

HAUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer: Jonathan Brumwell

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Minutes of the Meeting of Haughton Parish Council held at Haughton Village Hall at 7.00pm on Monday 23rd October 2023

Present:

Parish Councillors: Ian Sunley (Chair), Michael Allen, Suzanne Beatty, Mark Burgess, Peter Prokopa and Stuart Taylor.

In attendance:

Clerk: Jonathan Brumwell

Borough Councillors Emma Carter and Jack Rose; County Councillor Mark Winnington (from Item 5)

Public Open Forum: No members of the public were present.

1. To receive apologies and accept and record any reasons for absences.

There were no apologies.

2. Declarations of interest

None.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 25th September 2023

The minutes were proposed, seconded and approved as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

4. Items to be taken with the public excluded

There were no items to be taken with the public excluded.

5. Reports from Borough and County Councillors, SPCA, PCSO, Chair, and Clerk

Borough – Cllr Carter informed the Council that the Local Area Plan was being considered by the Borough Council Cabinet. No changes to parish council boundaries had been suggested but there were moves to making the Passivhaus the standard for new developments as well as enhanced EV charging provision. In response to a question Cllr Carter said she thought solar panels may become a required feature of new homes, and the Borough Councillors would take forward the need for separate planning provisions for rural areas.

Cllr Carter also mentioned the official reopening of Stafford Market Square on Saturday 28th October and the wider redevelopment of the town centre including the conversion of the former Co-op building for housing upstairs and covered market downstairs.

Chair – Councillor Sunley informed the Council that the first thermal camera training session had been successfully completed. Councillor Sunley had also spoken with a local farmer regarding works in Grassy Lane (this would be discussed further under Highways). Cllr Sunley informed the Council that he would be attending the SPCA AGM on Monday 30th October.

SPCA – Cllr Allen reported that Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association had appointed a new Heath & Wellbeing Officer, Andy Wheeler, starting from 23rd October. The post is part-funded by Staffordshire County Council. Cllr Allen would be meeting the Chief Executive of SPCA on Wednesday 25th October.

5. Reports from Borough and County Councillors, SPCA, PCSO, Chair, and Clerk cont/...

County – Cllr Winnington reported although there had been serious flooding people had largely managed to cope. Regarding roads Cllr Winnington said an extra £6m had been spent in addition to the £15m of budget provision. He said that the Roadmaster pothole repair system was working very well. In response to questions on Dale Lane Cllr Winnington said that approaches had been made to the land owner.

Village Hall – Cllr Burgess reported that car park resurfacing was nearing completion.

Clerk – the Clerk reported that replacement AED batteries had been purchased. The Clerk also reported that he would be meeting with the internal auditor on Wednesday 1st November.

6. Planning

There were no planning matters at the time the agenda was prepared.

The Clerk informed the Council that after the agenda had been circulated notification of a planning matter under Prior Approval arrangements had been received. Due to the limited timescale details would be circulated to members for individual comments.

7. Financial Report

(a) Expenditure incurred on behalf of the Council under the terms of Financial Regulation 4.1: none.

(b) Bank reconciliation as at 30th September 2023 was approved by Cllr Taylor.

(c) Payments for approval: To approve online payments and payment of direct debits as detailed below:

DESCRIPTION	NET	VAT	GROSS
RoSPA Play Safety	129.50	25.90	155.40
Haughton Village Hall	25.00	0.00	25.00
Mazars LLP – External Audit	210.00	42.00	252.00
J R Landscaping	992.44	198.49	1,190.93
Salaries and Expenses	720.90	4.92	750.41
<u>Direct Debit Payments</u>			
<i>EE Mobile</i>	£12.67	£2.53	£15.20

All payments were approved except the payment to J R Landscaping, payment for which would be considered under Item 9(a).

(d) Income Received:

Stafford Borough Council (precept – second payment) £12,000.00

Lloyds Bank (Lloyds Reserve – interest) £ 4.17

(e) Stafford Railway Building Society – nomination of signatories. The Chairman proposed that the councillors who were existing Lloyds Bank signatories should be approved as signatories for the Stafford Railway Building Society account, with the Clerk as non-approving administration ‘superuser’. Councillor Allen informed the Council he no longer wished to be a signatory and wished to be removed.

RESOLVED that the proposal is approved. The Chairman and Clerk are authorised to make the necessary arrangements to update the signatories for the Stafford Railway Building Society account to Councillors M Burgess, P Prokopa and I Sunley with the Clerk as ‘superuser’.

8. External Auditor’s Report

The Council received the report of the Parish Council’s External Auditors, Mazars LLP. The Council noted the external auditors’ opinion that the information in Section 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had not been met. The Chairman requested it recorded in the minutes that this had been a noteworthy achievement.

9. Highways, public rights of way and related issues

(a)(1) Dale Lane (information only) – this was being dealt with by Highways.

(a)(2) Email received from J R Landscaping. Councillors considered the email received from J R Landscaping regarding work previously done but not invoiced. The Council also noted that it appeared that it was proposed to carry out grass-cutting on Tuesday 24th October although water levels remain very high.

RESOLVED to instruct J R Landscaping not to carry out grass-cutting until the local water table has dropped. The current invoice would not be paid until outstanding issues had been resolved at a face to face meeting with the contractor.

(b) Public Rights of Way: It was proposed that a working party be formed to start works on the brook at Grassy Lane. The Chairman would investigate the possibility of a volunteer providing a mini-digger.

10. Reports from Councillors

(a) Park – Cllr Taylor reported that the memorial plaque had been repaired by the handyman, who had also raised the tree canopy around the basket swing to comply with recommendations in the recent RoSPA report. A new basketball net will be ordered and the missing sign on the basketball court would be obtained from the sign supplier and installed.

(b) Football Pitch – the grass is too long for the pitch to be used currently. The pitch is to be cut and lined once dry enough. The Clerk will contact Stafford Rangers and Gnosall AFC to obtain fixture lists.

11. Updates on projects and action points:

FLIRE5-Xt thermal Imaging Camera – Councillor Training

The first training session had been completed with two councillors plus the Clerk trained in use of the camera. A second training session would be held for the remaining councillors at the Village Hall on Tuesday 31st October at 6.00pm.

Picnic bench – Jim Jarvis Memorial Playing Field

Following a site meeting the 'rainbow' picnic bench will be located in the play area in the gap between the existing benches at the car park end of the enclosure.

Additional Picnic Bench – Jim Jarvis Memorial Playing Field

It had been proposed that a plain picnic bench be purchased to be sited outside the play area in a position aligned with the litter bin near the playing field gate and the teacup roundabout in the play area. The indicative cost is £506.00 (exclusive of VAT).

RESOLVED that the purchase of a second picnic bench to be located at Jim Jarvis Memorial Playing Field at an indicative cost of £506.00 (exclusive of VAT) is approved.

12. Budget 2024/25 - Suggestions

Councillors considered a report containing outline proposals and indicative costs for items and projects for inclusion in the Council's 2024/25 Budget. The following proposals were discussed:

1. Speed Indicator Display Signs: This was considered to be a multi-year project as each SIDS would cost around £2,550 and would also incur maintenance and relocation costs. The proposal would be taken forward for detailed costings to be presented at the November meeting.
2. Replacement planters at Village Gateways: These would be an investment leading to long term savings. Each planter would cost at least £1,000.00. To be taken forward to the November meeting.
3. Footpath 18 – installation of kissing gates: Existing provision in the 2023/24 budget was identified for this project.
4. Updated Parish Maps: These will be looked at by Chairman who has the masters.

Continued...

12. Budget 2024/25 – Suggestions cont/...

5. Defibrillator location signs: following previous debate these will be considered if Council approves signage.

6. Station Road – 40mph speed limit and pedestrian signs: to be taken up at County level with Highways.

13. Stafford Borough Council Planning Application Validation Criteria - Consultation

The Council considered Stafford Borough Council's Planning Application Validation Criteria consultation.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council has no comment to make on the consultation.

14. Future agenda items

The Council noted that future agenda items should be notified to the Clerk by Monday, 20th November 2023.

15. Date and time of next meeting

The Council confirmed the date and time of the next meeting as Monday, 27th November 2023 at 7.00pm.

16. Meeting Close

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.

Chair, 27th November 2023