

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ALBERBURY WITH CARDESTON PARISH COUNCIL**

Held at Wattlesborough Village Hall on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Present: D Parry (Chair), Mrs. S Evans, Mrs J Wilson, M Davies, R Davies, Mrs K Stokes, R Kynaston, C Bourne, Cllr. E Potter (part mtg), and 2 members of the public.

Apologies: R T Hughes

**1783 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING** Minutes 1775 to 1782 of the Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 were proposed for acceptance by M Davies, seconded by R Davies, and approved unanimously.

**1784 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** There were none.

**1785 CLERK'S REPORT** The Clerk reported that he had been notified of a complaint to the Ombudsman's Office on behalf of Mr K Peake, alleging that the Council had mishandled his FOI request, which had been rejected on the basis of excessive cost. The complaint had been notified but there was no further activity to report. He had also received notification of receipt of our grant application to the Police Commissioners Office, and again, there was nothing further to report. He then told members that he was now able to track website visits to the Parish site, and the number of visits in total was between 70 and 115 per month, which was quite encouraging.

The Clerk then referred to the barrister letter just received on behalf of Mr Peake, alleging, inter alia, bias against him by the Council, mala fides, defamation and other assertions; none of which in the opinion of The Clerk appeared to have any traction. However, it had been noted that the Alleged Planning complaint against Mr Peake discussed at the December Meeting had been correctly described in the Agenda, but the word Alleged had not appeared in the Minutes. The Clerk recommended that the Minutes be altered to reflect this, and this was proposed by R Kynaston, seconded by Mrs S Evans, and approved nem con.

Mr Bourne asked at this point where the ownership of the strip of land at the Halfway House Inn now stood, and The Clerk said that this was currently still with Shropshire Council.

### **1786 PARISH MATTERS**

- a. **Highways** The Chair noted that the Wigmore Lane re-surfacing had been a fiasco, with just patching done to Wigmore Lane only, not School Lane, and no final surfacing promised until later this year. Mrs Wilson said that the Abbey Lane potholes were coming back. Mr Bourn reported that a footpath bridge at Cardeston had been swept away in the floods, and there was also a large puddle again at the turn off from the A458, which is an old problem due to lack of drains, and The Clerk was asked to report this.
- b. **Policing:** No report, but it was noted that both van and motorbike speed detection units had been seen recently in Alberbury.
- c. **Other:** A member of the public asked about the various items that were currently causing issues on the Halfway House Inn site, and whether this could be treated as littering. The Clerk said that Shropshire Council were still considering whether this was fly tipping.  
Mr Kynaston confirmed that it was the intention to have a Beacon event on June 6<sup>th</sup> at Loton Park.  
Mr R Davies told members that he was discussing grass cutting at Alberbury in time for the new season.

**1787 UNITARY COUNCILLORS REPORT** Cllr. Potter told members that Shropshire Council's budget for 2024/5 would be dire with £62m savings required, and an apparent direction by the Minister M Gove that Councils would only be expected to carry out their statutory duties. This was likely to involve cutting services like

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libraries, leisure centres, recycling centres etc., that would be noticed. He said that out of every £5 of Council Tax, £4.50 went on Adult and Social Care, and better ways of achieving the requirements of this service were being considered. This problem would be the case across the UK and would continue whatever political party was in power, unless there was major reform.

He then referred to issues in Heath Drive, Halfway House, with the poor road surface and road flooding, on an unadopted highway. The Clerk was asked to write to Housing Plus, the housing association who own nine of the properties, to see if the ditch could be unblocked. Mrs Stokes also suggested that a pro-forma letter of complaint could be generated by this Council for residents to use, if this became necessary.

**1788 FINANCE** The Clerks Salary and expenses £579.99 and Wattlesborough Village Hall hire £15, were proposed for payment by Mr M Davies, seconded Mr Bourne, and approved unanimously. The Clerk then presented cheques for signature of £500 each to the Village Halls, as agreed at the last meeting.

The Clerk then told members that former Councillor D Roberts was content to carry out an Internal Audit of this year's accounts, and that he would apply for a full external audit as well this time. He then asked members to confirm that all current controls and systems were effective, and this was confirmed with none against.

Finally, The Clerk confirmed that the year-to-date position was as budgeted, with a predicted outturn figure of £10500 approx. at the year end.

**1789 PLANNING** Councillors noted 2 items which had been refused, and two new items where there were no comments.

**1790 DATE OF NEXT MEETING** 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at Alberbury Village Hall, 7.30 pm

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm.

Signed: Chairman

Clerk

Date: