

Minutes of Hopesay Parish Council

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Parish Council Meeting Tuesday 22nd June 2020, held remotely via ZOOM, 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs. R. Loynes, J Bowers, J Cole, I Alebon, J Manifold.

In attendance: 2 members of the public.

Clerk: Mrs M Gwilliam.

The Chairman ensured everyone could see and be seen, hear and be heard, then introduced the meeting, and summarised procedure for virtual / remote meetings.

1. Apologies for Absence: Cllr T Record, Unitary Cllrs L Chapman and D Evans.

2. Declarations of i) Disclosable Pecuniary and ii) Personal Interests, and written requests for dispensations: Cllrs J Bowers and J Cole both declared an interest in item 8.

3. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting 26th May 2020: The minutes were approved, and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as an accurate record. **Resolved.**

4. Public Participation: A member of the public spoke in objection to amended planning application 20/01288/VAR. The revised plans were no better in terms of the various concerns, in fact the footprint was now larger. The proposed dwellings would still overlook, overshadow and cause a loss of privacy to adjacent existing dwellings, exacerbated by the rise in ground levels on the site.

5. Planning:

New application: 20/02227/TCA, Rectory Cottage, Hopesay; to reduce to approx 2m in height 2 mature Ash trees and replant 1 taxodium distichum within Hopesay Conservation area. Council discussed the application. The Tree Warden had expressed concerns about felling healthy ash trees as these native trees were under threat, and also the inappropriate planting of a non-native conifer in a Conservation Area and an AONB. Councillors agreed. Council **resolved** to object to the application.

Re-consultation on amended plans: 20/01288/VAR, proposed residential development, nr Broome Farm Barns. Councillors expressed ongoing concerns about drainage and sewage issues, the size and proximity of the properties to existing dwellings, and the overlooking etc issues. Council **resolved** to object to the amended application and request the application be called in and a site visit undertaken.

Enforcement 18/06112/ENF, Tadymor Farm, Closed.

6. Unitary Councillor Report: None.

7. Updates on matters from previous minutes / Clerk's report: The Clerk reported that a Shropshire Council officer had made a site visit to Taddymoor Farm, and recorded most of the existing hedges in the local area between Taddymoor Farm and Round Oak. The owner had been written to asking for information on the sections of hedgerow removed by the quarry. Depending on the outcome a hedgerow replacement notice would be issued. Shropshire Council may also serve a hedgerow replacement notice for the hedge grubbed up and not replaced in front of Round Oak Farm.

Regarding Council's waste bin for Aston Green, the Clerk is waiting to be contacted by Shropshire Council's bin emptying contractors.

8. Community Shop and Village Hall lease: Council **resolved** to defer this item.

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9. Arbor Tree and enclosure: Council discussed the sap leakage from an old pruning point, and it was suggested that Mr Roy Lancaster who had connections locally and knew the Arbor Tree be contacted for advice. **Resolved.** The Clerk would ask the Arbor Tree Committee for contact details.

Council invited Mr P Sweetland, who was effectively project managing the enclosure improvements, to give an update. The seating around the tree and the kicker boards had now been installed and looked good. The seating was not yet finished. The left post by the entrance had been removed, and the post by the river repaired. The seat supports should be received and fitted soon, the flagpoles would follow, and Mr Sweetland said that a metal circular band would be fitted to the poles to strengthen and minimise stress on the oak structure.

Project costings were currently £2,932 for the woodworking of which £2,632 would be funded from Council's budget and £300 would be funded by the Community Shop. The Marstons had paid out over £2,400 for the oak wood supplied, and this was a donation. Council would send a letter thanking them in due course. Further anticipated costs of £1,134 + VAT for the metal working were expected. It was suggested that if Council's budget had sufficient left after all known costs were paid, the enclosure could benefit from a new picnic table and/or more gravel. This would be revisited once costs were finalised.

Council thanked Mr Sweetland for all his hard work and commitment, and praised his management of the works.

10. Aston Green: The Chairman summarised recent progress. The new mowing regime agreed with the grass cutting contractor on Aston Green and round the Lower Field is generating positive comments from users. The replacement interpretation board had been fixed to the plinth close to the archway, and the lectern was now installed near the reed-bed. Slabs had been laid in the two gateways between green and lower field, and installed and fixing holes drilled ready for waste the bin, which would be positioned once commissioning and the collection process commences. The Chairman and Mr J Champion had carried out most of this work together, and Mr Champion is also carrying out some tree work in his spare time. As a result, Aston Green is looking great and Council is indebted to Mr Champion for his time and expertise.

Topographic Survey: The Chairman had discussed a deep-water sign and a risk assessment for the reed-bed area with Mr Champion who had advised that a topographic survey of the whole green would give a very clear indication of the levels on the green and in and around the reed-bed such as inlet and outfall depth. It would make risk assessments much easier; identify and plot drainage infrastructures, specimen trees, fence lines and conditions, and would be of great benefit for many years in providing a detailed specification to new contractors for grass cutting and other works.

Councillors were unsure that the potential expense of such a survey could be justified, but agreed that obtaining quotes would aid further discussion. Council **resolved** to obtain competitive quotes for a topographic survey.

Car Boot Sale request: Council had received a request to hold a car boot sale on Aston Green. Councillors discussed the proposed event and agreed to defer a decision until further information and a booking form had been received.

11. Correspondence: new draft Code of Conduct consultation; Shropshire Council had informed Hopesay Parish Council that the electricity charge for lighting this year would be £15.88p + VAT; and various temporary road closures including: Clun bridge 18th June – 3rd July; Long Lane 13th – 14th July; Broome Road Aston on Clun 12th August; Long Lane crossing 27th Sept 1pm – 8pm.

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12. Finance: The RFO presented the Finance Report, informed Council of bank balances to 31st May, and that the interest rate would decrease from 0.1% to 0.01% from 24 July 2020.

INVOICES to PAY:

Between meetings, cheque 100656 for £36.72p (voucher 15) was issued to the Chairman in reimbursement of expenses (Aston Green, wood and materials, wheelbarrow tyre repairs)

Voucher	Name	for	Budget (from)	£amount	Cheque
15	R Loynes	Expenses – Aston Green	Aston Green 30.60	36.72 (VAT 6.12)	100656
16	Meg Gwilliam	Net salary, & home working expenses allowance	Salary 423.65 Office admin 26.00	449.65	SO
17	HMRC	PAYE tax on salary	Salary tax	72.60	100657
18	R Loynes	Zoom monthly subscription	Publicity & comms 11.99	14.39 inc VAT	100658
19	Bernard Townson	Internal audit fee	Audit	100,00	100659
20	Meg Gwilliam	Postage & mileage	Office admin	10.30	100660
21	Ditton Services	Grass cutting monthly instalment	Aston Green 203	243.60 (VAT 40.60)	SO

Council accepted the Finance Report, and authorised the lists of payments. Resolved.

13. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR): The Clerk & RFO introduced the item:

1 The Accounting Statements, having been duly prepared and signed by the RFO, had been submitted with the rest of the AGAR and all supplementary documentation to the Internal Auditor.

A bank reconciliation to 31st March 2020 and a summary of Receipts, Payments, and Reserves 2019/20 which had both been issued last month had been again circulated as they contained important year-end figures *which councillors had been asked to check*. Councillors confirmed that they had done so. The year-end balance carried forward (confirmed by councillors) was **£15,968.35p**, equating to **£15,969** in boxes 7 & 8 of the AGAR Section 2.

Councillors had also been issued with the receipts and payments pages of the Council's Cashbook, and had checked the payments total of £12,158.86 (**£12,159** rounded up) and the receipts total of £14,887.67 (**£14,888** rounded up) and having added boxes 4 and 6, and then boxes 2 and 3, in Section 2, confirmed that the Cashbook figures matched the figures in the AGAR.

Council **authorised** the Chairman to sign the RFO's bank reconciliation. **Resolved.**

2.1 The Internal Auditor had now completed his audit, and the documents including the Internal Audit Report and his detailed report letter had been returned. Council formally received and **noted** the Internal Auditors Report. **Resolved.**

The Internal Auditor had praised the Clerk for her professionalism and hard work, and had commended councillors for their time and diligence. The Chairman expressed thanks to the Clerk and RFO for all her work and dedication, and to Cllr Manifold for his leadership on the Risk Register.

2.2 Councillors had studied the assertions in Section 1 of the AGAR, and Council agreed that it could answer yes to all of them. Council **approved** the Annual Governance Statement. **Resolved.**

2.3 Councillors having previously checked the figures, Council then **approved** the Accounting Statements (Section 2). **Resolved.**

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2.4 Council then agreed that it could certify itself as exempt from External Audit, and **approved** the Certificate of Exemption. **Resolved**.

3 Council then **authorised** the Chairman and the Clerk to sign the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1), and the Chairman to sign the Accounting Statements (Section 2). **Resolved**.

4 The RFO informed Council that the dates set for the exercise of public rights (to inspect the accounts) were **29/06/20 – 07/08/20**. The Statutory notice would be displayed on the Council's website with all the AGAR documents by Thursday 25th June. Council **noted** the dates. **Resolved**.

5 Council **authorised** the Chairman and the Clerk to sign the Certificate of Exemption. **Resolved**.

6 Council **authorised** the Clerk to send the Certificate of Exemption to the External Auditor. **Resolved**.

All other required documentation would also be posted on the Council's website shortly.

14. Councillor Checks: The Clerk had suggested a new regime of quarterly councillor checks, to be carried out at a convenient time and date each quarter not immediately prior to a meeting as this imposed unnecessary stress on councillors and the clerk. The clerk would book a room for this at the village hall each quarter, once restrictions allowed. Council agreed to adopt a quarterly procedure for councillor checks as described. **Resolved**.

15. Risk Register rolling review: Cllr Manifold advised that risks 1 & 6 would be reviewed in July and that Council should also consider in July what the Covid-19 impact had been on electors having access to Council and Council's ability to represent and consult electors.

16. Training: Council approved the attendance of Cllr Jennie Cole at the SALC online Community Funding training on 30th July 2020, at a cost of £30. **Resolved**.

17. Equal Opportunities Policy: Council adopted the Equal Opportunities Policy previously circulated to all councillors. **Resolved**.

18. Meetings attended: None, but the Chairman had attended the Employment Relationships training session.

19. Reports of Parishioners and parish issues: None

20 Next Meeting: Monday 20th July 2020.

The meeting closed at 8.27pm.

Chairman Signed:

Date: