

HUNTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 11th April 2024 in Huntington Community Centre commencing at 19.25pm.

PARTICIPANTS: Councillors J Newman (Chairman), C Benton (Vice Chairperson), B Lester, R Bailey, P Wetton, J Ashley, S Tunas Bana, M Tym, (Mrs) D Davies, D Silvester, and M Thompson

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs L McClymont (Clerk), Mr D Wheatley (Finance Officer), and 1 members of the public.

58/24) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs(Mrs) P Graham and Cllr David Williams – County Councillor.

Noted

59/24) CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND ANY OTHER AGENCIES PRESENT

The Chairman took members through his written report that had been circulated prior to the meeting. Members accepted the report as presented.

Noted

60/24) POLICE REPORT

There was no Police representative in attendance, a written report had not been received. Members were reminded that the Parish Council will only receive a report quarterly going forward and they will all be in the format as presented.

Members felt it was unfortunate that there was no Police representative to explain to members the new style report.

Noted

61/24) COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT - CLLR DAVID WILLIAMS

Cllr Williams was not in attendance and had not provided a written report regarding the on-going activity from the County Council.

Noted

62/24) DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORT

Cllr Ashley took members through his written report which had been circulated prior to the meeting. Members accepted the report as written.

Noted

63/24) MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON THE 14th MARCH 2024.

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 14th March 24 had been circulated for members consideration. Cllr Tunas Bana proposed that the minutes be approved and signed as a true and accurate copy. This was seconded by Cllr Lester and all members unanimously agreed.

Resolved

The minutes of the Parish Council held on 14th March 24 were approved as a true record of the meetings and were signed by the Chairman.

64/24) MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising that would not be covered by an agenda item.

Noted.

65/24) FINANCE

a) Finance Statement

Salaries for April 2024	£ 5,112.46	
NEST Pensions - April	£ 181.22	
Cropper Grounds Maintenance (March)	£ 672.49	
GE Collis (Toilet seat & WBP)	£ 33.17	
Hygienic Waste (Sanitary Unit)	£ 299.40	
H.Caulfield (phone)	£ 5.00	
Dales of Cannock (balance of Comm. Centre consumables)	£ 189.83	
Simon Higgeson (Tree Felling Littleton Leisure Park)	£ 3,750.00	
GSS Security & Electrical (Midlands Ltd) (intruder alarm service)	£ 240.00	
TOTAL	£ 10,483.57	

DIRECT DEBITS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST MEETING

Coopers Waste	£ 84.00	
SEFE (Gas)	£ 351.11	
BT (Internet)	£ 54.18	
Microsoft (365 subscription)	£ 101.16	
Pennon Water Services (water)	£ 173.52	
TOTAL	£ 763.97	

INCOME FOR MONTH

Doctors Surgery Rent	£ 2,542.00	
Community Centre Association (contribution to staff wages)	£ 10,497.09	
SEFE (Electricity refund)	£ 5,141.27	
TOTAL	£ 18,180.36	

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

CURRENT ACCOUNT BALANCE	£ 30,004.99	
LESS PAYMENTS AGREED	£ 10,483.57	
LESS OUTSTANDING CHEQUES		
BALANCE IN CURRENT ACCOUNT	£ 19,521.42	
TOTAL	£ 19,521.42	

ON DEPOSIT

BUSINESS INSTANT ACCESS ACCOUNT		
General reserves + interest	-£ 29,116.14	
Memorial Garden sink fund - per "recommendation"	£ 3,546.19	
Community Centre sink fund	£ 14,514.45	
Leisure Park sink fund - per budget	£ 21,178.06	
Sports Ground sink fund - per budget	£ 9,082.77	
Bus Shelter sink fund - per budget	£ 5,300.00	
Election expenses sink fund	£ 15,258.38	
Play Area sink fund - per budget	£ 42,056.53	
Skate Park sink fund - per budget	£ 18,000.00	
Village Green sink fund - per budget	£ 12,093.21	£111,913.45
Total	£111,913.45	

a) Payments – The Finance Officer took members through the payments presented.

It was proposed by Cllr Silvester that all payments are approved payment. This was seconded by Cllr Wetton and agreed by all members. All payments approved.

b) Financial Statement – The Finance Officer took members through the Finance Statement. Members accepted the Financial Statement as presented.

c) Utilities – The Finance Officer explained to members the difficulties with arranging direct debit payment with the Gas and Electricity supplier, the direct debit mandate is set up, but they are not taking the payments as they should. Cllr Newman proposed that the Finance Officer be approved to pay the necessary outstanding invoices online using the bank card to prevent going into debt with the company

as a new provider is being investigated as we are out of contract. This was seconded by Cllr Tunas Bana and agreed by all members.

d) Quotation Gatesland for fencing and picnic table – Cllr Ashley asked for this item to be considered in Village Green agenda item. Members agreed.

e) Grant Application Penkridge ATC – This request has been carried over from last month as members requested further details of residents serviced by this group. Cllr Ashley stated that we do not fund groups outside of the Village. The Chairman reminded members that we have funded groups not resident in the village if they are being used by residents of the village such as the Tool Shed in Hednesford which has previously received 2 separate grants. Cllr Davies proposed a grant of £100 be awarded to Penkridge ATC which was seconded by Cllr Tym. A counter proposal was received from Cllr Benton that a grant of £50 be awarded to Penkridge ATC which was seconded by Cllr Wetton. The Chairman called for votes to identify the proposal to go forward. Members voted 5 in favour of the first proposal for £100 grant and 5 votes in favour of the second proposal for £50 grant, the Chairman had a casting vote and voted for the first proposal of £100 grant.

Members then considered the proposal on the table that Penkridge ATC be awarded a grant of £100 towards their training equipment. Members voted 7 in favour and 3 against. Therefore, a grant of £100 is awarded.

f) Electricity Connection to the Village Green - Cllr Tunas Bana reported that SEFE our current supplier at the Community Centre is not willing to connect the power supply to the village green as we would not be a viable customer due to the low usage. Having contacted a comparison adviser, they have identified British Gas as the only company willing to connect the village green power supply and members perused the information and options supplied. Cllr Wetton proposed that British Gas be requested to supply electricity to the Village Green on the 2-year option supplied. This was seconded by Cllr Tunas Bana and unanimously agreed by all members.

g) Utilities Gas and Electricity at the Community Centre - Cllr Tunas Bana reported that the Parish Council are currently out of contract with the Gas and Electricity supplier SEFE and are paying considerably more than we should be. Cllr Tunas Bana has been in contact with a comparison agency and currently the cheapest provider is YU Energy saving over £800 a year in standing charges for Electric and over £1,000 a year in standing charges for the Gas supply. Cllr Wetton proposed that the option of changing utility provider for both electricity and gas to YU energy is actioned as soon as possible. This was seconded by Cllr Thompson and unanimously agreed by all members. Cllr Tunas Bana agreed to contact the company and start the changeover as soon possible.

Resolved

- a) That all payments are approved for payment as presented.
- b) That the Finance Summary report was accepted as presented.
- c) That the Finance Officer has approval to pay Gas and Electricity bills online using the bank card to prevent the Parish Council going into debt until a new provider is arranged.
- d) To be considered during Village Green agenda item.
- e) That a grant of £100 is awarded to Penkridge ATC towards new training equipment.
- f) That British Gas are engaged to connect and supply electricity to the Village Green on the 2-year contract option.
- g) That the utility provider for both gas and electric at the community centre is moved to Yu Energy at the earliest opportunity.

66/24) PLANNING MATTERS

There were no planning matters received for consideration.

Noted

67/24) CORRESPONDENCE

Littleton Banner – Members considered the request from Friends of Littleton Colliery to have the new Littleton Banner to be blessed in the Memorial Garden on the 11th May at 11am. Cllr Newman proposed that this be approved, this was seconded by Cllr Davies and agreed by members, Cllr Wetton abstained to vote. Cllr Lester agreed to enquire if they wanted any of the flags flying on the day.

68/24) LONE WORKING

Cllr Benton updated members on the progress of the investigation into lone working people safe apps. Members discussed at some length the concerns and legalities of such apps and of the additional cost. Members were asked if they wished to pursue this project and continue the investigation. 10 members voted to shelve the project idea of purchasing a people safe type application as it would be too costly. Cllr Thompson voted against shelving the project and expressed his concerns about safety of lone workers and himself in some areas of parish owned land. He also raised issue that the Lone Working Policy does not cover Councillors and he believed it should. It was explained again that the Lone Working Policy as recommended by NALC and being used by Huntington Parish Council is for paid employees. It might be a possibility to raise a separate Volunteer Policy for Councillors and Volunteers to follow or it was questioned if it would be right and proper to add an addendum stating that Councillors are advised to follow the Lone Working Policy if volunteering on their own.

Resolved

The investigation project into various People Safe Applications for lone working has been stopped.

69/24) COMMUNITY CENTRE

Cllr Tunas Bana took members through his written report which had been circulated prior to the meeting. Members accepted the report as presented.

Cllr Tunas Bana raised with members that the Booking Clerk for the community centre was not provided with a laptop when machines were purchased for other staff members and she is expected to deal with email enquiries, raise invoices for hirings and she is having to use her own machine which is not GDPR compliant. Members agreed that a suitable machine and supplier should be identified and a price brought to the next meeting for consideration.

Noted

70/24) AMENITIES

- a) **Village Green** – Cllr Ashley took members through his written report which had been circulated prior to the meeting. Members accepted the report as presented and agreed the following actions from the report.

- 1) **Water Supply** – Cllr Lester proposed to pay the cost of £185 to get a price to connect water to the site, this was seconded by Cllr Thompson and 7 members voted in favour and 4 members abstained to vote.
- 2) **Wheel** – Cllr Ashley reported still awaiting further estimates of works which the clerk will circulate when received. One is a reviewed cost as it will need to add new RSJ's as well as boxing. Cllr Wetton advised that the original price did include RSJ's but not the boxing.
- 3) **Play Area** – Cllr Ashley reported that he would like to apply for funding from UKSP fund, but more details are needed.
- 4) **Play Area Sign** – Cllr Ashley proposed purchasing a sign for around £200 to the simple design provided by the clerk this was agreed by Cllr Thompson and unanimously agreed by all.
- 5) **Area in front of electricity Cabinet** – Cllr Wetton raised the issue that either slabbing or concreting the area directly in front of the Electricity cabinet needs to be followed up.

- b) **Littleton Leisure Park** – Cllr Thompson took members through his written report which had been circulated prior to the meeting. Members accepted the report as presented.

- c) **Sports Ground** – Cllr Lester took members through his written report that had been circulated prior to the meeting. Members accepted the report as presented.

Cllr Lester added that due to the very wet weather during the winter, the grass cutting has been delayed and is causing considerable problems and he advised that in future contracts we need to include that pitches must be cut using a smaller machine in wet months if the ground will not hold a larger machine.

Cllr Tym raised concerns that the Charity Commission report is overdue for the Sports Ground. The Clerk agreed to check with the Finance Officer for the date that he filed the report.

Noted

71/24) PUBLIC EVENT

Cllr Graham was not in attendance, however, she had supplied a written report which had been circulated prior to the meeting. Members accepted the report and recommendations as submitted.

Noted

72/24) ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT MEETING.

Members were reminded agenda items and supporting reports need to be emailed to the Clerk the week prior to the meeting to be included.

Cllr Tym wished to discuss at a future meeting the possibility of employing an assistant clerk to allow time to train and develop knowledge as the Clerk has made it clear that she intends to retire in a few years.

Noted

73/24) DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 9th May 2024, commencing at 7pm in Huntington Community Centre.

At 21.38 the member of the public left

Signed _____

Date _____

74/24) CONFIDENTIAL

Resolved

In accordance with section 1 of the public bodies (admission to meetings) Act 1960 the Council Resolved that the Public were excluded from the meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

75/24) WINDING WHEELS

Cllr Ashley shared his concerns regarding the winding wheels. Cllr Benton proposed that a construction engineer be engaged to examine and provide a report. This was seconded by Cllr Thompson and agreed by members. Cllr Ashley agreed to find suitable contactors.

Resolved

That Cllr Ashley to contact a construction engineer to examine and report on both winding wheels.

There being no further matters for discussion the meeting was closed by the Chair at 21.46

Signed _____

Date _____