

BISHOPSTONE GROUP PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
held on Wednesday 8th November 2023 at 7.00p.m.
in Stretton Sugwas Village Hall

PRESENT: Cllr. J Macklin (Chairman); Cllr. R Morgan; Cllr L Goldwater; Cllr. L. Handscomb; Cllr M. Holmes; Cllr S. Keefe; Cllr D Hadley and Cllr S Crump.

ALSO PRESENT:

Ward Councillor David Hitchiner; Mrs Lesley Hay (Parish Clerk)

Chairman welcomed those present to the November meeting.

1. Apologies for absence – Cllr C Draper.

2. To receive declarations of interest or written requests for dispensations. None declared.

2.1.The clerk explained that the vacant post for Bridge Sollers has now been advertised for the required time and can now be filled by co-option.

3. Ward Councillor's Report.

Local issues

Status of planning applications: No 231817; 230681 and 232877 to be reported on and discussed.

TRO on A438 completed. Does the PC want me to pass on any comments on the road closures to BBLP?

The Chairman reported he had numerous comments and complaints over the traffic travelling through Bishopstone when the A438 was closed for work recently, causing hundreds of vehicle to use the single track road through the village causing long delays, collisions and vehicles jamming together. After discussion, the Ward Councillor was asked to contact Balfour Beatty to ask for better signage in future if the road needs closing again. i.e. Access to properties only signage.

Election votes. Byford turnout was 46%, Bishopstone 45%. Overall Ward was 38%. Byford not quite top of the poll.

Council issues

Cabinet has approved the move of the Library to the Shirehall instead of Maylords. We understand that the Stronger Towns Board have not agreed the reallocation of funds at this stage and have asked for more information. The move is also subject to approval by the full Council of expenditure on the main fabric of the building which might be an additional £4m over and above the £3m on the library element paid for by the Government. The Shirehall project has 5 elements. Only funding for the first two is being sought at this stage. Funding for the other three phases is not known.

Council was due to vote on proposed changes to the Capital Programme at the last Council meeting but the proposal was withdrawn on the evening before the meeting, I assume because the administration were concerned that their programme would not receive the required votes. The new programme includes an allocation of funding for the Southern Relief Road without the support of a business plan and £10m for road improvements.

Ofsted have carried out a third monitoring visit. There was an acknowledgement that there was some improvement, but the pace of change is not fast enough. There was particular criticism that the Council is placing unaccompanied child asylum seekers outside the county with insufficient supervision. The County needs to find accommodation in the County.

3.1 Open Session – no members of the public present.

3.2 The Chairman closed the Open session

4. Chairman's Report

On Wednesday 11th October I met up with the lengthsman to inspect the parishes road network and review necessary work to be carried out under the forthcoming drainage grant.

Councillor D Hadley had sent a plan on Kenchester with a suggestion of drainage work needed in Kenchester. The lengthsman agreed to carry out cleaning out drainage chambers and jet cleaning pipework under the road U73025 but to reinstate ditches would be outside his brief. The whole grant would be used within a very short section of road. He does have a second-hand wooden footpath sign that could be installed with a new post on KT1. He suggested he could cut the hedge lower around the post so it would be more visible. The Wye valley foot path sign on Kenchester triangle would be replaced and the lower branches on the trees cut and shredded.

The sign post on the junction of C1099 and C1097 (is turning in the concrete base) this is the responsibility of BB the lengthsman could replace the post but the Parish Council would need BB permission.

Bishopstone jet cleaning and ditching work on C1097, C1098 and Bishon Lane, trimming the Jubilee tree and repairs to chamber at Downhill. A resident has reported to me about the condition of some sections of the pavement in Canon Rise it needs attention. (covered in moss and breaking up.)

Byford jet cleaning and clean ditching on Ferry Road U90013 Church road U90012 and on the Common.

Mansell Gamage jet cleaning and ditching on B4230 and Shetton U90200.

Bridge Sollars clearing footpath BS1 by bridge.

I have had numerous comments and complaints over the traffic travelling through Bishopstone when the A438 was closed for work recently, causing hundreds of vehicle to use the single track road through the village causing long delays, collisions and vehicles jamming together, could the Ward Councillor contact Balfour Beatty to ask for better signage in future if the road needs closing again. i.e. Access to properties only signage.

Councillor M Holmes emailed to say she had received a complaint from a resident in Mansell Gamage in regard to a Slow sign that has been painted on the road outside his house.

This issue was discussed but it was agreed that – although the sign does not appear to have been painted in the most visible place on the road – appropriate distances etc will have been measured by Balfour Beatty before work was commissioned.

I have spoken with the Bishopstone resident looking after the parishes sand bags who has asked if the Parish Council could provide a cover to protect the bags.

To be discussed later on the agenda.

5. Finance: Schedule of payment sheet (circulated).

5.1 It was unanimously agreed to pay all outstanding invoices.

BISHOPSTONE GROUP PARISH COUNCIL **Schedule of Payments Required Date: October 23**

PAYABLE TO	FOR	GROSS AMOUNT £	VAT £	NET AMOUNT £
Lesley Hay	Clerk's salary –	As per contract		As per contract
PAYE	PAYE	£70.00		£70.00
Expenses	Expenses	£18.75	£2.84	£15.91
Eyelid Productions	Annual website support	£100.00		£100.00
D C Gardening	Lengthsman	£295.20	£49.20	£246.00

5.2 The Clerk confirmed that the Internal Auditor has issued the 6th month audit certificate as required by the Financial Regulations.

5.3 The Clerk reported that despite various discussions and emails – HALC still have not responded to changing the incorrect website recently registered for Bishopstone Group Parish Council. After discussion, Cllr S Keefe very kindly offered to liaise further with Mark Millmore and/or HALC direct with regard to the costs and time frame in obtaining a correctly worded .gov.uk website.

6. Correspondence

6.1. Police reports are circulated as received.

6.2. HALC Training Programme for October – December 2023 had been circulated.

7. To approve and sign the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 12th September 2023. It was unanimously voted that these were an accurate account and that they be adopted and signed by the Charman.

8. Highways and Environmental Matters:

8.1 Plans are in place for use of the Drainage Funding Grant – please see Chairman’s report.

9. Footpath Officer Reports – Kenchester KT1.

9.1.1 The steps at the Credenhill end of this footpath have been cleaned and the top rail to the stile replaced.

9.1.2 The Clerk to ask D C Gardening about the wooden replacement pole for the KT1.

9.1.3 The unsteady finger post at the Credenhill end of the KY1

In the first instance the Parish Council voted to ask Balfour Beatty to replace this but, it was acknowledged, this would not be classed as urgent/dangerous – so this may not be done in the foreseeable future. Bearing this in mind, the Parish Council may need to consider funding the replacement. The Clerk to liaise with D C Gardening for measurements of a replacement post and the Clerk will ask Nuneaton Signs for a quote. Item to remain on the agenda.

9.2 Sand Bags – after a lengthy discussion it was agreed that the sand bags should remain in one central location – accessible 24/7 and that notices would be displayed on the Notice Boards and on Website of their location and mobile contact numbers.

The Chairman will liaise and will inform the Clerk of contact numbers.

It was noted that the sand bags are, at present, stored on a palette outside. In order to preserve them in good condition - it was agreed the Chairman would purchase a weather proof sheet to cover the palette during the coming winter months.

Cllr D Hadley will liaise with residents in Kenchester with regard to having a small amount of sand bags stored locally and will report back.

9.2 Grit Bins – it was noted that the local grit bins have been filled. Cllr Hadley reported that the grit bin at Kenchester has been missing for some considerable time. After discussion, it was agreed the Clerk would get a price for a small replacement grit bin and bring back to the next meeting.

Mile stone – Mansell Gamage - Cllr L Goldwater is still looking into the origins of the local milestone.

10. Planning applications:

Application 233167 – Bridge Farm, Bridge Sollers – removal of modern paint covering to expose original external timber and stone work - after discussion the Councillors unanimously voted to support this application.

Application 232877 – Stable Block at the Weir, Swainshill – installation of compost toilet -after discussion the Councillors unanimously voted to support this application

11. Items for the Next Agenda (no discussion).

12. In closed Session – the Budget and Precept for the 2024-205 Financial year was discussed.

(a) To discuss the 2023/2024 Local Government Services Pay Agreement regarding new pay rates for local councils which had been agreed by SLCC and ALCC.

(b) To discuss an increase in the Clerk's weekly hours.

The Clerk left the room.

After discussion, it was unanimously agreed to increase the Clerk's hourly rates of pay in line with the agreed revised pay scale for 2023-2024 and this to be back dated to the 1st April 2023.

After discussion, it was unanimously agreed to increase the Clerk's hour from 5 to 6 with immediate effect and to increase to 7 hours per week from 1st April 2024 - this would be in line with the recommendation set out by NALC.

The Clerk returned to the room and accepted the proposals outlined above.

The budget was discussed for 2024-2025 and it was unanimously agreed not to increase the Precept for 2024-2025 and this would remain at £9,500.

The Clerk will submit the Precept application before the 31st December 2023.

Date of the Next Parish Council Meeting as Wednesday 10th January 2024

Chairman closed the meeting at 9.10p.m.

Signed:

Date

