**HAUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL**

**DRAFT Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 23rd March 2016 2016 at 7.30pm**

**In The Village Hall**

Present: Cllr M Allen (in the Chair), Cllr D Warbrick, Cllr I Sunley, Cllr I Forrester, Cllr T Grattage, Cllr G Anslow, Cllr A Heath

Jayne Cooper, Clerk

Along with SBC Cllr R Sutherland

**Public Open Forum:** A resident of Watery Lane, who had attended the Council meeting in February, asked for an update from the parish council on issues previously raised including flooding in Bradley Lane, the large tree in Watery Lane, defects in Watery Lane and large pot holes. The Clerk responded: she said she had sent corresdponde to the resident following feedback from Staffordshire County Council’s Legal team regarding the cutting back of overgrown vegetation - the issue of the overhanging vegetation is not a maintenance one, it is not a question of repair but would have to be considered an obstruction for highways to take action. This is not a matter for the parish council.

Cllrs had been asked to review the flooding and the Clerk was asked to remind SCC Cllr Winnington that he had agreed to take necessary action to have the broken drains fixed. The Clerk was also asked to request Highways to add Watery Lane to the scheduled maintenance list.

The same resident also informed Council that she had contacted Western Power to contact the owners of the overgrown trees/vegetation and is waiting for a response.

The resident then asked for advice on planning laws in relation to mobile field shelters and how frequently they should be moved. A field shelter had been erected directly behind her property and not moved since mid-December and as animal feed is stored in the shelter, this is causing a vermin issue. SBC Cllr Sutherland agreed to find out more information from Planning Enforcement Officers and respond directly to the resident who also agreed to send Cllr Sutherland and the Clerk photographs of the field shelter.

*Resident left the meeting at 7.55pm*

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| 1 | **To receive apologies and record absences**  Received from Borough Councillor S Leighton and County Cllr M Winnington |  |
| 2 | **To receive any Declarations of Interest**  None received. |  |
| 3 | **To receive and confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd February 2016**  The minutes were proposed, seconded and approved as a true and accurate record. |  |
| 4 | **To receive any reports from Borough and County Councillors**  Cllr Sutherland was asked about the Borough Council’s plans for commemorating The Queen’s 90th birthday. He replied saying parishes had been encouraged to hold events and the Borough would help with The Big Tidy Up providing equipment and other resources. There is no financial support to parishes.  Cllr Sutherland was asked whether parishes would continue to receive the Government Grant with precepts. He replied that parishes would receive the Government grants for a while but it would probably be withdrawn by 2020. Cllr Sutherland also confirmed he had made arrangements to meet with Mr Holt, a Haughton resident, regarding a long standing planning issue about a boundary hedge (as reported to Haughton Parish Council several months ago).  *Cllr Sutherland left the meeting at 8.15pm* |  |
| 5 | **To consider any planning matters**   1. **Planning decisions and notifications of appeals**   **Application 15/23374/REM, 11 houses on Rectory Lane** – it was noted that this application had been resubmitted and is yet to be received by the Clerk although details are on the Borough Councils website that were reviewed by cllrs on-line. It was agreed to devolve powers to the Clerk to respond, once details are received, confirming that the parish councils comments, as submitted previously, remain the same and in addition, Council would recommend, plots 1 and 2 are swapped with plot 5 as this would be less obtrusive as the land slopes away from Rectory Lane. Cllrs also expressed concern that the garage belonging to plot 3 is located away from the house that would create illogical parking of vehicles. | Clerk |
| 6 | **To discuss matters of finance including:**  **a) Accounts for approval**  The Clerk presented accounts for approval for the month of March as follows:    R Mathews Salary £49.61  J Cooper Salary & expenses £287.39  Haughton V/Hall Hall Hire £23.00  HMRC NI & PAYE £302.40  Mr Furber Mole Catcher £130.00  SPCA Cllr Training x 2 £35.00  SPCA Cllrs Guide x 7 £17.50  Village Hall Support Grant £500.00  **TOTAL £1344.90**  The accounts for the month of March 2016 were approved for payment.  **b) To accept the financial statement for March 2016**  The financial statement for the month of March was circulated to cllrs and accepted. A bank reconciliation had been reviewed by Cllr Grattage and minor anomalies found would be discussed with the Clerk and Cllr Sunley before the year end accounts are completed. Councillors were informed that recommended changes (by the National Association of Local Council’s) to Financial Regulations states that a cheque signatory could no longer carry out Bank Reconciliations. Therefore, Cllr Grattage agreed to take responsibility for this in future.   1. **External Audit Changes**   The Clerk gave details of changes to external audit arrangements and that parish councils have the choice to opt out of current arrangements. The implications of this would be Councils would have to appoint an external auditor by 31st December 2016 that must be a registered auditor and qualified to audit local authority accounts as well as convening an independent auditor panel. The Clerk’s recommendation was to remain with current arrangements. It was proposed, seconded and agreed to opt in i.e. continue with current arrangements.  The Clerk confirmed the external audit report had been received for the financial year ending 31st March 2016 and explained the changes to it.   1. **Best Kept Village Bank Account**   It was agreed that a dormant parish council account should be used for Best Kept Village accounts rather than opening a brand new account. The Clerk would progress this with Lloyds Bank. | Cllrs Grattage, Sunley & Clerk  Cllr Grattage  Clerk |
| 7 | **To receive the Clerk’s report including correspondence**  The report had previously been circulated and included all correspondence received in the past month.  Cllrs had received details of the new website and agreed that this could now be launched.  Details of the Civic Amenity Visits for 2016/17 had been received (4th June, 20th August and 14th January) and would be put on the new website.  Arrangements for the Annual Parish Meeting were in hand and the agenda would be posted early in April.  The Clerk’s report was accepted. |  |
| 8 | **To receive reports from councillors on:**  **General Maintenance**   * Cllr Sunley reported a problem with the brook that needs further investigation.   **Park and Football pitch including a request from Stafford Rangers**   * It was proposed, seconded and agreed to accept the offer from Stafford Rangers to pay Council £15 per match and noted Stafford Rangers would line and maintain the pitch. The Clerk to respond to Stafford Rangers confirming Council’s decision and ensuring that they are aware that the pitch must be, at the end of the season, no worse than it is when it is taken on. Clerk to respond.   **Best Kept Village**   * Flyers had been distributed around the village**.** Mr P Lawrence is keen to continue to lead this year’s competition with help from parishioners.   **Highways**   * Some previously reported pot holes are still yet to be repaired. * The flooding near the bus stop on A518, previously inspected by parish councillors and Highways, continues to flood and is being monitored. Clerk to ask for a report from Highways on any work carried out to rectify this.   *Cllr Warbrick arrived at 9.20pm*  **Village Hall**   * To celebrate the Queens 90th birthday a quiz night with a Royal/British theme would be held on 11th June. * A men’s night out is being arranged in October * As the Village Hall is 60 years old in 2017 and event is being planned for 28th January 2017 * The Annual General Meeting is being held on 9th May to which all parish councillors were invited. * The Village Hall would be closed for the first week of the Easter holidays to allow the car park to be resurfaced.   **Allimore Green and Dale Common including tenders for grazing**   * Staffordshire Wildlife Trust had cleared ditches and cut Allimore Green in early March. * No tenders had been received for grazing on Dale Common. It was suggested to speak to the previous tenant for advice on the grazing conditions and possible use of this land.   **War Memorial Project**   * A second quotation had been received from GEM Conservation Limited for £1495 + VAT. The previous quotation was for £2499 * One further quotation from a local company is still awaited. * Quotations would be sent to funders of War Memorials to consider whether a grant could be awarded. Cllrs were reminded that Cllr Winnington had previously agreed to award £500 from his county councillor fund for this project and the parish council had allocated funds in its budget if grant aid was not possible. | Clerk  Clerk |
| 9 | **To consider a parish event to commemorate the Queen’s 90th birthday**  Various suggestions were discussed and it was proposed, seconded and agreed to hold an event on Sunday 12th June, after the weekly church service, consisting of a Big Tidy Up of the village, followed by refreshments in the Village Hall and a bouncy castle on the field and possible a Treasure Hunt for participating children. Bell ringers to be asked to ring the church bells. Cllr Heath agreed to take the lead on this event with help from other councillors. | Cllr Heath |
| 10 | **To discuss Christmas Lights**  Cllrs were informed that verbal complaints are still being made about the Christmas lights and concerns raised by some residents that there is no adequate insurance, inefficient means of registering money collected for charity and lack of safety awareness.  Advice had previously been sought from Staffordshire Parish Council’s Association and The Society of Local Council Clerk’s and both organisations had confirmed the Parish Council has nothing to do with the arrangements of Christmas Lights therefore is in no way responsible for any accident or wrong doing. Based on information previously received it was proposed, seconded and agreed that Haughton Parish Council takes no action. |  |
| 11 | **To receive Chairman’s Announcements**  The Chairman reported that on 12th April he would be attending the annual Liaison Meeting with Staffordshire Parish Council’s Association and Staffordshire County Council. |  |
| 12 | **To agree any future agenda items**  The next meeting would follow the Annual Parish Meeting therefore the agenda would be kept short. |  |
| 13 | **To confirm the date and time of the next meeting**  Monday 25th April 2016 immediately after the Annual Parish meeting that starts at 7pm. |  |

The meeting closed at 10.15pm

Chairman………………………………………. Date……………………………………..