



# Dodington Parish Council

**MINUTES** of **Full Council Meeting** of the Parish Council held in Dodington Parish Council Chambers on **Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2023** at 7.30pm.

**PRESENT:** Councillors David Fitt, Bob Graham, Louise Harris (until 7:50pm), Christine Howard, Paul Hulbert, Adrian Hutton, Sandra Jee, Laura Pearson Tong, Jean Thomas and Chris Zapata (chairing the meeting)

**ALSO PRESENT:** Hannah Saunders Clerk to the Council – Clerking the Meeting. Pip Tymon Deputy Clerk, Ward Councillors Marilyn Palmer & Cheryl Kirby and one Member of Public.

## **141/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr Sarah Hurley and Richard Evans.

## **142/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION**

Cllr Jean Thomas declared an interest in Item 8 on the Agenda (min ref 148/23) as she is a resident adjacent to Tern Inn Development. She will refrain from comment / leave the room.

There were no other declarations of interest of requests for dispensation.

## **143/23 PARISHIONERS QUESTIONS**

None

## **144/23 TO APPROVE MINUTES OF FULL COUNCIL MEETING**

It was resolved that the minutes of Full Council Meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023 as printed / circulated were a true record – and they were duly signed by Cllr Chris Zapata.

Matters Arising that won't be covered off during course of agenda:-

- Following on from Cllr Cheryl Kirby's report about Live Labs experiment – Clerk informed members that SGC had been in touch with Dodington – to see if they would be willing to think about taking park next year – matter will be on CL&E agenda...but Cheryl stated that there are a lot of matters that need to be ironed out currently.
- Clerk confirmed that she had been in touch with Charities Commission re trophies and beacon at Shireway (PMN – Charles from Begbies has been in touch acknowledging items not Charities and to arrange collection).

- SGC Budget will be considered by members at Full Council on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023.
- Clerk will send email out regarding open morning on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2024 to see who can volunteer and what format members would like to see. This will need advertising from 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2024.
- Matter regarding Youth Funding will be discussed further at CL&E meeting following week.
- Clerk and Deputy are struggling getting menu's or venues to respond regarding Christmas 2023. Heron Grill have had their agreement with Tern Inn terminated, and other places just haven't responded. Suggestion of using hall was muted and also going out in the New Year. Clerk to continue looking – but not to spend loads of time on it.
- Following updates to retention policy clearing of back office has begun.
- Memorial that required work at St Peter's has been dealt with by Jefferies Memorial Mason.

### **145/23 TO NOTE MINUTES FROM FOLLOWING COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

It was noted that CL&E, Planning, and FG&P would be approved accordingly at next meetings

- CL&E – 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023
- Planning – 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023
- F&GP – 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023

### **146/23 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM WARD COUNCILLORS**

Cllr Louise Harris reported on 4 major consultations that SGC have launched. These being Budget, Waste, Westerleigh Common and Part Night Lighting. There are quite a few others out for consultation currently too. Cllr Louise Harris and her colleagues are keen to see a good number of responses – and has asked that links be shared accordingly. Chair confirmed that all consultations were scheduled to be included on respective agenda's. *Cllr Louise Harris left meeting.*

Cllr Cheryl Kirby obviously would encourage people to respond to consultations – and following on from last month and reporting about Live Labs experiment would urge caution – as Yate have had a number of issues.

Cllr Marilyn Palmer reported about the tragic accident on Dodington Lane when a horse had to be put down after being struck by a car. She has asked SGC to look into road safety measures and the Police are going to be undertaking some Hi Viz Checks.

### **147/23 PLANNING MATTERS**

Planning applications that were considered can be viewed in Appendix 1 attached to these minutes.

*Cllr Jean Thomas – left chambers for next item.....*

### **148/23 TERN INN CAR PARK RE-DEVELOPMENT**

Clerk confirmed that no amended plans have been submitted yet to SGC, as such no further forward regarding the hedge, etc.

Clerk had found out ownership of the land in front of the shops, and has been in touch with people to see if they would be happy for Parish Council to apply for grant to potentially look at greening up the area. They were more than happy for this – so Clerk is working on grant

application.

*Cllr Jean Thomas rejoined the meeting.*

### **149/23 CONSULTATIONS**

Members had reviewed the consultation regarding Polling Districts and Polling Places, they had no issues and didn't feel need for Parish Council to comment on this.

### **150/23 REVIEW OF COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS 2024 – 25**

Clerk explained reason for this item being included was following on from Staffing Committee Meeting – when they discussed Terms of Reference for that committee / number of meetings / year and fact that double meetings (CL&E / Planning) on same night don't work. Coupled with fact that early in new year – work will begin on chambers / office – Clerk had been asked to come to meeting with suggestions.....

Currently DPC have 42 scheduled meetings a year.

- 11 Full Council, 10 CL&E & 10 Planning, 7 Finance, 2 Staffing (min), 1 AMPC & 1 APM.

Clerk would suggest to members that by doing away with the 3 x double meetings CL&E / Planning Committees could be reduced to 7 each (matching Finance) and 9 Full Council Meetings along with 2 x Staffing Committee and the AMPC and APM.

This would equate to 34 meetings / year – freeing up some valuable time. Question was asked as to whether having less meetings would mean the meetings would be longer? It was felt so long as members came to meetings prepared – then they should be able to proceed swiftly.

By adopting this – it would mean only 2 meetings a month during the first quarter of 2024 when works being carried out.

Cllr Paul Hulbert would also like consideration given to how many working group meetings there are each week – as the prior week had seen 3 – and it was too many. 1 x WG (max) when there is a council / committee meeting and 2 x WG (max) in a week with no council / committee meetings.

It was agreed that Clerk would email out suggested schedule to members in order for this to be approved at next full council.

### **151/23 BUDGET 2024 – 25**

Clerk thanked deputy clerk for comprehensive notes taken at the recent Budget Brainstorming Meeting – and explained that the objectives would be looked at in details at the coming committee meetings – with £'s being put against them. Clerk will come with necessary figures and quotes.

### **152/23 COMPLETION OF AUDIT 22 – 23**

Clerk confirmed completion of Audit 2022 – 23 had been received from BDO LLP on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023 – and there were no other matters to consider. Cost of audit for 22 – 23 was just over £1000 (and this was with no additional work etc). BDO LLP is the nominated auditor for small authorities for the next 4 years.

### **153/23 TO NOTE PROCESS FOR REVIEW / NOMINATION OF INTERNAL AUDITOR 23/24**

Clerk took members through report that is attached to these minutes as Appendix 2. In

brief – Mr Graham Smith had been carrying out internal audits for the last 4 years (since 2020) and it is normal practice for local councils to review their systems of internal control and internal audit every 3 – 4 years.

A point for members to bear in mind is budget / cost of audit....given that know BDO LLP will cost £1000 min each year.

Clerk knows from previous years of getting quotes that some of the specialist companies are expensive (and colleagues have said that SGC charge upwards of £800).

Prior to going out for quotes – Clerk asked for a steer – did members want to increase budget line dramatically so that DPC could afford one of the specialist companies or were they content (as they had been over past 12 years) to go with a qualified Clerk that carries out internal audits? (Prior to Graham, Pat Trull and Fiona Thornton had completed internal audits).

It was unanimously agreed to try and find a clerk willing to undertake. ALCA have details of Clerks that offer this service.

### **154/23 COUNCILLOR TRAINING**

Clerk confirmed that the 'At your place training' via ALCA had been booked for 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023 – and that this was open to all councillors and officers. All of the Chair's / Vice Chair's are then booked onto 'Charing Effective Meetings' training on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023.

The previous week Clerk had attended Standards Training – that Sodbury were undertaking – to see if it was something that would be useful for Dodington. Clerk found it a very useful session – and has contacted the trainer who is willing to facilitate a session for DPC in the New Year.

It was unanimously agreed that Clerk arrange for this to be booked in.

### **155/23 FINANCE MATTERS**

Payments received / made in September were reviewed. All in order.

Bank reconciliation for September was received by members and duly approved and signed by Chair – Cllr Chris Zapata and RFO – Hannah Saunders.

### **156/23 ITEMS TO REPORT**

Clerk reported the following matters:-

- Climate Emergency WG meeting wasn't able to go ahead the previous week – and would need to be rescheduled. Deputy requested that people let her know by 5pm on day of meeting in future if they can't attend.....as meeting wasn't quorate....and she could have saved those that came a wasted journey.
- Following the Planning Committee Meeting – clerk had gone back to Bus Shelter company to receive costings for a DDA enabled Shelter at Witcombe – it was no more expensive than quote for Bredon. Company are offering a discount for 2 shelters to be replaced at once....- Chair / Clerk have looked at and feel it is a good idea. Clerk will email out to members.
- Andy Porter for SGC had been in touch to inform Clerk that LED roll out within Dodington was nearly completed – and to see if there had been any issues (to date

Clerk hasn't had any queries via office / email, etc). Andy Porter also talked about the consultation on Night Lighting that has just launched – and is happy to speak to members if they have any questions.

- Clerk is still receiving complaints from resident at Kelston Close – and despite meeting with housing association and Police is no further forward. Will include on CL&E agenda for further discussion. In the meantime it was suggested Clerk get in touch with Claire Wood from SGC.
- A large amount of spoil / debris has been flytipped outside No19 Witcombe (this can be seen from Rodford Way) with the rain it has created a very muddy footpath. SGC officers are aware – and have visited site....they are concerned about situation – not only of the spoil but the work that is being undertaken in front garden of No.19 near a TPO'd tree.

*Meeting went into closed session for the final 2 items to be considered – with notes minuted confidentially due to commercial / employee sensitivity. (Council Chambers / Office Re-Ordering 157/23 and Staffing Matters 158.23)...*

*Cllrs Cheryl Kirby, Marilyn Palmer and MOP left meeting (9.05pm).*

Following Closed session as there was no further business the meeting was closed at 9.40pm – with Chair thanking everyone for attending.

Next meeting of Full Council – 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Signed .....Chair

Date 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023