

HAUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer: Jonathan Brumwell

www.haughton-staffs.org.uk

[Email: clerk@haughtonpc-staffs.org.uk](mailto:clerk@haughtonpc-staffs.org.uk)

Minutes of the Meeting of Haughton Parish Council held at Haughton Village Hall at 7.00pm on Monday 27th November 2023

Present:

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

In attendance:

Clerk: Jonathan Brumwell

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

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

Apologies were received from Cllrs E Carter and M Winnington.

2. Declarations of interest

None.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 23rd October 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

SPCA – Councillor Allen reported that it is intended that the Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association should become a company limited by guarantee. Councillors currently sitting on the SPCA executive would become directors and the SPCA would cease to exist in its current form at the March 2024 meeting. The new company would have nine directors, one for each of the seven districts and two appointed by vote. Cllr Allen also reported that the Chief Executive is conducting whole council training with the emphasis being on face to face, rather than remote, training.

Chair – Councillor Sunley informed the Council that he attended the SPCA AGM on Monday 30th October. Cllr Sunley informed the Council that the Standards Working Group would be called to meet before the January meeting to start the process of reviewing the Council's policies.

Village Hall – Councillor Burgess reported that car park resurfacing had been completed and the hedge at the entrance had also been cut back. Cllr Burgess informed the Council that the Village Hall now has CCTV with recordings being retained for 30 days.

Clerk – the Clerk reported that he met with the internal auditor on Wednesday 1st November for an interim review and there had been no issues identified. The Clerk reported that the Council's desktop PC had been updated and the FLIR software for the thermal imaging camera had been installed meaning that household survey reports could now be produced using the desktop PC.

6. Planning

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

7. Financial Report

(a) Expenditure incurred on behalf of the Council under the terms of Financial Regulation 4.1: none at the time the agenda was prepared. The Clerk reported that it had been necessary to purchase a LED projector at a cost of £133.33 (exclusive of VAT) and that this would be reported at the January meeting.

(b) Bank reconciliation as at 31st October 2023 was to be forwarded to Cllr Taylor.

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

DESCRIPTION	NET	VAT	GROSS
Haughton Village Hall	25.00	0.00	25.00
Parish Online	80.00	16.00	96.00
St Giles Church PCC (Churchyard Maintenance)	500.00	0.00	500.00
J R Landscaping	617.86	123.58	741.44
Salaries and Expenses	1196.75	-5.60	1202.35
<u>Direct Debit Payments</u>			
<i>EE Mobile</i>	£12.67	£2.53	£15.20

(d) Income Received:

Stafford Railway Building Society	£159.56
Lloyds Bank (Lloyds Reserve – interest)	£ 5.00

(e) Stafford Railway Building Society – the approved signatories for the Parish Council's account were requested to complete the signatory documentation at the end of the meeting. At his own request Councillor M Allen he would be removed as a signatory, the new signatories for the Stafford Railway Building Society account being Councillors M Burgess, P Prokopa and I Sunley with the Clerk as 'superuser'.

8. Appointment of the Internal Auditor 2023/24

The Council considered arrangements for the 2023/24 internal audit.

RESOLVED to appoint Mrs K Squires as the Parish Council's internal auditor for the year 2023/24 and approve associated budget provision of £200.00 (no VAT).

9. Highways, public rights of way and related issues including those requiring reporting:

a) Highways including grass cutting

1. Dale Lane: no further information had been received on this issue
2. Meeting with J R Landscaping 22nd November 2023:

Councillor Taylor reported on the meeting held with J R Landscaping via Zoom on Wednesday 22nd November 2023 which was attended by Councillors I Sunley, S Taylor, and the Clerk.

- Invoices – the Council's requirement for itemised invoices was repeated so that we know what has been done and when it has been done. This was especially important to differentiate between contract works and ad hoc work requests.
- Hedge-cutting – this will not be carried out during nesting season but it was agreed that a cut would be completed shortly before nesting season and again shortly after the season had ended. The hedges would be trimmed when necessary during nesting season to maintain access along the footpath and to the telephone kiosk.
- Grass-cutting in wet weather – this would be avoided wherever possible in future.

b) Public Rights of Way – there were no issues to report, although the budget for Public Rights of Way would be discussed later in the meeting.

10. Reports from Councillors

(a) Park – Councillor Sunley informed the Council that further thought would need to be given to the installation of the picnic benches as installing them directly on the grass would probably make it impossible for the grass underneath the benches to be mowed. Options for installation would be presented at the January meeting for discussion.

(b) Football Pitch – Councillor Taylor reported that following the meeting with J R Landscaping the pitch is to be cut and lined once dry enough. One positive result of the delayed cutting was that the goal-mouth areas appear to have recovered.

11. Updates on projects and action points:

FLIRE5-XT thermal Imaging Camera – Councillor Training

The second training session had been completed and councillors were now familiarising themselves with using the thermal camera. The Council's desktop PC was also available for downloading camera images and producing reports.

12. Local Government Services Pay Agreement for 2023

The Council noted the Local Government Services Pay Agreement for 2023, and the increase in the National Minimum Wage from £10.42 to £11.44 from April 2024.

RESOLVED that the Local Government Services Pay Agreement for 2023 is approved and adopted.

13. Suspension of Standing Order 3x

Councillor M Allen proposed that Standing Order 3x be suspended to enable the remainder of the business on the agenda to be transacted.

RESOLVED to suspend Standing Order 3x.

14. Parish Council Tax Base 2024/25

The Council received notification from Stafford Borough Council of the Parish Council Tax Base for 2024/25. This is 456.39 Band D equivalent properties, a slight reduction from the 2023/24 Council Tax Base of 458.85. The Clerk said that this was probably the result of a small increase in the number of residents claiming some form of Council Tax relief such as the single occupant reduction.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council Tax Base for 2024/25 is noted.

15. Draft Budget 2024/25

The Council considered its proposed budget for 2024/25.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council's budget for 2024/25 is £27,160.00 and its total precept requirement is £25,113.00. This represents an increase of 5% or £2.44 for a Band D property, equivalent to less than 5p per week.

16. St Giles Churchyard

The Council considered the payment of the second part of the Parish Council's contribution towards the maintenance of St Giles Churchyard and the Public Right of Way running through it.

RESOLVED that the payment of £500.00 towards the maintenance of St Giles Churchyard and the Public Right of Way is approved.

17. Councillor Training

The Council considered arrangements for members of the Parish Council to attend training courses arranged by Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association at a cost of £30.00 per delegate.

Continued...

17. Councillor Training cont/...

RESOLVED that arrangements are made for newly-appointed councillors to undertake appropriate training at the earliest opportunity and for all councillors to peruse the training opportunities available to them.

18. Delegation of Powers

RESOLVED to delegate powers to the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman until the next Parish Council meeting.

19. Future agenda items

The Council noted that future agenda items should be notified to the Clerk by Monday, 15th January 2024.

20. Date and time of next meeting

The Council confirmed the date and time of the next meeting as Monday, 22nd January 2024 at 7.00pm.

21. Meeting Close

The meeting closed at 9.29pm.

Chair, 22nd January 2024