

RUYTON XI TOWNS PARISH COUNCIL

2 MAY 2023 ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

The Annual meeting of the Parish Council was held at Victoria Rooms, at 6.30 pm on Tues 2nd May 2023.

Parish councillors in attendance: Mr T Allison, Mrs T Bibow, Mrs K Coldwell, Mr S Denyer, Mr N. Kynaston, Mrs A Lister, Mr L Penton.

Also in attendance:, Lydia Bardsley (Clerk), Nick Bardsley (Shropshire County Councillor), PCSO Iremonger, Public: 4

Meeting started at: 6:34pm.

01/23: ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

It was **NOTED** that Cllrs Spicer and Lister intend to step down from Council after the summer break, but were happy to carry on in current roles as Chair and Vice chair for the time being. After nominations, and a vote, it was **RESOLVED** to elect Cllr Spicer as Chairman. As he was unable to join the face-to-face meeting it was **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the PC would receive his Chairman's declaration of acceptance of office by next ordinary Council meeting.

02/23: ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

After nominations and a vote, it was **RESOLVED** to elect Cllr Lister as Vice Chairman. Cllr Lister duly accepted the position and signed the Vice Chairman's declaration of acceptance of office. It was **NOTED** that the declaration of acceptance of office for Cllr Kynaston had been signed and received prior to the start of the Annual Council meeting.

03/22: Welcome by Chairman

In the absence the Chairman, the Vice Chairman Cllr Lister took the Chair. She formally opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

04/23: Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Spicer (health concerns), Cllr Eyles (away), and Cllr Hamlett (work commitments). It was **RESOLVED** to note these.

05/23: Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests and Dispensation

Cllr Bibow declared an interest in agenda item 15/23 (Planning applications, ref: 23/01632/LBC).

06/23: Public session

Members of the public spoke on the following agenda items:

Playing field path around Doctors Meadow: When this is done can the reinstated path also join up with the private lane from Church street? It may also need a wider gate for wheelchair access.

It was **AGREED** to bring forward agenda item 13/23b Police report and to return to the public session afterwards to receive information on The Grange planning enforcement case.

13/23: Reports – Council to consider and agree actions

b) Local Police Report/Rural crime

PCSO Iremonger gave the following report:

- 3 x unintentional 999 calls (from different numbers). Police had done call backs, everyone was ok and not in need of assistance.
- Intruder alarm triggered, but turned out to be a fault in alarm system.
- Completed speed surveys outside school, and are sending letters to motorists depending on what speed they were driving when caught.

Cllr Allison notified the Council that someone has turned round the 30mph and national speed limit signs outside Packwood Haugh school. It was **AGREED** that Clerk will report this to Highways and let school know so they can inform staff and parents.

Cllr Denyer offered to share locations with PCSO Iremonger that had been previously approved for Community Speed Watch by the speed enforcement team e.g. top of Darlee cottage on Brownhill, as these may be useful for future speed enforcement.

It was **AGREED** that PCSO Iremonger will type up the verbal report given at this meeting to go in minutes, and the SNT will put together an annual police report for APM meeting (provisionally scheduled for w/c 22nd May).

Before he left, PCSO Iremonger left some information on Neighbourhood Matters. It is not a tool for reporting crimes or incidents, but it's a good way to stay updated on local policing matters and concerns.

The Chairman thanked PCSO Iremonger and he left the meeting at 18.51.

07/23: Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to confirm that the [meeting minutes dated 17th April 2023](#) were an accurate and true record.

It was **AGREED** to return to the public session to receive representations on The Grange enforcement case.

06/23: Public session

A member of public spoke about The Grange planning enforcement case. They explained that surveys had been done on the house as garage was developing cracks and were told the land was slipping. The contractors had apparently told the owners that they wouldn't need planning permission for this. The owners stated they had spoken with neighbours to explain what they were doing, and had the necessary building work done. The owners accept the site does not look ideal at the moment, but this is because work had to stop during enforcement investigation, and the owners have been unable to finish the planned planting/screening work until the investigation was concluded. After several months of no updates, they spoke to SC Cllr Bardsley about the delays, and subsequently a planning enforcement officer visited the site recently. Planning enforcement have now concluded their investigation and SC Enforcement are content that there is no breach in planning control and the case has now been closed with no further action. The owners now need to finish the work in terms of planting etc., and they assured the Parish Council the site will look better over time.

They stated they have written to neighbours to open up communications and ask whether they (the neighbours) have preferences in terms of screening and planting. They stated they have tried to negate any risks during the course of the ground works, and assured the Council that there will be hedge and tree planting to make the site look neater in as short a time period as possible. They apologised if there was an expectation that the owners should have spoken with the Parish Council first before commencing the work.

They stated that the enforcement case has caused considerable upset on both sides, and they stated that the police have been contacted.

The Chairman thanked the owners for coming to the meeting and sharing their update. They explained the PC's perspective and the concerns about considerable groundworks being done, matures trees and hedging being removed, the impact on the street scene, the loss of privacy for neighbours, as well as concerns about structural safety in terms of potential landslides onto the Brownhill Road below. At this point, a decision has been made by SC planning enforcement and from the PC's perspective the matter is now dealt with, and the PC has no further role to play. Unfortunately, the PC cannot help with the relationship between the two parties, but it was hoped that over time, things would improve now that the formal enforcement investigation has been concluded. A member of the public shared a testimonial on behalf of the owners.

It was clarified that if a planning application had been needed for the work that had been completed, that normally SC Planning Enforcement would ask the owners to put in a retrospective planning application, but this has not been requested on this occasion, which was a surprise to the Parish Council. The Council explained that there were some concerns about consistency in planning enforcement, as there had been a number of cases of planning control breaches in the parish in recent years. This is why SC Cllr Bardsley had contacted SC Planning Enforcement to discuss the recent enforcement decision.

Councillors wished the owners the best for finishing the work and with the planting, and 3 x members of the public left the meeting at 19.16.

08/23: Council vacancies

- a) Council to consider applications received for vacancy and co-opt

One application had been received for the vacant seat left by Cllr Edwards. After discussion, it was **AGREED** to defer a decision on filling this vacancy for the time being.

09/23: Audit: Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2022-23

Council to consider, approve, and sign the following (appendix A) in order:

- a) Annual Internal Audit report (to note) – This was **NOTED**.
- b) Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement

The Council considered whether it had met the governance requirements for the year 2022-23 and it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Annual Governance Statement. This was dated and signed by the Chairman and the clerk.

- c) Section 2 – Accounting Statements

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Accounting Statements for 2022-23. These were dated and signed by the Chairman.

It was **RESOLVED** to bring forward agenda item 13/23a, Shropshire Council Cllr Bardsley report.

13/23: Reports – Council to consider and agree actions

- a) Shropshire Councillor Nick Bardsley (appendix B)

SC Cllr Bardsley gave an update on the following:

- Safer Roads Group & CIL Project – SC Cllr Bardsley has asked cabinet member to intervene as the Parish Council are still waiting for modelling reports and visualisations for CIL Project. Chairman Spicer has had productive discussions with Andy Moreton, and SC Cllr Bardsley will follow this up as well to ensure things progress.

- The Grange enforcement case: This was covered early under the Public Session (agenda item 06/23) and there was nothing extra to add.
- Housing Options and StaR Housing: Cabinet Member Dean Carroll will come back to SC Cllr Bardsley with some dates for a Teams meeting with Housing Options officers about tenancy allocations in Ruyton XI Towns.
- Local Govt Boundary Commission for England: Under the draft BCE recommendations, Ruyton and Baschurch electoral division wouldn't change much besides the proposal to add in all of Walford Heath to the Ruyton & Baschurch division (the PC's response to the previous consultation stage supported this proposal), and a some of the Old Woods area. It was **NOTED** that SC want 75 member divisions, but BCE are proposing 74 member divisions. This may mean that some rural divisions in south Shropshire will need to cover a very large geographical area in order to achieve equality of electoral numbers across all 74 divisions.

The Chairman thanked SC Cllr Bardsley and he left the meeting at 19.40.

It was **AGREED** to resume agenda item 09/23d.

09/23: Audit: Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2022-23

- d) Explanation of variances report (to note) -This was **NOTED**.

The clerk highlighted that the Council had quite high levels of reserves at present. The Chairman gave a brief summary of a possible matching funding opportunity (Thriving Children Grants) for the PC to support some play/art therapies for children/young people aged 4-16, but this had a very tight application deadline (4th May). The clerk would send round an email to councillors to get provisional support for the initiative which could then be ratified at the June meeting.

- e) Period for exercise of public rights

The Clerk/RFO confirmed they would be setting the following dates for the exercise of public rights: Mon 5th June 2023 – Fri 14th July 2023, as recommended by the external auditor.

10/23: Policies to review and approve

It was **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the following procedural documents:

- a) Standing Orders
- b) Financial Regulations

11/23: Appointment of Council representatives

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint representatives as follows:

- a) SALC Area Committee representatives – Cllrs D. Spicer and L. Penton.
- b) Safer Roads Group representatives – Cllrs D. Spicer, A. Lister, and SC Cllr N. Bardsley
- c) Primary School representatives – Cllr A Lister and T Bibow
- d) Climate Emergency Working Group – Cllr K Coldwell, Cllr D Spicer, Clerk
- e) Village Hall Working Group – Cllrs A Lister, D Spicer, L Penton, T Bibow, and R Hamlett
- f) Planning Working Group – Cllrs M Eyles, T Bibow, T Allison, and R Hamlett
- g) Countryside Working Group – Cllrs M Eyles, T Allison, R Hamlett, D Spicer, L Penton, N Kynaston, D Spicer
- h) Staffing Committee and Sub-Committee – All cllrs for committee, Cllrs M Eyles, D Spicer, A Lister, K Coldwell, for sub-committee.

12/23: Register of interests

Council to receive updated register of interests from all councillors

It was **NOTED** that Cllr Eyles would be sending in an updated register of interest. So far Cllrs Denyer and Coldwell had confirmed there were no changes to their interests. It was **AGREED** that remaining councillors will check DPIs and update these if needed.

13/23: Reports – Council to consider and agree actions

a) Shropshire Councillor Nick Bardsley (appendix B)

This was covered earlier in the evening (after agenda item 09/23c).

b) Local Police Report/Rural crime

This was covered earlier in the meeting after public session (agenda item 06/23).

c) Safer Roads Group

There was no update as the Council and SRG are still awaiting information on the modelling from the pedestrian crossing proposals and only some of the promised visualisations had been received.

d) Planning working group

Nothing to report.

e) Climate Emergency working group

It was **NOTED** that the [Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan \(LCWIP\) consultation](#) had launched today (02.05.2023) and deadline for responses is 16.06.2023. Clerk would share details with Cllrs and Climate Emergency Working Group members for consideration and would add this to agenda for June Council meeting.

f) Countryside Working Group

It was **NOTED** that the Clerk had informed SC Outdoor Recreation team of the ROW anomaly at Coton Farm lane and this is being investigated. The Clerk had also reported some ROW obstructions on the West Felton/Ruyton parish boundary.

It was **NOTED** that clerk had shared the following advice from insurer regarding liability and permissive cycle routes: “by the Council providing permission and highlighting cycle routes they are accepting responsibility for ensuring those routes are safe for use for cyclists and would need to be inspected on a regular basis and the cycle routes properly maintained and managed. [...] Disclaimer notices do have their place and can be useful in highlighting potential hazards or risks to land users [... however] if you have been negligent a disclaimer won't preclude the Council from being held liable.” Clerk had advised the working group that if permissive routes are to be agreed, then the working group will need to consider costs of inspections, risk assessments, and regular maintenance (and who will be qualified to undertake inspections and maintenance). It was **NOTED** that SC do not actively monitor or maintain the informal area of bike jumps that have been created in Nesscliffe. It was **AGREED** that the Countryside WG will arrange a meeting with MTB users before June PC meeting to discuss how to move forward and will look into costs for inspections, risk assessments, maintenance etc.

g) Clerk's update report (appendix D)

The clerk's report was **NOTED**. This included an update on Council email accounts, and correspondence with National Highways re. safety improvements on Holyhead Road. In addition to this, the following actions were **NOTED**:

- Submitted Fix My Street report to SC Highways re. damaged/collapsed fencing over steep drop into brook near Wykey.
- Hanging baskets had also been ordered with Flowerscape and Cllr Lister will empty and drop off the baskets.
- DPI for Cllr Kynaston sent to Monitoring Officer at SC and training booked for Fundamentals for Cllrs and Code of Conduct in June.

It was **AGREED** to go ahead with repairs to 2 x benches in the arboretum with an estimated total cost of £260.

It was **AGREED** that clerk will set up a bank payment for the final Scottish Power invoice (approved 17.04.2023) as the direct debit had been accidentally cancelled before the last payment could be taken.

It was **RESOLVED** that the PC would support an application for Thriving Children Grant Funding for art/play therapy sessions for primary school children and young people of high school age living in the parish. The clerk would email cllrs to discuss provisional support for match funding of up to £4000-5000 for continuation of the initiative beyond the SC funding and this would be confirmed and agreed over email pending confirmation of costs from provider, and ratified at the June meeting. Financial support for this initiative in future years would rely on successful outcomes and assessment of the first year.

14/23: Parish Matters – Council to receive updates and agree actions

a) Council assets

i. Stone Cross damage – Council to receive update

It was **NOTED** that Cllrs Bibow and Lister had scrubbed clean the welcome gates on Olden Lane, and the clerk thanked them on behalf of the Chairman Cllr Spicer. There were concerns about misunderstandings on SC's behalf about the stability vs safety of the monument in its current location, which were causing delays to the repair project. The clerk reported that the loss adjuster had sent some paperwork for the PC for arranging an interim payment for invoices it had already paid e.g. Structural survey and project manager costs, but the excess would be deducted from this. It was **AGREED** not to submit a reclaim for interim payments yet in order to avoid paying the excess every time.

ii. War memorial name and info plaques

No further update from Stone Workshop on info needed for LBC application. It was **AGREED** that Clerk will chase again.

b) Shropshire Housing Options and StaR Housing Association

Covered under SC Cllr Nick Bardsley report (item 13/23a)

c) Annual parish Meeting

Council to agree arrangements for Annual parish meeting

It was **AGREED** that the Annual Parish Meeting should be arranged for Tues 23rd May, pending confirmation of availability. It was **AGREED** the PC will make no plans for attendance from SC/WSP reps about the CIL Project, as the necessary info is still outstanding.

d) Council insurance

It was **NOTED** that some insurance companies had not been able to quote this year because of the ongoing claim for the damage to the Stone Cross monument. After discussion of the remaining quotes, it was **RESOLVED** to renew the Council's insurance policy with Business services at CAS Ltd at an annual cost of £677.23 for a single year contract. It was **AGREED** clerk would send round policy docs for Councillors to consider whether any cover headings needed adjusting between now and the policy start date (01.06.2023). Any increase in premium would be agreed by Councillors over email prior to payment.

e) Village Hall Committee donation request

It was **NOTED** that this request had been withdrawn for the time being.

Cllr Bibow left the room at 20.29.

15/23: Planning applications – Council to consider and agree/ratify responses

1. [New access, Ruyton Hall, Olden Lane, ref: 23/01632/LBC](#) – Council to agree response

Proposal: New access

Deadline for comments: 21.05.2023

After consideration it was **RESOLVED** to SUPPORT the application with the following comments:

Similar comments to application ref: 23/00562/FUL. Proposals are a sensible option for improving visibility and highways safety, and plans are to rebuild wall sympathetically to match character of existing wall as much as possible, which PC is in support of.

Cllr Bibow returned to the meeting at 20.31.

16/23: Shropshire Council Planning decisions

It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the following:

1. [North West Relief Road Scheme, 21/00924/EIA](#) – Pending consideration
2. Enforcement case, The Grange, Brownhill – Investigation concluded, no further action
3. [Ruyton Hall, Olden Lane, ref: 23/00562/FUL](#) - Pending consideration
4. [Wykey Farm, Wykey, ref: 23/00710/FUL](#) – Permission granted

17/23: Finance – to consider and approve

a) Council insurance - Council to consider estimates, cover levels, and choose insurer

This item was covered earlier under agenda item 14/23d.

- b) Receipts & payments April 2023**
- c) Bank statement April 2023**
- d) Bank reconciliations April 2023**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the above items 17/23 b-d.

e) VAT reclaim for 2022-23

The above item was **NOTED** and the clerk would submit the reclaim request after the meeting.

f) Annual financial arrangements (direct debits, standing orders etc.)

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the following annual financial arrangements:

- NEST Pension (variable amounts, monthly)
- ICO, annual registration fee (usually £35 annually)
- Unity Trust, banking fees (usually £18 per quarter). These are deducted automatically from bank account so not technically a direct debit.

It was **FURTHER RESOLVED** to approve a new Direct Debit mandate with Shropshire Council (Streetlight Energy Scheme, variable amounts, quarterly). Cllrs Denyer and Allison signed the mandate form. Clerk would hold a scanned copy and send the original to SC.

18/23: Payments – Council to consider and approve

a) Invoices/reimbursements to be authorised

It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the following payments.

- L. Bardsley, May staffing costs, £885.37 (of which £11.98 VAT, £2.60 unrecoverable)
- HMRC, May PAYE and NI contributions, £135.05 (no VAT)
- NEST (Direct Debit), May emp'ee and emp'er pension contributions, £66.83 (no VAT)
- Shropshire Council, 1st quarter streetlight energy, £TBC (of which £TBC VAT). Invoice not yet received, so this may need to be ratified at the June meeting depending on when the invoice arrives.
- D. E. Peate, village maintenance (Jan – March 2023), £278.00 (no VAT)

As per min. ref: 14/23d, it was **FURTHER RESOLVED** to authorise the following payment:

- Business Services at CAS Ltd, 1 year insurance policy, £677.23 (no VAT) on understanding that premium may increase if cover levels are to be adjusted.

b) Urgent invoices to approve after publication of agenda

E: parishclerk@ruytonxitownparishcouncil.org.uk

www.ruytonxitownparishcouncil.org.uk

Some invoices had been received after publication of the agenda (SALC, SDH Accounting, and Highline Electrical Ltd) but all suppliers had confirmed these could be carried over to the June meeting for approval.

19/23: Correspondence received

It was **RESOLVED** to note the following:

- a) Roadworks: Eardiston Coronation Street Party, (07.05.2023)
- b) Roadworks: Cefn-y-Wern jct to Tedsmore (14-16.06.2023)
- c) Roadworks: Cefn-y-Wern jct to Haughton Farm jct (3-4.07.2023)
- d) Roadworks: Station Road, Baschurch level crossing (21-24 and 28-31.07.2023, night time closure only)
- e) Proposed road closure, Baschurch 29.05.2023 to 03 or 09.06.2023 – It was **FURTHER NOTED** that this had been postponed until August to allow time for developer and SC Streetworks to work out arrangements.
- f) Place Plan slides from briefing on 17th April
- g) Shropshire Electoral Division Review – BCE draft recommendations

20/23: Future agenda items

Councillors are requested to use this opportunity to report minor matters of information not included elsewhere on the agenda and to raise items for future agendas.

Councillors are respectfully reminded that this is not an opportunity for debate or decision making.

- Electoral Division Reviews – Stage 2 consultation
- Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan consultation
- Hedgehog signs– A resident has asked whether PC could fund some additional signs on Pound Lane
- Possible vehicle strike on Platt bridge
- Cllr Allison will prepare an analysis of Rights of Way issues for Annual Parish Meeting

21/23: Next Council meeting – Council to agree

It was **AGREED** that the next ordinary meeting would be held Tues 6th June at 6.30pm at Victoria Rooms.

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for their participation and closed the meeting at 20.42pm.

Confirmed as accurate: _____ Chairman. Date: _____