

SHUSTOKE PARISH COUNCIL

Monday 13th August 2018 at 7.15pm
Shustoke Village Hall

ORDINARY MEETING

DRAFT MINUTES (Ver 140818)

PRESENT:- Councillor Bridgette Chandler (Chair), Councillors Rebecca Pugh and Sue Taylor. Also in attendance - David Jeans (Clerk) + 5 members of the public. New Councillors Gaynor Daw, Rachel Gough and Lynn Pugh joined existing Councillors from Item 7.

1. Village Hall Evacuation Procedures

1.1 The Chair outlined the hall evacuation procedures.

2. Apologies

2.1 All Councillors were present.

3. Declarations of Interest

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting (14th May 2018)

4.1 The minutes were agreed as a true record and duly signed by the Chair.

5. Matters arising

5.1 There were no matters arising.

6. Contributions from Public (Maximum 30 minutes)

6.1 A member of the public queried the position of the village shop. The Chair advised that this was a substantive agenda item but summarised the current situation as outlined in the Council's update published on the website and on the Village notice board on 4th August.

7. Co-option of Additional Councillors

7.1 The Clerk advised that public notice had been given of vacancies for the position of Parish Councillor. No elector had made application for an election, and the Council was therefore in the position to co-opt new Councillors.

7.2 Applications had been received from the following:-

Gaynor DAW
Rachel GOUGH
Lynn PUGH

7.3 A proposal to co-opt Gaynor Daw was made by Councillor Chandler, seconded by Councillor Taylor. On a vote, Gaynor Daw was unanimously elected to the Council.

7.4 A proposal to co-opt Rachel Gough was made by Councillor Chandler, seconded by Councillor Pugh. On a vote, Rachel Gough was unanimously elected to the Council.

7.5 A proposal to co-opt Lynn Pugh was made by Councillor Chandler, seconded by Councillor Taylor. On a vote, Lynn Pugh was unanimously elected to the Council.

7.6 The Chair welcomed the new Councillors, and Councillors Daw, Gough and L Pugh immediately took up their posts.

7.7 The Chair advised that now the Council was at full strength, she would like to work with colleagues to identify relevant skills and experience, and to establish individual portfolios and/or sub-Committees to facilitate the development and introduction of a wide range of community initiatives.

Action - Chair

8. Financial Report

8.1 The Clerk presented the interim financial report dated 4th August 2018 which showed current spend against agreed budgets. The Council remained in a healthy financial position, but there would be unknown additional costs associated with changes relating to the village hall – a later agenda item. In addition, a small fee (£35) had been required to register the Council with the Information Commissioner's Office. This had not been anticipated and the budget head was therefore overspent by 3%.

- 8.2 He advised that in addition to repayment of 2017/18 VAT (£761), HMRC had also refunded VAT payments for 2015/16 and 2016/17 (total £1,067).
- 8.3 The Clerk presented a schedule of payments made since the last meeting and on a proposal by Councillor Pugh, seconded by Councillor Chandler the schedule was agreed and signed by the Chair and Councillor Pugh.
- 8.4 The Clerk advised that notice of termination of Shustoke Village Hall Committee Limited had been received after the 2018/19 Council budget had been devised and agreed. There were likely to be significant hall expenses which would now need to be paid by the Council rather than SVHCLtd. The 2018/19 budget included an allocation of £1,900 for ‘Trust administration and legal costs’ – included in anticipation of the Council’s work / legal advice associated with establishing a formal contract with SVHCLtd. This requirement had evolved into the need for the Council to take on full responsibility for the hall, and the Clerk asked that the budget category be amended to ‘Village Hall & Trust’ to allow hall - related invoices to be properly paid within the Council’s Financial Regulations.

Action - Clerk

- 8.5 On a proposal by Councillor Daw, seconded by Councillor Chandler, this was agreed by all Councillors.
- 8.6 A third bank signatory was required and it was agreed this would be Councillor R Pugh. The Clerk would arrange for the necessary forms to be signed.

Action - Clerk

9. Progress Report - 2017/18 Audit

- 9.1 The Clerk had reported the outcome of the internal audit of the 2017/18 accounts at the previous meeting, and confirmed that all deficiencies identified in that audit had now been fully addressed.
- 9.2 The period of availability for public examination of the financial papers expired on 27th July, and no enquiries had been made.
- 9.3 The documents required by the external auditor had been submitted and no queries had been raised to date.
- 9.4 The Clerk advised that the co-operative of local parish clerks which undertook the 2017/18 internal audits had proposed an interim audit session on 26th September 2018 and the Council were asked to approve the additional audit

opportunity. Councillor Chandler proposed the additional audit should take place, seconded by Councillor Gough and agreed by Councillors present.

Action - Clerk

10. Planning Matters

10.1 The Clerk advised new Councillors that in view of the limited time available to comment upon applications, the Clerk circulated electronic copies to Councillors as received. Should the Council wish to submit comments, an extraordinary meeting would be arranged if a routine meeting was not due. There had been no proposals from Councillors to submit comments on any application since the last meeting.

11. Horticultural Services

11.1 The Chair explained that weather conditions at the start of summer had been such that the contractor had been unable to complete the agreed work, and a number of complaints had been received from residents. The Chair and Clerk had met with the contractor and the required work around the Village had subsequently been completed fairly promptly, thereafter. Updates for residents had been provided on the website and in Connecting Four.

11.2 Councillor Taylor proposed that a further grass cut was now appropriate and the Clerk was asked to contact the Contractor.

Action - Clerk

11.3 Councillor Gough outlined the history of recent tree planting within the Village and the availability of grants for new trees. Councillor Gough undertook to survey the Village and provide recommendations to the Council.

Action – Councillor Gough

11.4 Councillor Chandler raised the condition of the Village Pound. The control of vegetation around the Pound was not included in the current Horticultural Services contract and it was agreed it should be added to the proposed contract when quotes were sought for 2019.

Action - Clerk

11.5 Councillor Chandler felt that more colour was needed in the Village planters. She had secured a source of plants and proposed a public ‘planting group’ to undertake the work. This was agreed and would form part of the programme of work for a new Sub-Committee.

Action - Chair

12. Play Area and Recreation Ground

- 12.1 Councillors had previously agreed to seek quotes for repairs to the play equipment and to the car park. Quotes had been received from two companies with whom the Council had conducted business but the Clerk had not received a third quote from any of the several companies he had contacted.
- 12.2 The Clerk advised that the Council's Financial Regulations permitted selection of one of two quotes (rather than three) under certain circumstances:-
11.1 (a) Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that these regulations shall not apply to contracts(iv) for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the Council;
- 12.3 One of the companies currently held a contract with the Council.
- 12.4 The Clerk also advised that the Regulations specified:-
11.1(j) The Council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest of any tender, quote or estimate.
- 12.5 The Chair suggested separate consideration of work to the play area and repairs to the car park, since the play area work could be postponed pending further strategic discussion of longer term and substantial improvements to the play area.
- 12.6 Councillor Daw advised that the poor state of the car park had led to parents dropping off children at the school parking on local roads, causing congestion. She added that local police officers had agreed to monitor the situation.
- 12.7 Following further discussion, Councillors Chandler proposed acceptance of the Fairways quote. This was seconded by Councillor Daw and agreed by all present. It was agreed that the work would be publicised, highlighting that the Council had paid for the work for the benefit of villagers.

Action – Clerk

13. Village Hall and Shop

- 13.1 The Chair reported that the remaining director of Shustoke Village Hall Committee Limited, the private company which had operated the village shop and managed the village hall since 2012, had given notice of its termination of operations with effect from 15th October 2018.
- 13.2 The village hall and land were held in Trust in perpetuity. The Parish Councillors were the Trustees and were meeting regularly to manage the departure of SVHCLtd and to determine how best to manage the village hall

from October. They were also looking at possible options for continuing a village shop and tea room. Updates would be provided on the website and in Connecting Four.

13.3 The Chair confirmed the Council would take responsibility for hall bookings from 15th October pending more permanent arrangements being established.

13.4 Councillors discussed the situation and highlighted the loss of a shop to local villagers who were unable to travel far. Councillor R Pugh highlighted that although the current shop would close, there may be opportunities for a new shop. Councillor Chandler explained the ‘Honesty Shop’ facility in Coleshill which worked extremely well, and this might be an option for Shustoke, post – October 15th.

14. Website

14.1 The Clerk reported that regular updates had been made to the website, including news, items of community interest, recent minutes, financial information and audit documents.

14.2 Details of website ‘hits’ were now available and these showed an inconsistent trend from 21 in May 2018, 82 in June, and 36 in July, albeit the total number of different individuals accessing the site remained low at 19.

14.3 Councillor Daw raised the confusion of the old website appearing in searches for Shustoke. The Clerk explained the efforts made to delete that website but the website provider had either ceased trading or was being wholly uncooperative. He undertook to renew efforts to have the old site removed.

14.4 Councillor Gough proposed that the Council consider a Facebook Group facility, explaining the benefits derivable, and responding to the privacy and security concerns raised by other Councillors. Councillor R Pugh felt that the timing was right for a Facebook Group – with new Councillors etc. Councillor Chandler expressed some concerns but agreed that the Council should look at the feasibility and operation of such a facility. This would therefore form part of the work of one of the new Sub-Committees / portfolios.

Action - Chair

15. Reports from County and Borough Councillors

15.1 No County nor Borough Councillors were present.

16. Reports from Parish Councillors

16.1 Councillor Gough queried the Council's involvement in the Thomas Hunchback Society, the purposes of which she outlined. It was agreed that the Council should seek to be involved in such local groups and this should be considered as one of the community engagement initiatives to be considered by a new Sub-Committee/Portfolio holder.

Action - Chair

17. Relevant Correspondence

17.1 NALC AGM

17.1.1 Councillors had previously examined the programme of events and agreed that a Councillor would not attend the 2018 event.

17.2 Fencing Wilkinson Way

17.2.1 A Resident in Wilkinson Way had queried whether the Council was responsible for maintaining the fencing bordering the recreation ground. She had also asked whether all or part of the 'rough' ground adjacent to Wilkinson Way and the school was available for purchase.

17.2.2 The Clerk had obtained copies of the deeds and maps of both the house in question and the recreation ground, but responsibility for fencing was not mentioned.

17.2.3 He had also contacted the builder Laing but they had sold out to Taylor Wimpey who had since advised that, given the length of time elapsed, relevant papers had now been destroyed. The Clerk advised that in the absence of any evidence the Council had an obligation for maintenance, the Clerk should advise the resident that fencing was the responsibility of individual householders. This was agreed by Councillors.

Action Clerk

17.2.4 Councillors also confirmed that the recreation ground was held in trust and it was not currently appropriate to sell off parts of the land.

17.3 British National Ploughing Championships 2018 - Austrey

17.3.1 The Clerk had received a letter from the Society of Ploughmen requesting publicity for the national ploughing completion on 13th / 14th October 2018. It was agreed that details should be publicised on the website.

Action - Clerk

The Meeting closed at 8.35pm