

ST PAUL MALMESBURY WITHOUT PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 22nd November 2023 at 19:00 in Crudwell Village Hall

Present: Cllrs Budgen (Chair), Hatherell (Vice Chair), Briggs, Clogg, Hopkins, Jones, Ingham, Maslin, Merriman, Stephens and Smith (WC-Sherston Division)

Public: One present

90 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Payne

91 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COUNCIL'S CODE OF CONDUCT

None

92 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME IN RESPECT OF ITEMS OF BUSINESS INCLUDED ON THE AGENDA

Cllr Smith thanked the council for submitting a statement of objection to the proposed closure of the Sherston Surgery and the integration of its services into the Malmesbury Primary Care Centre and provided an update that the NHS was now exploring ways to maintain a surgery in Sherston.

93 TO ADOPT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON THE 25th OCTOBER 2023

The minutes of the meeting on the 25th October were adopted as a true record and signed accordingly.

94 TO RECEIVE REPORT #11.1 ON PLANNING UPDATES AND REVIEW NEW APPLICATIONS

Cllr Budgen presented Report #11.1 and the council considered the following planning applications. Full comments submitted by the council can be viewed online at Wiltshire Council under the relevant application reference.

| Site | Reference | Comments |
|---|---------------|---|
| Fairview, Swindon Road, SN16 9LU | PL/2023/09104 | No objection |
| Land to the north of Whychurch Farm and to the south of Filands | PL/2023/08687 | It was agreed to delay a response to align with MTC's timescale |
| Manor Farm, Milbourne, SN16 9JB | PL/2023/09051 | No objection |
| 4 Hillcrest, Swindon Road, SN16 LU | PL/2023/09540 | No objection |

Cllr Budgen reported that application PL/2023/09540 has gone to a Planning Appeal and the Inspector's decision is awaited.

95 FINANCIAL REPORTS

The RFO presented the accounts for the year to date; receipts and payments are within budget. The bank statement dated 31st October 2023 was noted and showed balances of £10,855.41 and £94,010.95 and matched the reconciliation statement. Cllr Hatherell signed the original bank statements as correct and evidence of verification.

The RFO presented the payments schedule, 4 payments were approved and Cllr Budgen signed the list of payments for authorisation as per supporting evidence; Cllr Stephens first authoriser, Cllr Clogg second authoriser.

It was agreed to challenge 2 invoices received for waste collection and grass cutting. A member of the public commented on issues with waste collections over the past 6-8 months and was of the opinion that the bin under the bypass had only been emptied once a week during this time. It was unacceptable to have dog mess left on the ground under the bins and suggested, when notice is given to the present contractor, that the bins be taped off for the 4 weeks until a new contractor starts. Cllr Budgen stated there

is an agreed collection schedule and the bypass bin should be emptied twice a week. The company's performance in many areas of this parish, and others in north Wiltshire, has deteriorated considerably.

| Payments Schedule | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--|-------------------|
| Payment No. | Payee Details | Reason | Amount (£) |
| 1 | R J & S H Mellowes | Reimbursement - floral tribute | £53.50 |
| 2 | Malmesbury Town Council | Hall hire - defibrillator training | £15.00 |
| 3 | Franklin's Garden Supplies | Vegetation clearance Cowbridge permissive path | £580.00 |
| 4 | Ratcliffe & Son | Chainsaw maintenance (Corston LNR) | £96.00 |
| | | TOTAL | £744.50 |

Action: Cllrs Stephens & Clogg

96 **TO APPROVE THE COUNCIL'S 2024/25 BUDGET AND TO CONSIDER POSSIBLE PRECEPT OPTIONS**

An updated budget was circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr Briggs reported that bank interest had been significantly higher this year and would probably be similar next year and recommended the precept be kept at £16,043 to maintain general reserves at no higher than this figure. Cllr Budgen stated that over the coming year there would be more houses coming on to the tax base from developments on Swindon Road and White Poplars. Cllr Hopkins pointed out that when VAT is claimed back, this would increase the amount in general reserves and gives the true picture. Cllr Hopkins proposed the budget be accepted, this was seconded by Cllr Hatherell and agreed.

Cllr Budgen reported that Wiltshire Council is currently consulting on possible changes to its local Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme for working aged people and there could be a change to the taxbase for next year, although this will not have much of an impact on small parishes, like SPMW. Cllr Briggs proposed the Precept be set to £16,043 or a figure that approximates closely to that. This was seconded by Cllr Budgen and unanimously agreed.

97 **TO CONSIDER FOLLOW UP ACTIONS REGARDING IMPROVEMENTS TO PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AT THE A429 BLICKS HILL CROSSING**

Cllr Budgen reported that a Highways Improvement Request from the council had been put forward to and reviewed by the Local Highway and Footway Improvement Group (LHFIG) recently but believed the council should ask the Chair of the LHFIG to reopen and reconsider this at the next meeting. Cllr Smith has also spoken to the LHFIG Chair about this.

98 **TO RECEIVE REPORT #11.2 TO CONSIDER SELECTING A CONTRACTOR FOR THE 2-YEAR GRASS CUTTING CONTRACT**

Cllr Hatherell presented Report #11.2 stating the mowing specification now includes an increased number of cuts at the two playing fields during the peak growing season, from May-August. The Council voted to award the contract to company B at a cost of £2160 including VAT per annum, the lower of the quotations. The terms on the quote were read out. The clerk will notify all contractors officially.

Action: Clerk

99 **TO RECEIVE REPORT #11.3 TO CONSIDER SELECTING A CONTRACTOR FOR THE TWICE-YEARLY VEGETATION CLEARANCE ALONG COWBRIDGE PERMISSIVE PATH 2024-25**

The council voted to award the contract to company A at a cost of £1160, non-VAT, per annum. Although not the most competitively priced quote it was agreed, considering recent experience of this contractor's performance that this outweighed the cost differential. Additionally it was considered prudent not to have one contractor undertaking all groundworks for the council.

Action: Clerk

100 TO RECEIVE REPORT #11.4 TO CONSIDER SELECTING A CONTRACTOR FOR A 2-YEAR WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE

The council voted to award the contract to company B at a cost of £3024 excluding VAT per annum. Although the more expensive of the two quotes, the previous contractor was not providing the agreed level of service. It was agreed the contract should start from January 2024.

Action: Clerk

101 TO CONSIDER A MINOR HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT REQUEST FOR THE B4014, FILANDS

Cllr Budgen reported that the traffic survey was required as this would allow the Filands Community Speedwatch to be reinstated. The council supported this request.

Action: Clerk

102 TO RECEIVE VERBAL REPORTS ON HIGHWAYS, FOOTPATHS, PATIENTS PARTICIPATION GROUP, PERSONNEL COMMITTEE, FINANCE COMMITTEE, PROJECTS WORKING PARTY & WEBSITE WORKING PARTY

Highways

This month the parish steward was unable to attend the whole session but hopes to do a catch up. He cleared weeds in Corston, at Truckle Bridge and in Milbourne and tidied the verge by the village gates. He has been unable to book the sweeper. Cllr Budgen has asked if we can have another ½ day from the Parish Steward. Cllr Hopkins expressed dissatisfaction with the on-going problems with a pothole near the Common/Corston road junction, despite it being reported on MyWilts numerous times.

Playing Fields

The regular checks of the fields and play equipment have taken place. Cllr Hatherell will provide a written report with the recommendations from the RoSPA inspections. The grass cutting has not been done. Cllr Ingham, on behalf of the Reading Room Committee, requested permission for a police dog talk and demonstration to be held at Chippenham Road playing field. This is a one-off occurrence for the community. This was agreed.

Footpaths – no report

Patients Participation Group – no report

Personnel Committee

Cllr Clogg stated the national agreement on pay has been reached and the clerk will receive the arrears in this month's salary.

Finance Committee - no report

Projects Working Party – no report

Website Working Party – no report

The meeting closed at 20:24

The next meeting will be held at 19:00 on Tuesday 12th December 2023 at Crudwell Village Hall.

..... Chair

..... Dated