

SHORNE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 23rd November 2023 at Shorne Village Hall

PRESENT

Mr R Lane (Chairman)
Mr R Theobald
Mr J Bugg
Ms P Clifton
Mr R Hardy
Mr C Rea
Mr T Rochard-Pullen
Mrs S Lindley

APOLOGIES

Mrs D Salmon (Parish Clerk)
Mrs L Williams

45. To receive any declarations of interest for any items on the agenda

None received

46. To consider any items raised by Parishioners in attendance

None in attendance

47. Approval of minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 14th September 2023

The minutes were circulated on 27th September, and a slightly amended version on 15th November 2023. The minutes were approved as a true record.

48. Approval of minutes of the Budget & Finance meeting held on 26th October 2023

The minutes were circulated on 9th November. The minutes were approved as a true record.

49. Proposed amendment to 2024/25 budget and precept recommendation

The Budget & Finance Meeting on 26th October recommended a budget of £40,160, including an additional £10,000 for special grants, and to maintain the precept at £46,410. Mr Lane has written to Members expressing his concern that this is not justifiable, and will lead to a further increase in our general reserves. Our general reserves are already higher than the recommended levels given in the NALC Good Councillors' Guide to Finance & Transparency, and this has been noted by the internal and external auditors. Mr Lane has therefore tabled a proposed amendment:

“That the ‘special grants’ of £10,000 in the budget is changed to ‘unspecified capital expenditure’ of £14,500, increasing the budget to £44,660, and that the precept is reduced by 3.77% to £44,660. It will be incumbent on Members to identify specific expenditure to the cost of £14,500, and any additional expenditure incurred or additional grants made should be met from the general reserves.”

The proposed amendment was seconded by Ms Clifton. The amendment was discussed and put to a vote. The amendment was carried.

50. Approval of 2024/25 budget and precept

The budget and precept of £44,660 was approved. The Clerk was authorised to submit the precept requirement to GBC.

51. Review and approval of grants and donations for 2023/24

A request for a donation from Gravesham Citizens' Advice Bureau has been identified that was not considered at the Budget & Finance meeting on 26th October. Members were requested to consider whether to make a donation, in addition to the grants and donations agreed at the Budget & Finance meeting. It was agreed to make the additional donation.

A discussion followed as to whether we need a more formal policy and application method for awarding grants and donations.

52. To approve the updated asset register

Mr Lane has circulated an updated asset register on 21st August and 17th October and proposed that this is approved. This was approved. It is proposed that this is reviewed in April each year prior to renewing insurance.

53. To review the Finance Report

Mrs Salmon had previously circulated the spreadsheet of all payments received and made during September and October. The balance brought forward from the last reconciliation was £22,569.08. The balance reconciled and carried forward on 31st October 2023 is £17,725.09. The payments made were reviewed and approved.

31/08/2023	B/Fwd Reconciled Bank Balance			£22,569.08
Date	Supplier	Net	VAT	Total
14/09/2023	Vodafone Ltd	-£19.46	-£3.89	-£23.35
20/09/2023	Gozzett Tree Surgery	£470.00	£94.00	£564.00
28/09/2023	Clerk Salary	£1,208.20	£0.00	£1,208.20
28/09/2023	Postage	£1.10	£0.00	£1.10
28/09/2023	Clerk Expenses	£51.00	£0.00	£51.00
28/09/2023	Air Landline (telephone)	£9.99	£2.00	£11.99
28/09/2023	Colin Lawrence	£80.00	£0.00	£80.00
28/09/2023	KALC	£140.00	£28.00	£168.00
	Total for September	£1,940.83	£120.11	£2,060.94
30/09/2023	C/fwd Reconciled Bank Balance			£20,508.14

Date	Supplier	Net	VAT	Total
12/10/2023	Street Lighting Supplies Ltd	£133.90	£26.78	£160.68
12/10/2023	Shorne Village Hall	£56.00	£0.00	£56.00
13/10/2023	KALC	-£70.00	-£14.00	-£84.00
20/10/2023	Gozzett Tree Surgery	£905.00	£181.00	£1,086.00
20/10/2023	Mazars	£315.00	£63.00	£378.00
26/10/2023	HMRC	£174.93	£0.00	£174.93
28/10/2023	Clerk Expenses	£51.00	£0.00	£51.00
28/10/2023	Diane Salmon Clerk	£948.45	£0.00	£948.45
28/10/2023	Air Landline (telephone)	£9.99	£2.00	£11.99
	Total for October	£2,524.27	£258.78	£2,783.05
30/10/2023	C/fwd Reconciled Bank Balance			£17,725.09

Following approval at the Finance Committee meeting on 26th October, the 'Scribe' dedicated accounting software package is now set up and running. Mrs Salmon has entered all transactions from the beginning of the financial year and it will now replace the previously used spreadsheet.

54. Interim report from the Planning & Highways Committee

Mrs Lindley reported that GBC are failing to make us aware of Planning Appeals.

Lower Thames Crossing Specific Hearings are continuing next week which Mrs Lindley will attend. Also due for submission are our latest SoCG and PADSs Tracker documents. Mrs Lindley raised concern that the Section 106 Community Funding was not being targeted to benefit the locations which are most affected.

Network Rail has advised that the work on the footbridge at Shornemead Crossing has been delayed until the Spring, which is the next opportunity for closing the railway.

A virtual meeting with KCC was held on 13th November to discuss the Highways Improvement Plan (HIP). KCC will only investigate one or two priorities per year and will only review the HIP once per year, which is an unsatisfactory situation. The discussion included issues in Hayes Terrace and in Green Farm Lane. The automated traffic control data and telematic data shows that there is good compliance with the 30mph limit in Green Farm Lane, and that average speeds and 85th percentile speeds are well below 30 mph. Members have therefore agreed not to pursue traffic calming or a reduction in the 30 mph speed limit. However, there continues to be concern regarding HGVs disregarding the weight limit. KCC has refused to permit "Unsuitable for HGVs" signage, but is looking into the possibility of a survey using ANPR cameras to identify offending vehicles. In response to correspondence from a Green Farm Lane resident, a letter setting out the situation has been approved by Members and has been sent.

55. Interim report from the Footpaths, Properties & Greens Committee

Following the remedial work carried out by NPC Tree Surgery in Shorne Common Rough in accordance with the Invicta Arboriculturalist tree survey report, NPC sent a report detailing further trees suffering from Ash Dieback and which present a risk of falling into the highway and/or damaging power and telephone lines. A quote has been requested from NPC for the necessary remedial work and an application will be submitted to GBC for Tree Work in a Conservation Area.

The Invicta Arboricultural report for Shorne Common has been circulated to Members. It was noted that the report identifies work needed to 3 mature oak trees including the felling of one. It was agreed that Ms Clifton and Mr Rea would visit the site to view how this will impact the area overall. Ms Clifton will obtain quotes for the work and send an application to GBC.

55.1 Approval of fence repairs at Crabbles Bottom

Ms Clifton had previously circulated a quote from Hoist Fencing for repairs to the main post and rails, as well as repairs to the fence at the entrance to 'The Den' to discourage improper activities. This was approved by Members

55.2 Approval of small works contractor(s)

It was agreed that Ms Clifton would contact Mr A Day who had declared an interest in carrying out small works. The most urgent job is to repair the roundabout at the Play Area.

55.3 Update on car park

In accordance with the decision at the Budget & Finance Meeting on 26th October to delegate authority to Mr Bugg to select a preferred bidder for the resurfacing work, Messrs Bugg and Lane met with Lee and Son Ltd and selected the company as preferred bidder, and the work is scheduled to take place on 7th & 8th December. Members approved the instruction to proceed.

Three quotations have been received for the replacement of the concrete & pebble borders with block paving, and a paper has been circulated. It is proposed to instruct Hooper & Sons Ltd to proceed with the work. This was approved.

55.4 Update on bus shelters

There was concern that there had been little contact with the contractor since the order was placed on 15th September and we still did not have a start date. Mr Lane spoke to the contractor on 16th November. He advised that his current job has taken longer than expected partly due to adverse weather, but he expects to complete the current job this week. He expects to be able to start initial preparation work from last weekend and to commence the work properly as soon as the current job is complete. It was noted that most of the ivy has now been cleared from the North side bus shelter.

Mr Rea has been in contact with UK Power Networks regarding electricity for lighting. It is understood that the bus shelters may still be connected and therefore the only necessary work would be to reconnect.

Mr Rea will contact the contractor to advise him that there may be live cables.

56. To receive any report from Borough Councillor(s)

No report received.

57. To receive any report from County Councillor(s)

No report received.

58. To note the meetings schedule for 2024

The schedule of meetings for 2024 has been circulated. Members are requested to affix these to noticeboards.

59. Correspondence requiring action (to be circulated before the meeting)

- (a) The Council noted that it has received a copy of the accounts from Page's Educational Foundation charity, and that no action is required.
- (b) An email has been received from a resident who has concerns about a Planning Appeal for No 3 Park Cottages. Mrs Lindley will respond as required.

60. General matters raised by Members for discussion

- (a) Mr Lane requested Members to review the risk register, as this will need to be approved at the next meeting on 11th January.
- (b) Ms Clifton reported that all the remaining mugs and coins had now been donated to various groups and societies.

61. Matters discussed in private under item 14 of the Council's Standing Orders

Mr Theobald reported that he has had correspondence with the previous Clerk regarding payment entitlements. The previous Clerk has advised that she will seek legal advice before responding.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20:41.

Signed Mr Lane:..... Dated:.....