

FOLKE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting Held on Wednesday, 15th November 2023 at 7.00pm in Alweston Village Hall

Present:

Cllr D.Crothers, Cllr D.Cuff, Cllr A.Harris, Cllr P.Scrivener, Cllr S.Adams, Cllr T.Rolls

In attendance:

Parish Clerk, Joanna Ramsay

1 member of the public

23.61 To receive and accept apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Mike Lugg and Dorset Councillor Robin Legg.

23.62 Declaration of pecuniary and other interests in relation to the agenda

None were declared.

23.63 To agree the minutes of the previous meeting on 20th September 2023 are a true and accurate record

The minutes were agreed and signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

23.64 Matters raised by members of the public (15 minutes)

A member of the public questioned why there was no pedestrianised access to the Elms. There is a grass verge and potentially could the top of the playing field not be opened up to connect to the Elms? Chair stated that the Parish Council have looked into this before and there are several difficulties associated with creating a pathway. Firstly, the land is not owned by the Parish Council, and if the field was opened up it would mean tenant farmers would have public on their land mixing with the cattle. The path, the Parish Council had been informed, had to be 1.5m wide and fencing would need to be put in place alongside it. The path specification makes it difficult to fit with the landscape.

It was raised that as a member of the village with a young family, this part of the village feels like an island and it is a shame it is not connected up. There was a brief discussion about all the other footpaths in the area, but the majority are more like hiking paths and are not necessarily suitable for children. Chair reiterated that the Parish Council did look into the idea of creating a new path before, but establishing a new public footpath is not easy and the cost was prohibitive. Cllr Scrivener, as the Footpath Warden for the parish, offered to review the footpath specifications and look at the costs again. **Action: Cllr Scrivener**

23.65 Issues arising from the last meeting – Clerks Report

- Clerk attended the DAPTC Clerks Conference 2023 in September – Clerk reported that the main focus was on the Elections which are coming next May. To be discussed further under agenda item 23.74.
- Community Asset Planning – This was also part of the Conference. It is more to do with Dorset Council transferring assets to Parish Councils but the Clerk felt that it was worth contacting them with regards to the playing field to see if they had any records in relation to its ownership, unfortunately they didn't. Cllr Harris noted that the wooden

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shed has been moved from the playing field. Cllr Rolls raised the question again about whether the Parish Council should be maintaining the field and paying insurance on something that we do not own. Clerk stated that with regard to insurance you can insure something you don't own, however the insurance company recommendation was not to undertake any further maintenance on it until we own it.

23.66 To receive a report from Dorset Council

Cllr Legg was not in attendance.

23.67 To receive reports from Councillors attending meetings on behalf of the Parish Council

Chair stated that there is a DAPTC Central Area Committee meeting in November, however it is not well supported so he will not attending.

23.68 To receive a finance report and to agree action in response to proposals and payment approvals

Councillors noted the below payments made under delegated powers by bank transfer out of Council:

28/09/2023	Hugo Fox	Website Provision - Monthly Fee	£11.99
07/10/2023	Microsoft	O365 Subscription Fee	£12.36
16/10/2023	DAPTC	Clerks Conference September	£22.50
16/10/2023	HMRC	PAYE for Qtr 2 (July to September 2023)	£87.20
28/10/2023	Hugo Fox	Website Provision - Monthly Fee	£11.99
06/11/2023	Microsoft	O365 Subscription Fee	£12.36

Payments to be sanctioned:

15/11/2023	Clerk	Clerk Expenses	£37.80
15/11/2023	Village Hall Committee	Hall Hire x 6 meeting per year	£168.00
15/11/2023	Cllr Adams	Expenses – Bin Liners	£12.25

Clerk requested that the above payments as listed be sanctioned. ALL IN FAVOUR.

Clerk stated that spend has been low since the last meeting, so nothing major to report. Chair noted that the IT and website costs are escalating which is new so the budget will need to reflect that.

Cllr Rolls requested that the Parish Council contribute towards the cost of emptying the Village Hall bin. Dorset Council have informed the committee that costs will be going up next April. Request made for £100.00, this was agreed. ALL IN FAVOUR.

Action: Village Hall Committee to submit an invoice for £100.00

23.69 To receive the Budget Report and agree the Precept Proposal for 24/25

Chair asked the Parish Council to consider whether the precept should be raised for the next financial year. Clerk explained the budget report and that initially an increase of £400.00 has been proposed to assist with covering the Election costs next year and to also help towards the legal fees for the playing field. It was questioned whether this increase was enough to cover the legal fees, Chair explained that £3,000 has been put aside in the

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budget and the legal costs last year were less than expected so it is thought this amount would be sufficient.

Cllr Scrivener proposed that the Precept is increased for 24/25 by £400.00 per year to £6,000.00, seconded by Cllr Rolls, a vote was taken. ALL IN FAVOUR.

23.70 To review Grant Requests for 2023-24

- White Hart Vale Magazine – a request has been made for a grant for £35.00 towards the running costs of the local magazine. Councillors considered the request and it was agreed. ALL IN FAVOUR.
- North Wootton Churchyard – No grant request has been made this year. Question was raised as to why the Parish Council is giving money to the PCC to maintain it. Clerk explained that when the churchyard is an open churchyard maintenance should be undertaken by the PCC. If notice is given to shut a churchyard by the Ministry of Justice, then maintenance transfers to the Parish Council, unless the Parish Council refuses to take this on within a 6 month period of the notice given. At this point, maintenance transfers to the Unitary authority which it appears is what has happened at Folke church.

23.71 To determine a response to any planning applications received as listed below

None received

23.72 To receive an update on Playground Inspection and Maintenance

Covered under agenda item 23.65

23.73 To approve the following policies:

- Expenses Policy (staff) – Chair raised that the statement on mileage needs to be clarified to state 10,000 per annum and Cllr Cuff noted the heading needed to be changed, otherwise the policy was agreed. ALL IN FAVOUR

23.74 Town & Parish Councillor Elections 2024/25 Update

Clerk raised that part of the Clerks Conference focused on the upcoming Parish Council elections and what needed to be done and by when. The key part for potential Councillors is that there is a form that needs to be completed, which will not be available until mid February. Clerk explained the process and suggested that the at the March meeting time should be given to completing the forms as they can be collected and handed in all at once. Forms need to be downloaded and completed by hand and delivered by hand to Dorset Council. **Action: Clerk to circulate the video link on how to complete the form**

23.75 Meetings Schedule/Dates for 2024

Clerk wished to check Councillors are still prepared to meet on the second Wednesday in the odd numbered months. This was agreed. So the dates for 2024 are:

- 10th January 2024
- 13th March 2024
- 15th May 2024*
- 10th July 2024
- 11th September 2024
- 13th November 2024

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*This meeting is actually the third Wednesday of the month, this date is scheduled to fall in the middle of the month to take into account the legalities of being in an Election year.

23.76 Items of urgent nature subject to Chair's approval

Cllr Scrivener raised that we need to be making more of the website now that we are paying for it. The minutes are available on the website but residents are perhaps unaware of the website. A discussion was had about putting the White Hart Vale magazine on the website and the Parish Council maybe making more use of the magazine. Maybe an advert needs to be placed for the upcoming Elections, we need to encourage people to stand as Parish Councillors. Chair queried whether photo ID would be needed to vote in Town & Parish Council elections if they were to happen? **Action: Clerk to confirm**

23.77 Confidential matters (public and press to leave the meeting)

Clerk explained the recent backdated pay award given and made Councillors aware of the impact on the budget.

23.78 Date of next meeting

Wednesday, 10th January 2024 at 7.00pm

There being no further business to be transacted the meeting closed at 20:17 hours

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