

BISHOPSTONE GROUP PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting
held on Wednesday 17th May 2023 in Stretton Sugwas Village Hall

PRESENT: Cllr. J Macklin; Cllr. R Morgan; Cllr. S. Knights; Cllr. Muriel Holmes; Cllr. Serena Crump; Cllr. C Draper; Cllr D Hadley and Cllr L Goldwater.

ALSO PRESENT: Mrs Lesley Hay (Parish Clerk)
No 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. The new and re- elected Parish Councillors all signed their Declaration of Acceptance of Office forms.
3. Cllr M Holmes was unanimously re-elected as Vice Chairman.
4. Responsible Finance Officer - Lesley Hay as RFO was re-elected.
5. Apologies for Absence were received from Cllr L Handscomb; Cllr S Keefe and Ward Cllr D Hitchiner.
6. Disclosable Pecuniary, Non- Disclosable, Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary interests plus written requests for dispensation – no declarations made.
 - 6.1. All re-elected Councillors declared that there were no new or changed interests to their original declared register.
The newly elected Parish Councillor D Hadley will fill in his Declaration of Interest form and post directly to the Monitoring Officer at the Town Hall.
7. Election of Council Representatives
 - 7.1 Footpath Officers –
Proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed -
Bridge Sollars - Cllr S Knights
Byford - Cllr M Holmes
Bishopstone - Cllr R Morgan and Cllr J Mackin
Mansell Gamage - Cllr Lewis Goldwater
Kenchester – Cllr D Hadley

7.2 Planning Officers - as per parish

For the benefit of the newly elected Parish Councillor, the Chairman 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.

Cllr D Hadley asked about keys to the Notice Board in Kenchester. It was agreed that he would purchase two keys – one for himself and one for Cllr Crump – and his offer to display Parish Notices on the board was gratefully received.

Cllr S Crump very kindly offered to print off future Notices/agendas and deliver to Cllr M Holmes for display on the Byford Church Notice Board. At present, there is no key available for to the Byford Common Notice Board. It was thought perhaps Sue Hubbard may be able to help.

8. Chairman's Report

It was agreed that a copy of the Chairman's Annual Parish Meeting Report would be included in these minutes:-

The Parish Council has over the last year dealt successfully with various planning applications including extensions in Bishopstone and Byford and several smaller projects throughout the other parishes.

The Lengthsman has carried out his monthly maintenance work throughout the year, in November he carried out ditching and drainage work throughout the five parishes, covered by a grant of £4,333.00, the Parish Council managed to obtain an additional drainage grant in January which allowed us to carry out more ditch clearing in the parishes of Bishopstone Byford and Mansell Gamage

The lengthsman has also carried out work maintaining the footpaths throughout the parishes, including repairing the post and style on BS1 (Bridge Sollars) and BN4 (Bishopstone) a broken hand rail was replaced on a bridge and in April 2023 two broken posts were replaced with new ones.

(I think the lengthsman has carried out excellent work for the Parish Council this year, I would like to thank him for always being very helpfully and professional)

I have spoken with the Herefordshire Council newly appointed footpath officer who has already walked some of our network of footpaths including KT6 (Kenchester) which he was happy with.

The Parish Council installed a No River crossing sign on the junction of Church road Byford and the A438 in January 2023.

I was invited to a meeting with the National Trust at the Weir Kenchester on April 14th where they explained their proposed development for the site including a new visitor centre, coffee shop and carpark, planting many acres of woodland, walks and river access. The team will be giving a presentation at our next parish council meeting on July 12th all parishioners are welcome to attend

Making space for Nature in our Parish run by Councillor Sarah Keefe and Councillor Rosemary Morgan with help from Councillor Muriel Holmes for Byford, this year again

expanded including planting wild flowers throughout the parishes on verges and green spaces, thank you all for your efforts in supporting this very worthwhile scheme.

Many thanks to all the Councillors for their help throughout the year especially to Councillor Holmes for looking after and finding sites for the jubilee trees, it turned out to be a very time consuming job.

Thank you to Mark Gearly who represented Byford as a Councillor over the last year for his time and input.

Finally, I would like to record the Parish Councils thanks to our Clerk Lesley Hay for all her advice and help throughout the year.

John Macklin Chairman

8.1 Ward Councillor Report – apologies received.

8.2 Update on TRO – A 483. Cllr S Knights reported that there was evidence of some initial road preparation for the changes in line with the TRO.

8.2 Open Session – no members of public present

8.3 The Chairman closed the Open session

9. The Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday 8th March 2023 were agreed to be a true record and it was voted and unanimously agreed that they be adopted and signed by the Chairman.

9.1 The Clerk confirmed she had sent a letter of thanks to Sir Harry Cotterell – this was read out at the meeting.

9.2 Cllr M Holmes confirmed that the Jubilee trees have now been planted in the five identified places as agreed with Sir Harry Cotterell. Further guards and stakes maybe necessary for three of the trees but, to date, all were flourishing. Cllr S Crump reported that she had now planted two of the remaining trees as agreed at the last meeting. Once these trees are planted and established – the Parish Council have agreed to purchase commemorative plaques to Celebrate the Queen's Jubilee and the King's Coronation – wording yet to be agreed.

10.Finance Matters: End of year Bank Balances had been circulated. The current end of year accounts sheets had also been circulated.

10.1 The Annual Governance Statement for 2022/2023 was read out by the Chairman; agreed and accepted by Council. The External Audit Form was duly signed by the Chairman and the Clerk as Responsible Finance Officer.

10.2 The Annual Accounts for 2022/2023 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.

10.3 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 5th June 2023 for 30 working days up to and including 14th July 2023.

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.

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

10.4.1 It was agreed to make a donation of £50 to the internal auditor – the Clerk will get a thank you card and send donation.

10.5 To consider and approve payment of outstanding invoices:

The April Schedule of Payments had been circulated – by vote, it was unanimously agreed to pay these invoices. The May schedule of payments had also been circulated but there may be an outstanding invoice from D C Gardening to be added – it was unanimously agreed to pay these invoices at the end of the month.

10.6 To consider Clerk's annual increment and hours.

The Clerk reminded those present that there had been an governmental pay award 2022-2023 and negotiations were currently taking place with regard to the 2023-2024 pay award.

In view of the potential pay award under negotiation - it was agreed with the Clerk not to increase the salary scale at this time. After discussion, it was agreed between the Clerk and the Parish Councillors that the hours would remain at 5 per week subject to review in November when the Precept is set for the coming financial year.

10.7 All Parish Councillors present signed their Election Expense Forms and the Clerk will submit.

Forms will be delivered to the two Councillors not present and they will send into the Elections Officer direct.

10.8 The Clerk confirmed that there will be no increase in the hire-fees for the Village Hall for the 2023-2024 financial year.

11.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/Safe Guarding Policy/ Councillor Code of Conduct had not changed since last adopted – these were discussed and it was agreed they would be adopted subject to them being circulated by email. Clerk to circulate email copies.

11.1The 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. A copy of the policy to be sent to Cllr D Hadley.

11.2 To confirm acceptance of D C Gardening's 2023-2024 Contract and to confirm receipt of his Insurance Policy for 2023-2024. Both on file.

12. Planning :

Planning Consultation - 230681 - Cork And Bottle Barn, Mansel Lacy, Hereford, Herefordshire. Proposed removal of condition 2 of planning permission 82/575 (Conversion of first floor of outbuilding to a first floor flat) - to regularise the current arrangements. The barn has been let as a full time home since 2002 and in separate ownership.

After discussion – no objection recorded.

Planning Application 230773 – Bishopstone House, Bishopstone Herefordshire
Outdoor riding arena for domestic use – sand and fibre surface with timber fencing.
After discussion – no objection recorded.

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

We would like a cut at Kenchester Triangle as part of the Lengthsman's normal end of May cut please. We have trimmed the outline of the wildflower areas. There was an orange tip butterfly and lots of other insects when working on the Triangle yesterday and it's pleasing to see the flowers returning without much upkeep from ourselves.

After discussion, it was agreed that the Clerk would liaise with Lengthsman (D C Gardening) and ask him to contact the Chairman on his next visit to Bishopstone to make sure the correct areas are trimmed etc.

Cllr L Goldwater asked if D C Gardening could look also at bridleway MG3 on his next visit as it is blocked with overgrown nettles etc. Clerk will liaise with Lengthsman.

14. Items for the Next Agenda ([no discussion]):

15.Date of the Next Parish Council Meeting as Wednesday 12th July 2023 with possible speakers (yet to be confirmed) David Bailey and his Colleagues, Iain Carter, Countryside Manager and Anna Watts, Estate Manager, both work for the National Trust in Herefordshire - they are to talk about their plans for The Weir.

Signed:

Date: