

ELDERSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Eldersfield Parish Council held on Tuesday 9th May 2023 at Eldersfield Lawn School, commencing at 7.20 p.m.

Present: Mrs C Joseph (Chairman), Mrs D E Holt (Vice-Chairman), Mr M. Mrs W Burr, Mrs T A Owen

In Attendance: County Councillor Tom Wells
District Mrs Jennie Watkins

Members of the Public: -

[Mr M K Barton, Mrs W Burr, Mrs D E Holt, Mrs C Joseph, and Mrs T A Owen signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office in the presence of the Responsible Financial Officer and took their seats as councillors.]

1. To elect a Chairman

Mrs Joseph announced that she was willing to stand for election as Chairman; no other candidate presented himself. It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Mrs Joseph be Chairman.

2. To elect a Vice Chairman

Mrs Holt announced that she was willing to stand for election as Vice-Chairman; no other candidate presented himself. It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Mrs Holt be Vice Chairman.

3. Apologies for absence

None

4. Members' interests

None

5. Adoption of the Minutes of the previous meeting

The draft Minutes of the meeting held on 7th March 2023 were accepted as a true record of that meeting and were signed as such by the Chairman of the meeting.

6. Matters arising

None

7. Report from District and County Councillors

The County Councillor, Tom Wells, had presented his report during the Parish Meeting and had no further comments to make.

The Chairman then welcomed the new District Councillor, Mrs Jennie Watkins and congratulated her on her election.

Mrs Watkins introduced herself as a parishioner, living in Bridge End, and someone keen to do whatever she could to improve the Parish and the lives of those living in it. She looked forward to attending future meetings of the Council and to contributing to them.

Councillors then instructed the Clerk to express to Mrs Bronwen Behan, the retiring District Councillor, their thanks for the many years of service which she had performed to the clear and evident advantage of the community, and to pass to her their good wishes for the future.

8. Public Comment

Mr Andrew Holt offered to the Council the thanks of the PCC for the grant made to the PCC at Easter. It had helped fund a community event which proved very popular: some 60 people had attended. He was impressed by the warmth and number of comments made to him in the following days and weeks.

He then raised the matter of the request for a grant to assist with the marquee. The marquee had been an invaluable asset. It had not only enabled the PCC to raise over £7,000 in the less than two years in which the PCC had had possession of it but it has also permitted the holding of a number of large public events which had had the effect of bringing the community together. In his views, it was a community asset of enormous value.

He reported, however, that damage had been sustained to some of the poles. The marquee was long and heavy and raising it was a challenge: unfortunately one not always met successfully. The PCC had therefore submitted a request for a grant for £948. With this grant, the PCC would not only purchase replacement parts but would also buy additional parts which would enable the marquee to be erected in two discrete sections. This flexibility would enable the marquee to be used for a wider range of events and would also make erection safer.

Mr Holt said that he was aware of the comments of the Clerk and said that it would be perfectly acceptable for the proposed purchases to be made in the name of the Council.

[The matter was disposed of at Item 14.]

9. Report from the Parish Footpaths Officer

The Parish Footpaths Officer, Simone Bullen, advised the meeting that there had been no significant change over the winter in the issues relating to footpaths. There were now 58 logged issues but she was pleased to report that there were no assessments outstanding. She expected progress to start in clearing these issues.

She was asked whether by law the public footpaths were required to be able to accommodate large dogs. She replied that there were legal stipulations in respect of wheelchairs and access for the disabled but there were no requirements relating to dogs.

10. Road Safety

The Chairman reported that she was awaiting bars for the white gates recently installed as also for a replacement sign.

She understood that repairs were required to the hard standing on the west side of the road opposite the School; that the cost was £42,000 and that Worcestershire County Council had decided to take no action for the present.

Various councillors reported having received complaints from parishioners about excessive speed by cars. A dog and a cat had recently been killed.

The means of combating this were debated.

The Chairman said that she had become aware that Vehicle Activated Signs (which display an approaching vehicle's speed), which it was thought could not be installed in roads with a speed limit of greater than 40 mph, were in fact in operation on some 50 mph roads. She would investigate and report at a later meeting.

11. Tree planting project: to receive a report

Cllr Mrs Burr advised the meeting that the Jubilee tree planting project was now complete. A small number of the trees had been planted on Berth Hill, a point from which they would be visible to a large number of parishioners. The question of installing a plaque had not yet been decided.

12. Defibrillator and Training

Cllr Mrs Owen reported that no further action had been taken with respect to training but given that there was a possibility that such training might be organised by the Butcher's Arms (see Item 24 below) coordination would be appropriate.

No potential site for the installation of a further defibrillator had yet been identified.

13. Lengthsman

Council noted the report from the Clerk on the services provided by the Lengthsman for which invoices had been submitted as follows: March £248; April £256.

14. Grant request: Parochial Church Council

Councillors were aware of the comments made by Mr Holt under item 8 above.

There was a lengthy debate during which differing views emerged but it was eventually **RESOLVED** that the Council purchase the parts requested by the PCC for the repair of the marquee and for the improvement of its flexibility of operation in an amount not exceeding £948, such amount representing the cost of materials, delivery and VAT.

The Clerk was instructed to request that the PCC (a) provide a breakdown of the costs between repair and improvement and (b) confirm that the PCC, being liable for the operation of the marquee in accordance with the terms of the Contract of Bailment dated August 2021, take all appropriate safety measures and precautions.

15. CALC

After a short discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the Council renew its membership of Worcestershire CALC for the year commencing 1st April 2022 at a cost of £385.74.

16. Insurance

Councillors reviewed the policy offered by Zurich Municipal and agreed to renew it on the terms offered.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council effect insurance with Zurich Municipal at a premium of £196.00.

17. Accounts: Adoption of Accounts

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council approve and adopt as the Accounts of the Council for the Financial Year ended 31st March 2023 the draft accounts circulated prior to the meeting.

18. Accounts: Internal Auditor for the Financial Year ended 31st March 2021

The Council noted the Internal Auditor's report.

19. Accounts: AGAR Certificate of Exemption

It was **RESOLVED** that the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Certificate of Exemption for the Financial Year ended 31st March 2023.

20. Accounts: AGAR Section 1

It was **RESOLVED** that the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Section 1 for the Financial Year ended 31st March 2023 as circulated by the Clerk prior to the meeting.

21. Accounts: AGAR Section 2

It was **RESOLVED** that the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Section 2 for the Financial Year ended 31st March 2023 as circulated by the Clerk prior to the meeting.

22. Investment Policy

It was **RESOLVED** that, in accordance with item 15 of the minutes of the meeting of 11th May 2006, the Council's investment policy remain that all funds be maintained in a current account and that this Policy be reviewed annually.

23. Risk Assessment

Councillors considered carefully the Council's Risk Assessment and decided that no amendment was required.

24. Grant Request: Butcher's Arms

[Dealt with immediately after item 8]

Councillors welcomed Mrs Jo-Anne Block's proposal to install a defibrillator at the Butcher's Arms and had no difficulty in congratulating on her initiative. They noted that she had in mind to arrange for the provision of training to those who wished it.

It was **RESOLVED** that a grant of £650 be made to The Butchers Block (Eldersfield) Ltd to assist in defraying the cost of acquiring and installing a defibrillator at the Butcher's Arms, Eldersfield.

25. Authorisation of Disbursements

It was **RESOLVED** that the following disbursements be made for goods and services:

£209.27	J L Gabbott
£136.40	HMRC
£504.00	Jeremy Moore (£248 Mar; £256 Apr)
£407.81	CALC
£196.00	Zurich Municipal
£650.00	The Butcher's Block Ltd
£948.00	Dancover

26. Future Meetings

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Council be held on Tuesday, 4th July 2023, commencing at 7.00 p.m. at Eldersfield Lawn School.

27. Any other business

None

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.05 p.m.

JLG
10.5.23