

BISHOPSTONE GROUP PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting
held on Wednesday 11th May 2022 in Stretton Sugwas Village Hall

PRESENT: Cllr. J Macklin; Cllr. R Morgan; Cllr. S. Knights; Cllr. L. Handscomb; Cllr S Keefe and Cllr. Muriel Holmes.

ALSO PRESENT: Ward Councillor David Hitchiner. Mrs Lesley Hay (Parish Clerk)
Two members of the public.

Chairman welcomed those present to this the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

1. Cllr. John Macklin was unanimously re-elected as Chairman and he signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Chairman form.
2. Byford Parish Councillor vacancy

Co-option of new Parish Councillor. The Chairman reminded Councillors that a vacancy had occurred with the resignation of Sue Hubbard. The Chairman was delighted to introduce Mark Geary who had recently shown an interest in becoming a Parish Councillor. The Parish Council then followed its co-option procedure; Mr Geary was unanimously voted in and duly appointed as a Parish Councillor. He signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form and moved to the table with full voting rights. The Clerk will complete the necessary paper work and inform the Elections Officer.

3. **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr. Serena Crump; Cllr. C Draper; Cllr L Goldwater and Cllr K Smith.

4. All councillors confirmed there were no changes to their Declarations of Interest and Applications for Dispensation during the past year.

4.1 Cllr M Holmes and Cllr M Geary declared an interest in item 7.1

5. **Election of other Officers:** Proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed -
 - 5.1 Vice Chair persons - Cllr M Holmes and Cllr M Geary.
 - 5.2 The Clerk, Lesley Hay, was confirmed as Responsible Finance Officer
 - 5.3 Footpath Officers –
Bridge Sollars - Cllr S Knights; Byford - Cllr M Holmes; Bishopstone - Cllr R Morgan and Cllr J Mackin; Mansell Gammage - Cllr Lewis Goldwater and Kenchester - Cllr K Smith.

5.4 Planning Officers- as per parish

The Clerk reminded those present that notification of all Planning Applications affecting the parishes are emailed to the clerk.

As previously agreed, a Councillor - together with another Councillor (as required) will arrange to visit all planning application sites. The site meeting will be arranged at a convenient time and will provide an opportunity to discuss the proposed plans with the applicant.

This information would then be reported back to the next Parish Council meeting for discussion and - if required - a comment submitted to the Planning Officer.

6. To Receive Reports:

6.1 Ward Councillor report - The Herefordshire Council Leader's April/May report had been circulated. During the meeting it was from his report that Ward Cllr Hitchiner particularly referred to:

A significant priority for the Council continues to be making improvements for Children in our County. For some time, we have known of the possibility of a Panorama programme being broadcast which may refer to issues we have. This programme has been confirmed for Monday 16th May. We have not had the opportunity to view the programme so do not know the extent to which it will refer to us, or whether instead it will concentrate on the broader national picture.

As you can imagine, there has been considerable activity planning for the impact the programme might have. We know that the Council has failed children in our care, however we are working hard to turn things around.

Last week also saw the publication of an Audit report on the Inner Link Road which relates to activity several years ago and which does not make good reading. The Audit and Governance Committee is due to consider this report next week. The Cabinet is keen to study any recommendations it makes. Weakness in Contract Management were identified early in our administration and as a result much improved controls and monitoring are already in place.

I was pleased that we had a number of civil servants visit us from DLUHC on 27th April to obtain a better understanding of rural issues. They spent time at the Shell Store, the Cyber Quarter, NMITE and on the Stronger Towns Fund. That may not sound like rural but in our presentations we took the opportunity to raise rural issues. I believe they were impressed with the

many innovative things we are doing. I also spent some time this week with two agricultural enterprises in my Ward, also innovating in significant ways. So, amidst the not so good news there are some great things happening.

Locally there has been a request by a local resident regarding the possibility of Herefordshire Council adopting The Boat so that it would fall under the maintenance contract of the Herefordshire Council. This investigation remains on going.

6.2 Policing Matters - correspondence is circulated as received.

7. The Chairman opened the Open Session –

7.1 Byford Jubilee celebrations

There was a long and detailed discussion with regard to the request for funding towards Byford's Jubilee celebrations. Cllr M Holmes explained the plans and answered various queries with regard to concerns raised during the discussion. Eventually, the Chairman called for a vote as to whether the Parish Council wish to financially support this event. The Parish Council wanted it minuted that - whilst the Parish Council fully support the event - with one abstention - a vote not to financially support this event was unanimous.

It was agreed that a letter of explanation would be forwarded to the resident who originally emailed the Parish Council requesting financial support.

It was agreed that a copy of the email will be added to the end of these minutes - although not as a formal minute but in case of future reference.

8. The Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 9th March 2022 were unanimously agreed as being a true record and these were adopted and signed by the Chairman.

No matters arising.

9. Finance Matters:

- 9.1 End of year Bank Balances had been circulated. The current end of year accounts sheets had also been circulated.

- 9.2 The Annual Governance Statement for 2021/2022 was agreed and accepted by Council. The External Audit Form was duly signed by the Chairman and the Clerk as Responsible Finance Officer.
- 9.3 The Annual Accounts for 2021/2022 had been audited and these were agreed and accepted by Council. The External Audit form was completed and signed by the Chairman and Clerk as Responsible Financial Officer.
- 9.4 The Certificate of Exemption was signed and together with the Contact details will be returned to the External Auditor

The Notice of Date of Commencement of Period of the Exercise of Rights is ready to be displayed on the 12th June 2022 for 30 working days up to and including 22nd July 2022.

The Clerk informed those present that all documentation would be up loaded on to the website as appropriate and displayed on the village Notice Boards within the appropriate time scale.

- 9.5 It was unanimously agreed to appoint Robert Taplin as Internal Auditor.

- 9.6 To consider and approve payment of outstanding invoices:

9.6.1 Schedule of Payments had been circulated – it was unanimously agreed to pay these invoices and the clerk raised the cheques to be signed.

9.6.2 The annual insurance renewal policy has been received. As there was no increased in the annual premium - it was unanimously agreed the clerk should settle the invoice.

9.6.3 It was unanimously agreed to make a donation of £50.00 as a gift for the Internal Auditor – Clerk to purchase a voucher and card of thanks.

10. **To Consider adopting the Standing Orders;** Financial Regulations; Financial Risk Assessment; Bishopstone Safeguarding Statement.

The Standing Orders together with the Financial Regulations/Financial Risk Assessment and Safe Guarding Policy had not changed since last year – these were discussed and adopted. The Councillor Code of Conduct revised May 2021 was discussed and adopted. The Safeguarding Policy; Data Projection Policy and Complaints policy have not changed since last year - these were also adopted and signed by the Chairman.

Copies of these policies to be emailed to Councillors.

All Councillors present agreed to abide by the revised Code of Conduct.

11. Planning updates since last meeting:

11.1 Planning Application No: 220885 Downhill House Bishopstone (circulated) - after discussion - no objection

11.2 Planning Application No: 220629 - Weir Garden Cottage (circulated) - after discussion - no objection

11.3 Planning Application No: 221443 Bishopstone House - this application had only been received today the 11th May so no detailed information was available on the planning website. However, in principle there were no objections raised - but if, once more detailed information was available, there are any queries - the Clerk to be informed.

12. Lengthsman / Locality Steward

12.1 D C Gardening contract 2022-2023 has been confirmed.

12.2 Lengthsman work sheet for May/June - as required

12.3 Confirm Balfour Beatty 's Drainage grant offer

(a) Prioritise work based on grant

(b) Possible match funding to cover to outstanding drainage work

Drainage grant. The Chairman had met with Dave Campbell and a drainage grant application had been submitted to Balfour Beatty. Unfortunately, Balfour Beatty are not able to financially meet all the applications in full and each parish council had been allocated £4333.00 and asked to prioritise the work.

After discussion - it was unanimously agreed to initially book D C Gardening to undertake this work which is scheduled to start in the Autumn - but the Chairman will meet with D C Gardening during the summer months to prioritise the work. It may be necessary for the Parish Council to consider funding some extra work if prioritised issues remain outstanding.

12.4 Footpath Officers' Reports - all footpaths in good order.

12.5 Litter pick - after discussion it was agreed to organise a litter pick in March of next year. In the meantime, Councillors from each Parish regularly do a local litter pick and arrange with Balfour Beatty to collect the purple bags as and when required.

13. Brief update on 'Making space for Nature in our parish'

Over the last year, the four verge-side wildflower areas created in 2021 - two in Kenchester, one at Bishopstone church turn, two in Byford - have become established and more plants added to expand the variety of more nectar-rich flowers for bees and other insects. A fifth area was added at the Bishon Lane turn in Bishopstone in the Spring and plants here are already in flower. Snowdrops in the green were planted at the Bishon Lane and Bunshill turn and in Kenchester Triangle, with wild bluebells also planted here.

We'd like to explore where in the parish we could have an area for people to sit and enjoy a nature-rich space which we would create for the community. Does anyone have any ideas?

The Chairman referred to page 17 of the Neighbourhood Plan where it refers to a *community orchard open to public access* - this is associated with the housing development at Bishon Farm. The Chairman agreed to remind the owner of Bishop Farm of this commitment.

14. Items for the Next Agenda ([no discussion): none raised.

15. Date of the Next Parish Council Meeting Thursday 13th July 2022

Signed:

Date:

Not to form part of the minutes but for information in case of future reference - copy of email sent with regard to Byford's Jubilee celebrations.

Dear David,

Further to recent correspondence regarding Byford Jubilee Celebrations - a request for a contribution towards funding this event was raised at the recent Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 11th May 2022.

There was a long and detailed discussion regarding this request during which Cllr M Holmes outlined the plans and answered various queries with regard to concerns raised during the discussion.

Eventually, the Chairman called for a vote as to whether the Parish Council wish to financially support this event?

The Parish Council wanted it minuted that - whilst the Parish Council fully support the event - with one abstention - a vote not to financially support this event was unanimous.

So, it is with regret, that on this occasion - the Parish Council are unable to help fund this event - however, the Parish Council wish you every success with this event.

Best regards - Lesley Hay (Parish Clerk)
on behalf of Bishoptone Group Parish Council