

Final DRAFT – For approval - Hannington Parish Council, – Minutes of *Quarterly Meeting*:  
Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2023.

**Date and time of Meeting:** 7.00pm, Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2023

**Present:** Chair, Cllr. Alex Lowrie (AL),  
Cllr. Jon Whitfield (JW)  
Cllr. Nick Joslin (NJ)  
Cllr. Pat Coneley (PT)  
Cllr. Judy Henry (JH) (in the capacity of Cllr. for the Quarterly Meeting, only).

**Apologies:** None received.

**Clerk:** Sue Wright

**Members of the Public:** Two.

**May 2023, Quarterly Meeting.**

**1. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest.**

All Parish Council members are present. No apologies received from the borough councillors. In lieu of attendance, Cllr. Rhydian Vaughan had sent a written report to update on his work, which SW had prior circulated by email. SW confirmed the declarations of interest to be up to date – and nothing additional was being made for the purposes of the quarterly meeting.

*Action point: SW/AL to reach out to Borough Councillors in respect of future meetings.*

**2. Draft Minutes of the Meeting held; 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

AL noted one addition to the draft minutes, which was to include a copy of the Action Plan (which was referenced but not appended). For those new Cllrs. present, AL explained that the Action Plan was put in place last year by our Internal Auditor, (AL handed out a printed copy to the new members), noting that the red text denoted the status of action points as at February 2023 and the blue text, the status of the action points as at March 2023. The reason for the actions relates to historic resourcing issues and work to rectify is ongoing. AL further noted that we expect the number of action points from this year's audit to be much reduced. Those members present who attended the 7<sup>th</sup> March meeting (AL and JW), otherwise confirmed the minutes to be a true record of the meeting and commended them to the other members present. Minutes approved. *Action point: SW to add a copy of the updated Action Plan to the parish council website.*

**3. Co-opting of New Council Member**

AL explained that a Casual Vacancy on the council had arisen, after the sad passing of Cllr. Oliver Larminie, earlier this year. Note: As the Casual Vacancy had arisen within 6 months of elections to the Parish (which were held on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023), there had been no need to issue a separate notice or hold a by-election regarding the vacant seat and as only two of the three vacant seats were filled during the election process, the Council was able to co-opt a third member, to fill the remaining seat. AL introduced Judy Henry (JH) to the meeting who kindly volunteered to fill the vacant position, noting that her addition to the council completed our geographic representation (Ibworth). Seconded by JW and unanimously approved by all members present. JH was therefore formally invited to join the council for the 2023/2024 electoral year. SW completed the required Declaration of Pecuniary Interest and Acceptance forms.

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As an aside, AL noted to all members that technically if a member fails to attend council on three consecutive occasions, they are deemed to have resigned.

**4. Open Session**

In a change to the published agenda, AL moved the 'open session' to agenda item 4, in order to give the members of the public (MoP) in attendance, an opportunity to speak earlier in the evening.

Village Green & Traffic:

- MoP: raised safety concerns, regarding occasional, speeding traffic in the village in the proximity of the Green, reporting that they had seen several cars/vans/farm vehicles travelling at speed, when there had been young children playing on the Green (both unsupervised and supervised). MoP concerned that this presented a safety risk and enquired about the actions the Parish Council could potentially take to raise awareness and/or reduce speeding.
- PC: commented that a traffic survey (usually required as a pre-cursor to changing a speed limit), had been organised several years earlier in response to the same concerns and that the outcome had shown no persistent speeding through the village, (on the basis that the survey reports an average of the speed of vehicles passing through) – and the overall average had been below 30mph. Changing the speed limit to '20 is plenty' through the village would certainly require a new survey.
- MoP also requested Members to look at obtaining signs for all entry points into the village, which would urge drivers to be cautious, for example 'Caution Children at Play'.

*Action: Members agreed to investigate available options with BDBC and the Borough Cllrs and report back at the next quarterly meeting in September.*

**Village Green – Mowing & Maintenance**

- MoP requested clarification on invoicing by the business responsible for the mowing of the Village Green and whether VAT should be included or not. Members confirmed that all invoices should be inclusive of VAT (where VAT is chargeable).
- MoP expressed concern that parts of the Green appeared to be 'sinking' in the areas which historically had been ponds; (two small ponds were originally part of the Village Green, but were filled in – many years ago). Members commented that while settling of the ground over time was normal and that a small area of the Green had flooded for a few hours following recent heavy rainfall; they did not consider there to be a serious problem with the Green. Members agreed to look at the dipped area which had flooded, as part of an overall assessment of the condition of the Green, ahead of an asset review and in particular, in advance of repairs which are pending to the grassed corners of the Green, (which have become worn and damaged as a result of recent building work around the Green and farm vehicles entering and exiting the farm).

There were no further questions from MoP and AL closed the Open Session.

5. (Agenda Item 4) -

**Policy Review**

- a. **Website** – SW confirmed that a 'holding statement' has been posted to the website, pending completion of legacy work and other necessary updates; which includes a comprehensive review of all (many out-dated), policies and procedures on the website. Much of the work relates to a number of the action points, highlighted during the 2022/23 Internal audit, and the work to update the website would continue across the year. Work

on creating updated versions of all Council policies and procedures, (including Council Standing Orders), has begun.

**b. Audit Preparations for 2023**

- AL reported on the arrangements for the Internal Audit for 2023 and tabled an AGAR exemption form, for approval ( - form was approved by all Members during the meeting), and confirmed that this would be submitted. (AL to sign the certificate – JW to sign as RFO). Copies of the final accounts for the year, together with a copy of the AGAR exemption must be available for public scrutiny and will be posted to the website in due course.
  - AL circulated an example of the cashbook and explained (for the benefit of new members) that the cashbook and bank statements are reconciled every quarter (v budget & bank statement), an action point which has also been highlighted by the Internal Audit, action plan.
  - SW to pick up the responsibilities of RFO going forwards. SW will need to continue using her own IT equipment as the previous Parish Clerk has still not returned the parish laptop. Consideration may need to be given to sending a formal legal letter to progress recovery of parish-owned equipment. NJ could potentially visit the former clerk’s address in Devon to collect it. *Action: AL to review options and report back.*
- c. IT & Security** – AL confirmed that new member email addresses for Parish business, had been requested and should be set up soon. *Action: AL confirmed he would follow up with Jan Hertz – who continues to help the council with its IT and security arrangements.*

**6. Finance**

- a. VAT Refund:** AL confirmed this would be initiated via the HMRC web site. Reclaim has not been started yet – but would aim to have it progressed by the next quarterly meeting. *Action point AL/SW to commence reclaim.*
- b. Banking arrangements** - Jon Whitfield’s approval from Lloyds as a signatory has been received – and as per the above in in ‘Agenda Item 8’ on page one of these minutes, the parish clerk would be added as an additional signatory, in due course. *Action: AL to add SW as a signatory.*
- c. Cash On account** – the parish council cash reserve of £14,000 is currently in an account, which is not earning interest. *Action: AL to propose some options on interest bearing accounts (with immediate notice) for reserve funds.*
- d. Payments for approval** – The new Parish Clerk’s recent appointment is awaiting the conclusion of various employee and pension-systems set-up before payments via payroll are able to start and hence the Clerk’s payment for Q2 2023 is to be a manual payment, (via cheque or cash transfer). Members approved payment. *Action: AL/JW to action payment (either by cheque or transfer).*
- e. Coronation reserve.** Michael’s field have asked for some assistance in funding the ‘coronation oaks’ being planted. Requested amount is anticipated to be £400.00. Members present confirmed they are happy to approve such request and AL/JW/SW to authorise the payment, when it is requested.

**7. Roads and Footpaths (Agenda Item 6)**

See page 1 of these minutes. PC volunteered to take on the role of Footpaths Representative – and will report back on any findings at the next quarterly meeting in September. SW commented that County Councillor Rhydian Vaughan had circulated a recent report on road potholes in the county and additional funds which were being made available to expedite their repair. *Action: SW to place a copy of the report on the website.*

**8. Open Spaces (Agenda Item 7)**

See issues discussed in the Open Session on pages 2 and 3 above. No additional matters were raised.

**9. Police Matters (Agenda Item 8)**

Members noted that it had been a long time since the police or a PCSO has attended a parish council meeting and in light of recent reports on the village WhatsApp group, of an increase in thefts from outbuildings across the parish, AL/SW to re-engage with the village police representative and invite them to attend the next meeting in September. *Action: AL/SW to follow-up.*

**10. Borough Councillor's report. (Agenda Item 9)**

No contact had yet been received from the newly elected councillors for the Borough. Action: *AL/SW to contact BDBC and invite them to the next meeting.*

**11. County Councillor's report.**

A written report was received and circulated prior to the meeting, in lieu of RV attending. The report has also been posted to the Parish Website.

**12. AOB.**

No other matters were arising.

**13. Members confirmed the dates of next meetings:**

HPC Quarterly meeting – 10th October 2023

HPC Quarterly meeting - 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023

Ends.