

Honeybourne Parish Council

Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council

Held as a virtual meeting via the internet at 7:15 pm on Tuesday 11th August 2020.

Members present

Cllrs: Cathryn Steward, vice-Chairman
Trevor Askew, Andy Attridge, Jonathan Barnes, Colin Clear, Graham Clelland,
Chris Gear, Matt Henson, Heath Jobes, Sylvia Matthews, Graham Taylor

In attendance: Gill Lungley, Locum Clerk
Four members of the public.

As the Chairman had resigned his post, the vice-Chairman, Cllr Cathryn Steward opened the meeting in the Chair. Cllr Graham Taylor hosted the virtual meeting.

321. Election of Chairman

Cllr Graham Clelland had resigned the post on 01/08/2020. Cllr Cathryn Steward, as vice-Chairman chaired this item, thanked Cllr Clelland for having undertaken the role and his commitment to the council and asked for nominations to the post. There was one nominaton. On the proposition of Cllr Matt Henson, seconded by Cllr Graham Clelland **IT WAS AGREED** to elect Cllr Trevor Askew to the role of Chairman and he henceforth proceeded to chair the meeting, thanking Cllr Clelland for his work in the role.

322. To note the resignation of Mr John Stedman from his position as Clerk to the Council with immediate effect from 01/08/2020.

This was noted.

323. Apologies: None to record.

324. Disclosures of Interests

Members were reminded to declare and disclose any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items of business and to declare any other Disclosable Interests in items on the agenda and their nature, if necessary.

Disclosable Pecuniary: Cllr G Clelland declared an interest in matters relating to the ex-clerk Mr Stedman and would leave the meeting when matters relating to Mr Stedman were to be discussed at agenda item 12.

Other Interests: None declared

325. Open Forum

Members of the public were asked if they wished to comment or ask questions in any item on the agenda but none wished to do so.

326. Election of a Senior Parish Council Member to support the Chairman and vice-Chairman

Cllr Cathryn Steward explained that dealing with the extra duties required of her since the resignation of both the Clerk and the Chairman at the same time, she felt there was a need to share the role with a senior member of the Council. Cllr Steward also explained that she had intended to step down from the role of vice-Chairman, which was the next item for consideration on the agenda, but that she had since asked for that item to be withdrawn.

When put to the vote, 8 members were in favour of the motion. The Chairman asked for nominations to take on that role and when put to the vote

IT WAS AGREED to appoint Cllr Matt Henson to the role of Senior Support Member.

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327. With the agreement of the council, the agenda's running order was changed so that agenda item 8 'To consider engaging a locum Clerk until the Clerk's vacancy is filled' was considered with agenda item 12 towards the end of the meeting.

328. To note Cllr Matt Henson has been agreed as the Data Protection Officer until such time as a new Clerk is employed and the registration has been completed with ICO.

This was noted.

329. To consider purchasing computer hardware and software to be owned by the Parish Council

Items necessary for a Clerk to do their job, such as a laptop computer, printer and cloud storage were required for the new Clerk, such items to cost in the region of £1,400. It was believed the cost would be covered in the council's budget.

IT WAS AGREED by the majority of those voting to purchase sufficient hardware and software to be owned by the Council but used by the Clerk for council business. This would be one of the first tasks for the new Clerk to take on and the items would be added to the council's existing insurance cover.

330. To consider the retrieval of the council documents from the ex-Clerk as contained in the Clerk's contract of employment

Mr Stedman had made eight boxes of paperwork available for collection by Cllr Matt Henson who was now storing them on his office premises prior to handing on to the new Clerk upon appointment. One further box would be provided in due course following eventual retrieval from Mr Stedman's storage. In addition Mr Stedman is forwarding email correspondence to the Honeybourne Clerk's email address.

331. To consider safe storage of council documents and files deposited by the ex-Clerk
As noted above, minute no. 330.

332. The Council resolved to move into confidential session to discuss personal matters relating to staffing arrangements, as allowed by way of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and the members of the public were asked to leave the meeting

333. To consider engaging a locum Clerk until the clerk's vacancy is filled

Two offers had been received from locum Clerks to take on the role until the Clerk's vacancy has been filled. Members were advised the job was being advertised via local county associations but no end-date to the advert had been allocated. Members were keen to follow a standard appointment procedure and that as any locum Clerk might want to also apply for the permanent position, then it would be appropriate for a Staffing Committee to be appointed with support from a separate advisor / officer. It was noted a Staffing Committee already exists, having been appointed in May 2019 consisting of Cllrs A Attridge, G Clelland and G Taylor and this committee would take the matter forward but would not be involved in the appointment of a locum Clerk. It was agreed in the meantime that Cllrs T Askew and H Jobses would undertake to interview the two people who had offered to take on the role of locum Clerk and arrange to hire the most suitable candidate.

In addition it was agreed that as the council's DPO, Cllr M Henson would be the central point of correspondence relating to documents for the appointment process.

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Prior to discussion of the next matter, having declared a pecuniary interest Cllr G Clelland left the meeting temporarily.

334. To consider the ex-Clerk's request for a fee payment equal to a month's salary for the transition of council property and data.

Following relevant discussion

IT WAS AGREED by the majority of those voting, to pay Mr Stedman a month's salary, ie from 1st to 31st August 2020.

Regarding Mr Stedman's offer to retain the Responsible Financial Officer role **IT WAS AGREED** by the majority of those voting to ask the locum Clerk to take on the role.

Cllr G Clelland returned to the meeting.

Through the Chairman, Cllr C Gear asked if the council would consider another matter that was of such importance that it could not wait until the next meeting, as follows:

335. Village Hall Landscaping

The landscaping around the village hall was part of the build contract. As such there is a planting scheme in place much of it dating back to the original planning permission. It was decided to remove the landscaping from the build contract primarily due to the delay in the completion date caused by COVID-19 restrictions. The delay meant that the optimum season for planting had been missed and so in order to close the build contract, the landscaping was removed from the contract.

The land around the Village Hall belongs to the PC and will therefore be maintained by the PC's contractor. Does the Parish Council want to take responsibility or have a role in any or all of the tasks of :

- creating a landscaping plan,
- managing the tendering process and
- the landscaping?

Or is the PC happy to leave all tasks to the discretion of the Village Hall Committee?

It was generally thought best to continue as originally agreed and therefore leave this matter to the discretion of the Village Hall Committee.

336. Matters Raised by Members for the next meeting agenda

With reference to land off Dudley Road and overhanging of vegetation obscuring street lighting and such like, the Chairman would contact the County Council Division member to seek permission for the Lengthsman to address the issue.

337. Meeting Dates:

The next council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 8th September 2020 to start at 7.15pm via video link.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.20pm.

Chairman _____

Date _____