

Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 30th January 2023 at 7.30pm in Hadnall Village Hall

23/013 REGISTER OF ATTENDANCE and APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Present: Cllrs John Harrison (Chairman), Barry Bell, Andy Brisbourne, Nigel Clifford, Neil Duxbury, Harmesh Jassel, Andrew Marston, Sarah Parker.

Clerk: Alison Utting

Also: 14 members of the public.

23/014 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – None.

23/015 STATEMENT FROM CHAIRMAN

This statement is attached in full as a separate document.

23/016 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

A resident stated that she was fully in favour of the £40K CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) money being used for recreation facilities for older children but wondered how much longer they would have to wait. The Chairman replied that, unavoidably, the pandemic had delayed this matter but that also lack of available land was an issue. This might be solved should another housing development be permitted under Shropshire Council's new (pending) Local Plan. In the meantime, the Chairman reassured the resident that SC are understanding of the fact that the CIL funds may not be spent within the usual deadline. The Clerk also clarified that CIL funds must be spent on capital expenditure for the benefit of the community and cannot be used for revenue expenditure.

Another resident raised some concerns about the probable site of this housing development, but Cllr Bell explained that the site selection is out of our hands and also that the Council would continue to raise these concerns as and when any planning application is submitted.

A resident suggested that the Council could profitably move the £42K earmarked reserves into a different account to gain interest. The Chairman agreed that this could be a sensible option and that the Council would investigate it. However, it was pointed out that any such move (and related income) would be likely to impact the next year's budget, rather than 2023-24.

A resident publicly thanked the councillors for all their hard work. She stated that, having been present at the meeting on 9th January, she felt fully informed about the decision-making process at that meeting. She encouraged other residents to attend the meetings of the Parish Council regularly as she felt you could learn so much from being present during discussions and decision-making.

Another resident brought up a suggestion he has made previously about re-opening Hadnall railway station (in the light of Baschurch achieving this). The Chairman said that this will definitely be up for discussion in Hadnall's Parish Plan consultation process which is being created at the moment (volunteers welcome). He pointed out that many other budgetary issues – such as grounds maintenance, lighting, etc. – will also be part of that consultation. The current Parish Plan has informed the decisions of the parish council and the renewed Parish Plan will do the same for the future. The Chairman also highlighted that the system has changed and that CIL money is no longer automatically paid to parish councils, but that the parish council will have to apply for funding for specific projects – which again, will be informed by the wishes of residents as expressed in the Parish Plan.

Cllr Marston asked the members of the public present whether they had any arguments for or against the proposed budget. One resident pointed out that many people are facing rising living costs without any pay rise. Another highlighted the fact that residents of Abbot Drive have to pay maintenance charges on top of their Council Tax and Cllr Bell agreed that this is the case for other parts of the village too. However, no-one present voiced opposition or support with regard to the proposed budget – simply a wish that the Council would bear residents' hardships in mind when making their decisions.

Cllr Clifford pointed out that Council had made a mistake in not publishing budget and precept documents 3 clear days before last meeting and stated that he felt the

budget had been pushed through without proper discussion. (See also Chairman's statement).

23/017 MINUTES

It was agreed that the Chairman should sign the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 9th January 2023 as a true and correct record. It was noted that the figure of 5.99% (SC proposed precept increase) reported in item 23/006(a) was corrected to 4.99% following the meeting.

23/018 MOTION TO TEMPORARILY SUSPEND STANDING ORDER 7a in order to progress to the remaining agenda items. Prop: BB. Sec: ND. Passed nem.con.

23/019 MOTION TO RESCIND ITEMS 23/010(c) and 23/010(d) (budget and precept decisions, 9th January 2023). Prop: NC. Sec: ND. Resolved by majority.

23/020 FINANCE

a) Council discussed the draft **budget** for 2023-24. Some amendments proposed by Cllr Clifford were discussed. The amount budgeted for Grounds Maintenance was discussed, but it was agreed that funds should be in place to cover not only the renewal of the Grounds Maintenance contract but also to meet the probable expense of necessary maintenance at The Ease and the land at the entrance to Wedgefields. Cllr Clifford suggested removing the Chairman's Allowance (which is used for the Annual Community Meeting, etc.) but others disagreed. During the budget discussions, Cllr Clifford raised matters relating to the Clerk's contract of employment. He was asked to refrain from discussing such matters in a public forum but to bring them to the Staffing Committee (of which he is a member). Despite this request, Cllr Clifford continued to repeatedly bring up employment matters and went on to suggest that the Clerk be laid off in order to save money. At this point, it was proposed by Cllr Parker that each line of the budget be voted upon individually (Sec: AB). However, Cllr Marston then stated that he had given the proposed budget full consideration and would be voting to accept every line without amendment. Following his statement, five other councillors also stated that they would also be voting this way. In the light of this, a new proposal was tabled: That the whole budget be accepted in its entirety without amendment. (Prop: SP.

Sec: BB). This was passed by a clear majority (7:1). Cllr Clifford wished to record that he was unhappy with the way the budget had been debated and decided.

- b) In order to meet the needs of the agreed budget and to replenish general reserves to the recommended level, Council agreed to request a **precept** of £14631 (Prop: BB. Sec: HJ), representing an increase of £3.59 per year for the average household (10.3%). This was passed by clear majority (7:1) An alternative proposal to cap the precept increase at 4.99% was proposed by Cllr Clifford but not seconded.

The meeting closed at 9pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

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