



FINSTALL PARISH COUNCIL

Ref: 05/23 pages 1284 - 1287

MINUTES of the ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday 25th May 2023, 7.00 pm at St Godwald's Church Hall, Finstall

Councillors present: Cllr Will Taylor, in the chair for the first item of business
Cllr Norman Hewer
Cllr Malcolm Molloy
Cllr Christine Orr-Cooper
Cllr Rosemarie Ryan
Cllr Caroline Spencer

In attendance: County Councillor Kit Taylor, Bromsgrove East division
District Councillor Peter Whittaker, Tardebigge ward
Parish Footpath Officer, Brian Lucas
Gill Lungley, Support Officer (Acting Clerk and RFO)

1. Election of Chairman

It was unanimously **AGREED** to elect Cllr Will Taylor to the chair for the civic year 2023/24. Proposed Cllr Spencer, seconded Cllr Hewer.
Cllr Taylor signed his declaration of acceptance of office of chair.

2. Completion of all members' declaration of acceptance of office forms.

The Acting Clerk confirmed all members' present had completed their declaration of acceptance of office.
On the matter of the absent member, Cllr Wendy Molloy, it was **AGREED** to allow deferral of completion of the declaration until the next meeting of this council.

3. Apologies for absence.

Cllr Wendy Molloy had submitted apologies for absence.

4. Declarations of interest.

Cllr Will Taylor was prepared to declare an interest in agenda item 7(ix)d relating to confirmation of the Chairman's Allowance, however as the amount had already been specified in the budget he was not required to leave the meeting when it was discussed.

5. Dispensation requests.

There were no requests for dispensation.

6. Election of vice-Chairman

It was unanimously **AGREED** to elect Cllr Christine Orr-Cooper to the position of vice-Chairman for the civic year 2023/24. Proposed Cllr Molloy, seconded Cllr Spencer.

7. Annual Business

The Acting Clerk explained this agenda was based on the Standing Orders dated 2009 found on the council's website at short notice, and was rather out of date.

i. To appoint representatives to outside bodies.

It was **AGREED** to appoint Cllr M and Cllr W Molloy to be the parish council's representatives on the village hall committee.

- ii. **To appoint committees and sub-committees.**
Not required.
- iii. **To consider the payment of any subscriptions** falling to be paid annually.
It was **AGREED** to continue to subscribe to Worcestershire County Association of Local Councils (WorcsCALC) and to support the clerk's membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC).
- iv. **To inspect any deeds and trust investments** in custody of the Council as required.
Not required.
- v. **To read and consider the minutes of the previous council meeting** and after consideration to approve the signature of those minutes by the person presiding as a correct record.
After amendment to minute no. 3 where it had been Cllr Molloy, not Cllr Ryan, who declared an interest in agenda item 10, it was **AGREED** to approve the minutes of the council meeting held 4th April 2023 and they were signed by the Chairman.
- vi. **To deal with business expressly required by statute to be done.**
 - a) **Appointment of Internal Auditor.**
It was **AGREED** to appoint DKE Audit to audit the 2022/23 accounts. The internal audit would cost £250.
 - b) **Declaration of exemption from external audit.**
It was **AGREED** to declare exemption from external audit; total receipts were £10,215 and total payments were £11,649, both under the exemption threshold of £25,000.
 - c) **Approval of the Annual Governance Statement.**
It was **AGREED** to approve the Annual Governance Statement. A copy had been circulated to all members in advance of the meeting and the Chairman read out each assertion to which the council agreed its response.
 - d) **Approval of the Annual Accounting Statements.**
It was **AGREED** to approve the Annual Accounting Statements, a copy of which had been circulated to all members in advance of the meeting.
- vii. **To dispose of business, if any, remaining from the last meeting.**
None.
- viii. **To receive such communications as the person presiding may wish to lay before the Council.**

1. Brian Lucas was invited to speak to:

The Finstall Parish Path Warden Annual Report for the year ending 30 April 2023

Activities undertaken in the past year

- **Strimmed vegetation on almost all footpaths in the Parish twice** during the summer (in May and July) using equipment provided by Worcestershire County Council (one footpath, from Upper Gambolds Lane to Patchett's Farm, was skipped due to lack of time).
- **Replaced a signpost** (on Dusthouse Lane) that had rotted at the base and fallen down.
- **Removed a fallen tree** that had blocked a footpath (the footpath branching off of the bridleway between Dusthouse Lane and Alcester Road).
- **Cut back brambles and other overgrowth six times** on multiple footpaths using hand tools, especially around stiles and kissing gates and particularly along the footpath that runs from Finstall Road to St Godwald's Road beside the railway line.
- **Litter picking seven times**, five times on the footpaths adjacent to the railway (from Finstall Road to St Godwalds Road) and behind the Rugby Club and twice in other areas.
- **Replaced waymarking arrows** as needed.

Members asked questions relating to barbed wire on top of fencing on path no. 504 alongside the rugby ground. Mr Lucas was thanked for his presentation and hard work and he left the meeting.

- ix. **To answer questions from Councillors.**
None.
- x. **To receive and consider reports and minutes of committees.**
None.
- xi. **To receive and consider resolutions or recommendations** in the order in which they have been notified:
- a) To adopt the new Members' Code of Conduct.**
Members had received a copy of the updated Code of Conduct; good practice is for the parish council's code to be the same as that adopted by the District Council which is providing training to all members on two occasions in July. It was **AGREED** to adopt the new Code of Conduct.
- b) Review and update of Standing Orders.**
It was **AGREED** to update the council's Standing Orders, as circulated to members prior to the meeting.
- c) Review and update of Financial Regulations.**
The updated copy had not been previously circulated and it was therefore agreed to defer approval to the next meeting.
- d) Approval of the Chairman's allowance for 2023/24.**
The Chairman's allowance has been included in the budget for 2023/24 at £660. It was pointed out that the allowance is subject to PAYE when paid in one lump sum and suggested that HMRC should be contacted with regard to a dispensation allowance.
- e) Review and approve bank mandate arrangements.**
It was noted six of the seven members are signatories to the bank account and cheques are signed by any three of those six signatories.
It was **AGREED** to write to the bank to notify them of change of address for sending out the bank statements.
- f) Review existing direct debit or standing order payments.**
There is one direct debit payment which is for the payroll company. It was **AGREED** to notify them of the recent staff changes.
- g) Agree dates of ordinary council meetings for 2023-24.**
It was **AGREED** to hold regular council meetings on the first Tuesday of every month except in August when there is no meeting.
- xii. **To authorise the sealing of documents.**
None.
- xiii. **If necessary, to authorise the signing of orders for payment.**
See minute no. 9 below.
- xiv. **Any other business specified in the summons.**

8. Public Forum

- a) No members of the public were present.
- b) County and District council representatives:
- i. Coun. Whittaker, Tardebigge ward:
- now has responsibility for Environmental Services and will pick up on issues regarding footpath maintenance, poor gutter cleaning and flooding.
- ii. Coun. Taylor, Bromsgrove East division:
- Aware of drainage problems due to so many being blocked.
 - Has provided division funding to local schools and Bromsgrove Hockey Club.
 - Has requested data cables for the Alcester Road to look into the speeding issues there.

9. Approval of bills for payment.

The schedule of bills was presented for payment approval:

Receipts to note					
	R#	From	Reason	Amount	
	R1	Bromsgrove DC	Precept, 1st half	4,355.00	
	R2	Worcestershire CC	Lengthsman	560.25	
	R3	Worcestershire CC	Lengthsman	391.50	
Payments for approval					
V#	chq no	To	Reason	Gross amount	VAT paid
1	100976	Bromsgrove Printing	Finstall Focus newsletter	48.00	-
2	100977	Playsafety Ltd	annual play equipment check	90.00	15.00
3	100978	IDG Garden Services	Bin emptying x 5 months	378.00	-
4	100979	S Keys	Lengthsman service, March 23	391.50	-
5	100980	Worcestershire CALC	Annual subscription	491.97	74.71
6	100981	BHIB Ltd	Annual insurance premium	531.78	-
7	100982	Bromsgrove DC	Lease, Penmanor Rec	5.00	-
8	100983	Black Cat Computers	Laptop power cable	50.00	-
9	DD	Three Counties Payroll	Payroll services inc. end of year	52.68	8.78
10	100984	Finstall Village Hall	Hall hire for year 2022	260.00	-

Three members signed the cheques; two members signed the authorisation schedule.

10. To comment on any planning consultations notified by the Planning Authority.

No notifications had been received.

There was discussion about automatic notification or whether the council must check the weekly planning lists to find out if any applications relate to the parish. The Acting Clerk would seek clarity from the Planning Authority.

11. To determine staffing arrangements.

The meeting was not closed to the public.

Members considered how to approach the need to appoint a new clerk.

It was **AGREED** to temporarily appoint Mrs Gill Lungley to the position of Acting Clerk / Support Officer but the detail had yet to be confirmed. The Chairman and vice-Chairman would meet with the Acting Clerk to discuss terms of appointment and return to the next council meeting for approval.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

Finstall Parish Council will next meet on Tuesday 6th June at 7pm, at Finstall Village Hall, Alcester Road.

This meeting ended at 8.30pm.

Signed as a true record:

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Chairman, Finstall Parish Council

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Date