. Update on the Carbon Literacy Project presentation:**  
**Resolved:** Deferred to the next meeting.
- 6. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES**
  - 6.1. Shropshire Council – Cllr Cecilia Motley was not in attendance.**
  - 6.2. Village Hall –** Cllr John Heighway reported that there had been lots of events which had raised a considerable amount from bar sales.
  - 6.3. Commoners Association –** Cllr Ian Heighway reported that the Annual meeting had been held and Mr Paul Massey is Chair, Ms Margaret Peake is Secretary and Mr Dan Robinson is Treasurer.
  - 6.4. Our Upland Commons –** Cllr Ian Heighway reported that Matt Williams of Fearn Archaeology gave a presentation. Unfortunately, they have not been able to carbon date the bell pits.
- 7. Correspondence**
  - 7.1. Hill Management Plan and Public Meeting –** Mr John Thirlwell had written to the council with information that should be considered when drafting the new maintenance plan. He was very positive about the proposals put forward at the public meeting except the use of plastic. He also wanted to ensure that the industrial heritage was considered when changing the drainage systems.  
**Resolved:** This information will be considered when drafting the plan.
  - 7.2. Expenditure and Precept –** Mr David Palmer had written to the council with concerns that the council's expenditure was more than income and there appeared to be no oversight of the expenditure against budget. The Chair noted that the expenditure is compared to the budget at every council meeting and that in the 2022-23 year it is currently projected that income will exceed expenditure (see item 9.1).

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**Resolved:** The Clerk to thank Mr Palmer for his letter which will be considered when setting the budget for the forthcoming year.

**7.3. Blockage of Public Right of Way** – Ms Margaret Peake had written to the council reporting a blockage of a bridleway.

**Resolved:** The Clerk will report the issue to Outdoor Partnerships at Shropshire Council who deal with footpaths and bridleways.

## **8. THE COMMON**

**8.1. Update on the Public Meeting and the New Maintenance Plan:** The public meeting had been very well attended with considerable support for most of the proposals. Council discussed the drafting of the plan and the need to consult and draw on expertise of others including but not limited to the OUC contacts. The draft plan will be presented at the Annual Meeting in April and considered by the Commoners Committee before the Parish Council finalises the plan with costings.

**Resolved:**

**a.** No contractors should undertake work without the agreement of the Hill Manager Cllr Ian Heighway or the Clerk.

**b.** Cllrs Helen Robinson (Parish Council Chair), Ian Heighway (Hill Manager and on the Commoners Committee), Cllr John Heighway (also on the Commoners Committee and grazier), Mr Guy Cholmeley (on the Commoners Committee) and Mr Clive Fisher (Commoner and member of Abdon Wildlife Group who attended site visits on rewetting) will form a drafting group.

**c.** The drafting group will not make decisions about what actually takes place and should provide alternative options for discussion by the Commoners Committee, the Annual Parish Meeting and the Parish Council.

**8.2. Plan Rush Cutting During the Winter:** Rush cutting needs to start this season and should be done in January. Several people have offered to assist.

**Resolved:** Cllr Ian Heighway (Hill Manager) with the help of Mr Guy Cholmeley will organise this.

**8.3. Update on Contact Telephone Number Notices:** The Clerk reported that she now had up to date telephone numbers and agreement from Cllrs Robinson, Ian Heighway, John Heighway and Mr Paul Massey for their numbers to be included on the sign.

**8.4. Update on Action Regarding Trees on the Boundaries of The Common:** Cllr Ian Heighway was in discussions with the landowner about the maintenance of the trees.

**8.5. Scouts request permission to take a vehicle up the stone road track on Monday 1 May 2023 as part of the six peaks challenge:**

**Resolved:** To grant permission.

## **9. FINANCE**

**9.1. Approve the Accounts, Expenditure Against Budget and Bank Reconciliation.** As of the 29<sup>th</sup> December 2022 the income was £7895.82 with expenditure of £12312.48. The forecast income for the remains of this financial year is £10,622.50 and forecast expenditure of £3742.96 leaving a forecast underspend of £2462.88. The current account holds £536.11 which reconciles with the accounting record. The savings account holds £20,138.57 and the investment account holds £124,978.72 in investments and £556.58 cash. There has been expenditure above certain budget headings during the year which is not unexpected due to the rate of inflation and some unexpected costs such as defibrillator batteries and the level of the NJC pay rise for the clerk.

**Resolved:** To approve the accounts, expenditure against budget and bank reconciliation.

**9.2. Note that PKF Littlejohn LLP Appointed as External Auditor for 2023 to 2026-2027:** Noted

**9.3. Investment Advisory Group Report:** Cllr Jackson reported that the income for this year is remaining steady and the dividends are better than was budgeted.

**9.4. Consider the Draft Budget and Decide Whether to Set a Precept:** The Clerk had asked the Parochial Church Council to consider paying the cost of churchyard mowing in the coming year and had received a letter from Mr Goodrich (churchwarden) requesting that the Parish Council continue to help with this as the church is an important asset to the village. The issue will be discussed at the next Parochial Church Council and at the next Parish Council meeting. The Village Hall has now provided an invoice for the rental of the hall of £200 and the Parish Council will then consider whether to donate to the Village Hall at the end of this financial year. Although the budget remains in a draft form awaiting more information on the cost of the Hill Management Plan, it is anticipated that there will be sufficient income and funds in the Parish Council savings to cover the draft budget.

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**Resolved:** To defer adopting the budget until the next meeting and inform Shropshire Council that a precept will not be required for 2023-2024.

- 9.5. Authorise Payments – Village Hall Fee, Clerk Reimbursement for Administration Supplies.**  
**Resolved:** To make payments of £200 to the Village Hall and H Coonick (Clerk reimbursement for printer inks) £47.99.

**Additional information:** The purchase of a third key for Mr David Massey was authorised at cost to Mr Massey. Clee St Margaret Parish Council SmartWater kits should not be made available to anyone who is not a parishioner of Clee St Margaret.

- 10. ITEMS FOR POSSIBLE INCLUSION IN THE NEXT MEETING at 7.30pm 27th February 2023: a. Budget b. Hill Management Plan c. Carbon Literacy Presentation d. SmartWater role out. e. Electric Vehicle Chargers.**

**Signed by the Chair:**

**Date:**