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|  | PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL  *Working together for a better future* |

PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF A FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

**HELD** **ON THURSDAY 21st September 2023 AT THE VILLAGE HALL**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs: Ellis-Brown (Chair), Campbell, Clarke, Court\*\*, Esdaile\*, Hands (Vice Chair), Lee, Marcusson, Martin, Trembling and Wallace

\*arrived 19:36

\*\*arrived 19:42

**IN ATTENDANCE**: Mr H Quenault (Clerk), Cllr Charlottle Kenyon (West Sussex County Council)

***The meeting opened at 7.30pm.***

1. **REMEMBRANCE OF DAVID JOLIFFE**

Members and those in attendance observed a minute silence for the late Chair David Joliffe.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received as follows:

Cllr Ian Hare – Personal Commitment

Cllr Frank Riddle – Personal Commitment

Cllr Elizabeth Hunt - Personal Commitment

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND CHANGES TO REGISTER OF INTERESTS**

Cllr Campbell declared an interest in Item 18 of the agenda (as he worked for one of the payees) and therefore would not comment on the payments list.

There were no changes to the Register of Interests.

1. **MINUTES OF FULL COUNCIL**

The Council **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council from the following dates as a true and accurate record of the proceedings and these were duly signed by the Chair:

15th of June – Full Council Meeting

20th of July - Full Council Meeting

10th of August – Extra-Ordinary Council Meeting

1. **COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

Members **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Minutes, Reports and Recommendations of Committees (other than separate agenda items) as follows:-

**PLANNING & SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Members received the Minutes of the Meetings held on 15th June 2023, 20th July 2023, 3rd August 2023 and the 31st August 2023.

**RECREATION & OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE**

Members received the Minutes of the Meeting held on 13th July 2023.

**FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE**

Members received the Minutes of the Meetings held on 22nd June 2023 and 27th July 2023

1. **ADJOURNMENT FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING**

There were no members of the public who wished to speak. The Chair moved to the next agenda item.

1. **DISTRICT & COUNTY REPORTS**

**West Sussex County Council Report:**

Road Feedback:

Recent feedback was discussed regarding the condition of West Chiltington Road, particularly at the junction of the A283. It was noted that the highways department is making progress in addressing these concerns. Investment initiatives have been reported, including improvements in Pulborough, addressing key issues on The Hollow and rectifying a patch on East Street.

A29 Discussion:

The ongoing discussion with landowners regarding the A29 access issues has not yet reached a conclusion. It was acknowledged that the legal process is still ongoing, and there is no indication of a resolution in the near future. Concerns were raised about the potential impact of freezing conditions and adverse weather on the stability of the banks along the A29, which could lead to further issues.

Task Force:

The County representative emphasised the need to establish a task force to handle immediate liaisons and address any emerging issues promptly. It was recognised that the situation with the A29 might not escalate to court proceedings until the new year; therefore, local management of any adverse impact was crucial.

Remembrance Service:

It was mentioned that wreaths will be laid by the County Councillor at the nearby Church during the upcoming Remembrance Service.

Questions then followed from the committee:

Traffic Cameras:

The committee inquired about the status of the traffic cameras used for traffic phase control. It was noted that the cameras are generally effective in their role.

Red Light Violations:

A question was raised regarding whether the cameras are effectively monitoring and controlling red light violations by drivers. Are there instances of drivers running red lights that go unaddressed by the cameras? – The County Councillor advised that so far the cameras were effective and no red light violations had occurred recently.

Councillor's Statement:

A councillor raised a concern about the red-light cameras, specifically mentioning that they are not functioning as expected, particularly in the vicinity of their residence. The councillor reported incidents of cars still running red lights despite the presence of cameras.

Lessons Learned:

The discussion led to a consideration of lessons learned from the current situation. The committee acknowledged that there is room for improvement, and the councillor expressed hope for a more satisfactory outcome in this regard.

Ownership of Trees:

Questions were raised regarding the ownership of trees near the Brookfields close to the roundabout. It was noted that the County Council had taken action to address a safety issue by making the branches safe.

**Horsham District Council Report:**

Business Skills Training:

It was discussed that free business skills training is being offered independently, and efforts have been made to engage with district councillors regarding this initiative.

Drill Hall:

The Life Spring Church will take on Drill Hall from HDC; it has been identified as a suitable venue for running courses and utilising the space, particularly interest was discussed due to its sprung floor.

Crime Reduction Initiative:

The committee noted that the crime reduction initiative, initially focused on Horsham town centre, has the potential to be expanded to the wider district.

Employment Fair:

An employment fair is set to begin at the Drill Hall, with numerous employers offering both part-time and full-time positions, thereby supporting local residents.

Business Improvement Districts Scheme:

The discussion revolved around the Business Improvement Districts (BID) scheme, which allows businesses to contribute to the improvement of services and infrastructure for the community. Contributions are based on a scaled income system, and it was emphasised that this initiative is not restricted to Horsham Town Council alone; larger businesses could implement it for smaller areas.

Safety and Reporting:

Safety concerns were addressed, with attendees reporting that crime levels in the area remain relatively low, making it a safe community. However, concerns were raised about the centre of Horsham experiencing increased criminal activity. The importance of reporting incidents to build a crime profile was stressed, and attendees were encouraged to report any suspicious activities, including taking note of vehicle registration numbers.

Neighbourhood Officers and Anti-Social Behaviour:

The availability of contact details for neighbourhood officers was discussed, with the suggestion that these details could be passed on by the County Councillor. Concerns were raised about the drug scene in Pulborough and other crimes involving shoplifting and theft. Attendees highlighted the need for community involvement in reporting crimes and suspicious behaviour, as many individuals are known to both the Police and the Council, reporting also helps build a pattern of crime. Limited police resources in West Sussex were acknowledged, and it was emphasized that using the non-emergency number is crucial, even for what may seem like minor or peripheral.

Members **NOTED** the District & County Reports.

1. **SECOND SCREEN REQUEST FROM DEPUTY TOWN CLERK**

The clerk provided an explanation regarding how the second screen would benefit the deputy clerk in their role, emphasising that it would enhance efficiency and productivity.

The Council **RESOLVED** that Pulborough Parish Council purchases a second screen for the Deputy Town Clerk to help improve productivity and efficiency in the role at a cost around £177.60.

1. **WARDEN REPORTS**

Patrol Hours and Reporting:

The discussion commenced with an overview of the hours spent on foot patrol (42 hours) and administrative tasks (46 hours). It was suggested that there is a need to streamline reporting processes to optimise the allocation of time and resources.

Powers on Anti-Social Behaviour:

The limitation of powers in addressing anti-social behaviour was highlighted. It was stressed that managing expectations is essential, and there was consideration of a potential shift pattern change.

Managing Expectations:

The importance of managing expectations was reiterated, especially in the context of an admin-based job. It was proposed that a more balanced approach to reporting might involve reducing the level of detail in reports to prevent disproportionate time allocation.

Members **NOTED** the Warden’s Report for July.

1. **INTERNAL COMMS – OPT IN / OPT OUT**

It was observed that this action would enhance communication within the Council and enable a quicker reporting process for members.

The Council **RESOLVED** a new WhatsApp Group for Councillors so that the Clerk can update them more readily. The proposal encompass the provision that only WhatsApp group administrators have dialogue privileges.

1. **WARDEN RING FENCE FUND – MOVEMENT OF FUNDS**

The Clerk explained that this was a recommendation from the DCK Accounting. A clarification was made about why the money was within the ring-fenced amount, the suggestion was made to keep the ring-fenced funds intact. This decision was prompted by careful consideration, with a focus on sound reasoning and accounting principles. It was noted that now with this new information it would be best to go back to the accounting providers and notify them of this.

The Council **RESOLVED** to seek guidance on optimal solutions for the ring-fenced amount and subsequently the Clerk would report back to the Council based on the advice received.

1. **RIVERMEAD – LEASED LAND**

The Clerk informed the Council that the reason for bringing this matter before the Full Council pertains to a critical decision that needs to be made regarding the Rivermead Nature Reserve's lease. Specifically, the question at hand is whether the Parish Council should continue retaining the lease or transfer management responsibilities to Saxon Weald. It is important to provide some context to this decision.

Over six months ago, this issue was initially raised within the Council, stemming from the belief that Horsham District Council (HDC) expressed interest in taking over the management of the reserve. However, upon further investigation, it was determined that HDC did not intend to assume responsibility for the reserve. Instead, it came to light that the land in question was, in fact, owned by Saxon Weald.

Saxon Weald has now expressed their willingness to assume management duties. However, it's crucial to note that their capacity to maintain the reserve, particularly in terms of regular strimming, is limited, with maintenance likely occurring approximately every six months.

The discussion followed on from the Clerk’s comments that this work does require additional resources and maintenance. The committee acknowledged the time spent conducting a biodiversity assessment of a site, the liability of poor maintenance and the recent incident of flash floods that caused damage to properties located near Rivermead. It was noted there is a current insurance claim against the Council in regard to this.

Concerns were raised regarding the historical decision-making process that led to the assumption of responsibility for the site, particularly when it was not owned by the council. The committee considered the reasons behind this decision and whether it might be reverted through past minutes or administration. The site's value as a community asset was acknowledged, but the strain on resources was a concern.

Community involvement and the need for better access into the countryside was highlighted as pivotal in addressing these challenges, especially in light of recent survey results. The existence of a community liaison for the Rivermead Nature Reserve was noted.

Additionally, there were discussions about cost estimations, with reservations from the Clerk about the accuracy of figures due to the absence of information. The committee acknowledged the Clerk’s comments that providing a potentially misleading figure should be avoided. It was mentioned about the terms of the notice period needed for exiting the lease. It was believed to be around 3 months, however it was noted that this needed to be confirmed.

The Council **RESOLVED**, once the Clerk has confirmed that the current lease exiting period is 3 months,that theParish Council retains the lease of Rivermead Nature Reserve.

1. **CALENDAR OF MEETINGS**

During the meeting, a question was raised regarding the necessity of convening all finance meetings. It was clarified that the discretion to cancel such meetings lies with the Chair, and if there is no pending business, cancellation is an option. Furthermore, there was a query regarding the August and December hiatus, and it was explained that this practice is standard and customary in Parish Councils.

The Council **RESOLVED** that per appendix B the Council approved the calendar of meetings for the upcoming year.

1. **SOUTHERN WATER LETTER**

Members **NOTED** the response sent by Southern Water in response to the Parish Council emailed on the 31st of July.

1. **ASBESTOS SURVEY & OTHER WORKS FOR SPORTS & SOCIAL CLUB**

The Council **RESOLVED** that an asbestos survey is carried out per the recommendation from Chartered Surveyors Findings Report (£550.00) and **NOTED** expenditure yet to be invoiced (quoted) as follows:

£194.70 – Sauders – To restore hot water to the S&SC.

£420.00 – Vraxis Safety Solutions – Fire Risk Assessment

£480.00 – MWelectrical Services – Critical Electrical Work

1. **REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

The District Community Care Association was recognised for their commendable community work and their current need for funds. They have approached both HDC and our Council seeking financial support. Despite facing cutbacks, they continue to engage with the community actively. There is also a mention of the library charging for the use of facilities by mothers and babies and the association's request for funding. It was also mentioned that the have a banner currently on the library that needs to be removed, it was asked whether this Council had any space for it.

Correspondence was noted regarding the grass length on the bank near the Village Hall, which was deemed unsightly. It had been mentioned to plant thyme in its place, as it is known for its vigorous growth.

These reports were **NOTED** by the committee.

1. **VISON STATEMENT & OBJECTIVES**

The Council **RESOLVED** that per appendix D the Council approve the vison statement & objectives for the upcoming 3.5 years.

1. **PAYMENTS**

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| VIKING | £38.33 |
| DCK ACCOUNTING | £180.00 |
| SAUNDERS SPECALISED SERVIUCES LTD | £194.70 |
| LASER - KENT COUNTY COUNCIL | £111.23 |
| GALLAGHER INSURANCE | £6,356.39 |
| RADIUS UK FUELS | £8.75 |
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***The meeting closed at 9.00pm.***

……………………………………..Chair

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