

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BILLINGSLEY PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY  
14<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2022 AT CHETTON VILLAGE HALL AT 7:30PM**

**Present:** Cllr S Bates (Chairman), Cllr S Crawford-Thomas, Cllr A Johnson, Cllr A Jones

**In Attendance:** C Maclean (Locum Clerk)  
Members of the Public: 1

**12.01 WELCOME**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**12.02 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES**

From: Cllrs N Gennard, S Yates, and Shropshire Cllr R Tindall. Apologies noted.

**12.03 DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

None

**12.04 PUBLIC SESSION**

Mrs J Parker thanked Councillors for the opportunity to attend the meeting and express her views in support of a planning application she had submitted to Shropshire Council. The application was to seek approval for the change of use of holiday cottages to residential dwellings at Castle Keep and Castle Meadow, Middleton Scriven. Mrs Parker advised Councillors that the intention for the change of use was to enable her to let the cottages out for long-term rental to local residents rather than as provision of holiday accommodation. Councillors noted the potential benefit in terms of provision of housing to locals and that there was no intention to sell these properties. Councillors also noted that no changes were required in terms of the building or access/parking and no structural work would be taking place internally or externally.

Councillors expressed their thanks to Mrs Parker for her comments and confirmed that the Council would formally respond to the application when the Agenda item was reached.

**12.05 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022**

**Proposed by Cllr S Crawford-Thomas, seconded by Cllr A Johnson and it was resolved the Minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2022 be adopted and that the Chairman sign these as a true record.**

**12.06 MATTERS ARISING FROM 7<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER MINUTES**

- (i) Councillors noted the litter bin had been replaced by Shropshire Council and it was agreed that this be considered an asset of Shropshire Council and not the Parish Council.
- (ii) Councillors noted no action had appeared to be undertaken in relation to the siting of a mobile home at Church Farm House, Deuxhill.
- (iii) Councillors agreed that parties interested in the permanent Clerk role be kept advised of developments.

### **12.07 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

- (i) Councillors noted the contents of the Chairman's report that had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Details are set out in Appendix A.
- (ii) Cllr S Bates advised Councillors of her attendance at a recent meeting of the Bridgnorth and Shifnal Area Committee. Councillors noted the opportunity for two representatives from the Parish Council to attend.
- (iii) Cllr S Bates advised that a presentation had been given at the meeting on safeguarding and it was noted that this also applied to young adults. Councillors agreed that this topic was not one to be ignored and that there was a duty to inform and pass on relevant concerns to the authorities where these were identified.
- (iv) Cllr S Bates also advised Councillors that some guidance had been provided at the meeting on the handling of planning enforcement matters.

### **12.08 CLERK'S REPORT**

- (i) The Locum Clerk advised Councillors that whilst the Agenda covered points he wished to raise he also had the following updates.
- (ii) Having established full access to the Clerk mailbox, all correspondence would be issued from that source.
- (iii) Regular bulletins and updates were received from SALC and NALC and these would be forwarded to Councillors for information.
- (iv) The Locum Clerk noted that the Parish Council did not appear to be on the distribution list for bulletins and correspondence from the Rural Services Network. He would seek to address that given the content focused on rural communities.
- (v) The Locum Clerk noted that the advertisement for the Clerk role remained on SALC's website even though the closing date for applications had passed. Action would be taken to have the advertisement removed.

### **12.09 CORRESPONDENCE**

The Locum Clerk advised that there was no other correspondence to be considered that had not already been covered in previous Agenda items.

### **12.10 SHROPSHIRE COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

Councillors noted that due to the absence of Cllr R Tindall through illness, no report had been provided. Councillors noted the period since his last attendance and that currently there was no alternative arrangements for representation by a Shropshire Councillor. Councillors noted that contact could be maintained with Cllr R Tindall via email.

### **12.11 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN**

- (i) **AGAR Return:** The Locum Clerk advised Councillors that the process for the previous financial year had not been followed as expected. Whilst it was noted that the Certificate of Exemption had been completed and delivered prior to the deadline, the other documents that support the process were outstanding in terms of completion. The situation had also been exacerbated by the delay in the council holding a further meeting to enable the documents to be discussed.

- (ii) **Presentation and Acceptance of 2021/2022 Accounts:** The Locum Clerk presented to Councillors the set of accounts that had been prepared by the previous Clerk. There followed a discussion with Councillors on the values relating to unrepresented cheques.  
**Councillors agreed to accept the accounts as presented.**
- (iii) **Receipt and Noting of Annual Internal Audit Report:** Councillors noted the report which had been dated and signed off on 16 August 2022. There followed a discussion with Councillors on the ruling on the objectives within the document.  
**Councillors noted the contents of the Internal Audit Report.**
- (iv) **Review, Consideration and Approval of Annual Governance Statement:** Councillors considered the criteria set out in the Governance Statement. Councillors agreed that three of the criteria were not seen to be adequately met and remedial action to address these would be set out in a separate document.  
**Subject to recording the remedial action to address criteria 1,2 and 5, Councillors approved the signing of the Annual Governance Statement covering the period 2021/2022 by the Chairman and Clerk on behalf of the Council.**
- (v) **Presentation and Approval of 2021/2022 Accounting Statements:** Councillors noted that considering previous discussions on the unrepresented cheques from previous periods a restatement of the values previously shown should be made.  
**Following these restatements Councillors agreed to approve the 2021/2022 Accounting Statement and that it be signed by the Chairman on behalf of the Council.**
- (vi) **Noting the Submission of the Certificate of Exemption:** Councillors noted the Certificate that had previously been submitted on behalf of the Council.  
**Councillors agreed to note the document as it stands.**
- (vii) **Appointment of Internal Auditor for Year 2022/2023:** The Locum Clerk advised Councillors that enquiries would be made on seeking a new Internal Auditor for the current year and an update would be provided at a future meeting.

## 12.12 ENVIRONMENTAL MAINTENANCE

- (i) **Parish Requirements:** Cllr s Bates noted with Councillors that the previous grant application for £1,500 required to be match funded. Questions were raised and considered on the level of direction from the Parish Council and scrutiny on work undertaken.  
The Locum Clerk advised Councillors that there should be an agreement in place with Shropshire Council. This would be sourced and shared with Councillors  
Councillors considered overall requirements and agreed that a detailed discussion is required on what is required across the parish for the next year.  
**Councillors agreed to consider this topic further at the next meeting.**
- (ii) **War Memorial:** Cllr S Bates noted that the amount of £!50 which had been paid for the maintenance of the war memorial in the past year and questioned whether this was sufficient. Councillors considered whether increased funding should be made available for future maintenance.  
Expressions of thanks were made to residents of the parish who had helped to maintain the memorial.

### 12.13 TRAINING

Councillors noted that in view of recent new members to Council and expectations of a new Clerk joining in next few months, an element of training and development would require to be funded.

**Councillors agreed that an element of funding be put aside to fund and support training for Councillors and Clerk.**

Councillors noted the suggestion that it would be worthwhile attending meetings of other Parish Councils to learn from experience of others.

### 12.14 BUDGET AND PRECEPT REQUIREMENTS FOR 2023/2024

- (i) **Consider and Agree Budgetary Requirements For 2023/2024:** The Locum Clerk reviewed with Councillors a schedule that he had prepared to consider the next year's funding requirements. The document was an initial view of requirements and basis for Councillors to consider in terms of any further additions and amendments as they saw fit.

Councillors noted the potential for increased costs if factoring in all requirements as shown.

Whilst Councillors noted that the level of reserves currently appeared to be adequate, further work was required to define these and to establish whether some of these related to Neighbourhood Funding. The remaining funds maintained under General Reserves are required to support the Council's operational costs.

**Councillors agreed to consider requirements in anticipation of the next meeting.**

- (ii) **Consider and Agree Precept Requirements for 2023/2024:** Councillors noted that once the budgetary requirements had been fully established and level of reserves established, agreement on the Precept amount could be considered and agreed at the next meeting.

### 12.15 FINANCIALS

- (i) **Receive a Report on Current Finances:** the Locum Clerk advised Councillors on level of funding currently maintained within the bank accounts.

- (ii) **Authorise Payment of Costs in Delivering Council Services:** Councillors noted that due to incorrect payee details being provided for the previous Clerk, the cheque could not be presented for payment and a fresh cheque was therefore required. Councillors also considered the claim which had been submitted by the previous Clerk for £200 covering expenses for the prior two years.

**Councillors agreed to the payment of £200 to cover these expenses and for the amount to be added to the payment of £694 due for salary payments.**

Councillors noted the payments required to MedUK for defibrillator pads replacement for £95.88 and N Oliver for Lengsthman duties for £575. Councillors also noted an amount of £220.19 due to Shropshire Council for streetlights but this was subject to review in view of a previous payment noted of £138.89 which had not yet been presented for payment.

**Councillors agreed to the payments to MedUK and N Oliver.**

- (iii) **Change of Address for Bank Statements:** The Locum Clerk presented a letter to the Council's bankers advising of a change of address of Clerk to enable future statements to be sent to the Locum Clerk.

**Councillors agreed that the letter be signed and delivered on behalf of the Council,**

### **12.16 BOUNDARY COMMISSION REVIEW**

Councillors noted the documentation that had been forwarded from Shropshire Council in relation to the review being undertaken by the Boundary Commission for England 2023 relating to Shropshire.

### **12.17 TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL BOUNDARY REVIEW**

Councillors noted the options to review parish boundaries but agreed that in the current circumstances no action need be considered.

### **12.18 PLANNING MATTERS**

- (i) Councillors considered application 22/05376/FUL and proposal for the change of use of holiday cottages to residential dwellings at Castle Keep and Castle Meadow, Middleton Scriven, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, WV16 6AG. No objections were raised.
- (ii) Councillors considered application 22/04935/VAR and the variation of Condition No 2 (approved plans) attached to planning permission 21/05081/FUL dated 15/06/2022 at The Crest, Billingsley, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, WV16 6PH. No objections were raised.
- (iii) Councillors considered application 22/04534/FUL under Section 73A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for the erection of an agricultural workers dwelling (rural occupation dwelling), installation of septic tank and associated works at The Log Cabin, Wadeley Farm, Glazeley, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, WV16 6AD. No objections were raised.
- (iv) Councillors noted the proposed Woodland Management Plan for Clay Wood.
- (v) Councillors considered application 22/05155/FUL and the proposed conversion of 5 former colliery buildings to provide 3 residential units and 2 ancillary domestic outbuildings; formation of private drive and associated drainage and landscaping works at Land at Bynd Lane, Billingsley, Bridgnorth, Shropshire.

Councillors noted the considerable number of documents linked to the application and comments already provided by consultees within Shropshire Council together with the feedback provided by Shropshire Council in their Pre-Application Response.

Councillors shared concerns over the scale of changes now being proposed in comparison to what was approved in the original application. Concerns were also shared over the splay at the entrance and levels of light pollution. Further concerns were shared over the integrity of the public footpath that borders the site and its maintenance together with potential negative impact on surrounding land which is in open countryside.

Based on these considerations Councillors were of the opinion to object to the application as presented.

### **12.19 STRATEGIC PLAN**

Councillors noted the documentation that had been provided by the Locum Clerk and considered the benefits of a plan for the parish. It was also noted that the plan would provide links to the parish budget and future expectations. The Locum Clerk offered to draft an outline template for consideration at a future meeting.

**Councillors agreed to consider further on receipt of the outline template.**

## **12.20 CORONATION OF KING CHARLES III**

Councillors considered potential for events to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III in May 2023. It was noted that previous events were organised by local groups within the parish.

**Councillors agreed that the Parish Council need not coordinate any activities and to leave this to local groups.**

## **12.21 KEY COUNCIL DOCUMENTS**

The Locum Clerk noted with Councillors that the Council's website required population of key council documents such as (i) Standing Orders; (ii) Financial Regulations; (iii) Complaints Policy; (iv) Councillor Code of Conduct; (v) Data Protection Policy; and (vi) Risk Assessment. The Locum Clerk advised Councillors that he would present these documents for agreement at a future meeting.

## **12.22 PARISH MATTERS**

- (i) Cllr A Johnson noted that the hedge at Mor Brook Bridge had been cut back enabling greater visibility for drivers.
- (ii) Councillors considered the communication from the Trees Outside Woodlands Project Officer at Shropshire Council and the offer to replace the oak tree which has died.

**Following consideration and the logistics in securing and siting the tree, Councillors agreed not to take up the offer.**

## **12.23 ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA**

Councillors noted to advise the Locum Clerk of any items required for the next meeting.

## **12.24 NEXT MEETING DATES**

Councillors noted the next meeting scheduled for Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

The Chairman thanked everybody and thereafter declared the meeting closed at 9:37pm.

## **APPENDIX TO THE MINUTES OF BILLINGSLEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 14<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2022**

### **Chairman's Report for Billingsley Parish Council meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

I am delighted that we are able to welcome Councillor Sarah Crawford-Thomas who represents the Middleton Scriven ward and Councillor Andrew Jones who represents the Billingsley ward. It has been some time since the Parish Council has been at full strength and I am confident that we are well placed to move forward in meeting the needs of the residents of the parish.

Chris Maclean, locum clerk, has offered much valued expertise and guidance with regard to several outstanding matters which will, hopefully, be resolved by the end of the current financial year.

With so many newly appointed councillors, including myself, and the likelihood of a newly appointed permanent clerk next year I consider an evaluation of training needs to be priority.

There are a number of Smart Water packs that I am now able to register. If anyone knows of newcomers to the parish who would like to receive a pack please let me know the details.

With regard to correspondence, I have received a tentative enquiry regarding the post of Parish Clerk. This is in addition to the application we discussed during September's meeting. I have responded stating that we will probably be in a position in the Spring to consider making an appointment and I will keep the person concerned updated of the situation.

The 'thecircuit' web account which is where the details of our defibrillators is now fully up-to-date and I am delighted to inform you that all three devices are now being monitored on a regular basis and are available for use. Thanks go to Andrew Jones, Dave Lewis and Philip Constable who have kindly volunteered to undertake regular checks. Chris Phillips continues to provide invaluable support and has facilitated the manufacturer's updates on the devices over recent weeks.

Sue Bates

December 2022

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Chairman

4<sup>th</sup> January 2023