

Hannington Parish Council, – Draft Minutes of Quarterly Meeting held on Tuesday 24th
September 2024.

PARISH COUNCIL OF HANNINGTON, HAMPSHIRE

Date and time of Meeting: 7.30pm, Tuesday 24th September 2024

Present: Chair, Cllr. Alex Lowrie (AL),

Cllr. Jon Whitfield (JW)

Cllr. Judy Henry (JH)

Cllr. Nick Joslin (NJ)

Apologies: Cllr David Conquest – BDBC (DC)

Cllr. Pat Coneley (PT)

Clerk: Sue Wright

BDBC & HCC Cllrs. Cllr. Rhyddian Vaughan - HCC (RV)

Members of the Public: Three. (the Audience).

1. Apologies for absence and declarations of interest.

AL opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees, noting that Cllr. Pat Coneley had sent his apologies. SW confirmed the declarations of interest to be up to date – and nothing additional was being made for the purposes of the quarterly meeting.

2. Borough Councillors

None in attendance. SW noted Cllr. David Conquest and Cllr. Mike bound had sent their apologies, indicating that they hoped to attend the next meeting of the Parish Council, due to be held on Tuesday, 10th December, 2024.

3. County Councillors

AL welcomed RV to the meeting who in addition to his monthly written report (prior circulated), provided members with an update on the status of the financial review, currently underway at HCC and which will inform the overall County financial strategy for 2025.

- HCC continues to struggle with rising costs and the financial outlook for 2025, predicts a budget deficit of around £125million. This is largely due to the rising costs of social care (both adult and children) upon which the county is currently spending £2million per day. The county's overall budget for 2025 remains at £9.1million for the year.
- As a result of rising costs, the County is examining different areas of operation where cuts and savings could made, including a review of Household Waste and Recycling Centre provision across the County, (focusing on under-utilised sites and those sites which require too much investment to remain viable). Some sites are expected to close. Wade Road in Basingstoke is classed as a 'Tier 1' facility – and such sites are not being targeted in the spending review. The focus of review is on some Tier 2 and Tier 3 facilities, (for example – Hartley Wintney).
- Other services under review include School Crossing Patrols, (only those which are not being used or otherwise have vacant positions which the authority has not been able to fill) and introducing mandatory car-parking charges for all County operated car parks, (some are still free).
- £7million is also due to be cut from the County's capital building budget, with these funds being reallocated to other activities.
- RV noted [all of this] was a long way off achieving the magnitude of savings required – and that cuts in other areas would be inevitable.

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not the verge – but noted the wire hazard. The bridlepath up to Plantation Farm was also hazardous as it does route along the verge and there is a lot of discarded wire and cables – again previously reported to Kingsclere Estates but still not addressed. The riders in the Audience also noted that the route from the ‘Yellow Brick Road’ down to Ballstone is regularly flooded, requiring the riders to divert but that this was not possible due to some new, recently installed, barbed wire fencing. Routes in Ibworth near the burial ground were blocked with gates, one of which is impossible to open from horse-back. JW proposed that the best solution would be to schedule a meeting between the Parish, the Lengthsman, Stuart and a representative from Kingsclere Estates (most likely Tim May), to walk all the reported routes and determine what works needed to be done, allocate who would deal with it – and agree dates for the work to occur. (This would also assist the Parish and Lengthsman in scheduling the work across 2025). **Action: AL/JW to follow-up with the Lengthsman, Stuart and Tim May and organise a date to survey the reported routes before the next Parish Council meeting in December.**

b. Village Green:

AL noted that there had been some concerns raised over the vulnerability of the Village Green to Travellers, following the recent break-in of the car park at Michael’s Field. However, the advice from the police and Bailiffs is that typically, areas like central, village greens are not targeted by members of the travelling community. AL also noted that there had been discussions in previous council meetings concerning ideas to fence, or partly enclose the Village Green, albeit for a different reason - i.e. to help keep young children playing, from straying into the road, and that such ideas had largely been discarded for practical reasons, plus there was no appetite among the parents of the young children, (whom he had spoken to), for fencing off the green. As such, the parish council does not currently have any further plans to look at this matter - but will happily consider any new ideas, raised in the future. The Audience and JH additionally noted that it was great to see children using the village green and that the recent sign which had been put up asking traffic to slow down, was welcome and appeared to have had some effect.

RV added that the best course of action was to ensure especially young children were supervised when playing on the green (which they generally tend to be).

RV also reminded the Council that he had available a fund to which parish councils in the County were able to apply for grants to help with parish projects and that we were welcome to contact him in respect of any improvements we may wish to make to the village green. NJ/AL commented if this would extend to replacing the recently storm-damaged parish noticeboard and providing a new bench for the green – RV encouraged the council to send in an application. **Action SW to speak to RV further about the nature of the fund and the grants available.**

(RV and the Audience left the meeting at the end of this update and AL and the other members of the council, thanked them for their attendance).

6. Draft Minutes of the Annual and Quarterly meetings held on 7th May 2024.

The draft minutes for the Annual meeting held; 7th May 2024, prior circulated, were Approved subject to one minor amendment to the list of Attendees. **Action: SW to amend and upload final version of minutes to website. (Done).** The draft minutes for the Quarterly meeting held 7th May 2024, (following the Annual meeting), were Approved. **Action: SW to upload final version of minutes to website. (Done).**

7. Matters Arising

a. **Annual Audit 2024** – AL reported that the outcome of the recent AGAR and Audit had been better than previous years and that the auditor had noted the Council’s considerable

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effort to improve standards and governance. SW circulated printed copies of the Audit report and confirmed it was published and available to read on the Parish website. AL welcomed that this year the Auditor had determined not to make any formal recommendations for improvement. AL summarised the main observations in the report, noting –

- this year, the parish council had correctly observed the time for the *Exercise of Public Rights*. Last year due to a miscommunication, we had been late displaying the notice on the public noticeboard, (although it was on the website).
- A review of the contract-tender level depicted in the financial regulations; (this level is currently deemed adequate by the council due to a lack of contracts – but the auditor recommended that we minute that it is reviewed annually),
- Ensuring the annual review of the *Risk Register* is completed in advance of each audit period, (this year's is tied to the current *Health and Safety risk review* which JW is completing).
- AL reported that the auditor had again made the comment that the council had 'too much in reserve' – a comment previously dismissed by the council as the reserves are being deliberately being built up to cover the expected cost of road repairs around the village green, (which have been quoted as being in the order of £30,000). All Members agreed that the slow and consistent build-up of reserves over a period of years, was necessary for this purpose.
- AL noted that he would again be able to submit this year's VAT reclaim via HMRC's online portal – a requirement which appears in our Financial Regulations.
- AL confirmed that in the absence of a cost-effective PAYE solution for a parish council which seeks to employ only one employee, the current arrangement for the reimbursement of the clerk's fees had been explained to the auditor and would, for the moment, continue.
- The auditor also recommended that the Council's risk and asset registers be compared with the council's insurance policy, schedule. No other observations to report – but if members had any further questions on the detail of the report – further discussion could be added to a future agenda. **Actions:** *SW to obtain details of Insurance policy schedule and send a copy of the Health and Safety risk assessment document to JW.*

- b. **Noticeboard Suppliers** – SW circulated the updated quote received from one of the three suppliers originally contacted in December of last year; GEViews has agreed to honour the December 2023 quote. NJ confirmed a 'one-window' design would be suitable for the White Lane locations and AL/JW confirmed a two-window design for the village green. SW commented that a separate contractor would need to be found to install the noticeboards as none of the companies spoken to, provide installation services. AL and JW noted that [Stuart] would be able to help. **Approved:** noticeboards are to be ordered and installed, ideally before the end of the year. Expected cost of the boards is £1440.00 plus VAT, plus installation fees. **ALL** noted that the council should also speak to JV about a possible grant to help with the costs of the noticeboards as well as a replacement bench. **Action:** *SW to finalise quote with supplier and order the noticeboards – and contact [Stuart] for a quote to install. SW to also enquire about the supply of a replacement bench and speak to RV about a possible grant, once costs are finalised.*
- c. **Computer Leasing** – SW to review the payment options available, in respect of the lease company, previously reported: our Financial Regulations (and bank account terms) do not permit monthly direct debits (standing orders are permitted) – and hence fees which need to be paid monthly by Direct debit are problematic. **Action SW:** *to enquire of HardSoft Computers whether an annual payment can be made instead.*

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- d. **Parish Domain name** – *As previously reported:* the reason for the break in service of the parish website, earlier this year was due to Namesco holding incorrect information in respect of our account – and not permitting us to easily update our account contact details. Invoices for the service were being addressed to the previous clerk's address and the account had been placed into her name, in error, rather than 'the Clerk' and the clerks' generic email address being provided as the correct contact email address. ALL conveyed the parish council was enormously grateful to Jan Hertz, who has been instrumental in resolving the issue with Namesco, reinstating the website, updating the account details and enabling payment of the outstanding invoices. AL confirmed that the Namesco Account is now fully updated with the correct information, that we have access and that all future invoices will now be sent to the Clerk's generic email address. AL also noted that both Jan and he, had to pay two of the immediately due, older, invoices out of their own money simply to ensure the website was reinstated, while the rest of the work to update details was verified. The two invoices in question are denoted below - and payment will need to be reimbursed to Jan Hertz and AL respectively – not – to Namesco, who have already been paid. (See below).

8. Finance

a. **Payments for Retrospective Approval: (ALREADY PAID) –**

- **Michael's Field Committee:** (AL) Retrospective approval was requested for the payment pledged to the Michael's Field Committee, in the sum of £400.00, as a contribution to the total cost of £1300.00, they paid out to the Bailiffs to evict the Travellers from the car park, earlier this year. **Approved. Action AL: to remind the Michael's Field Committee they need to send us an invoice.**
- **NamesCo invoice:** Domain Resolution - £24.00. See explanation under 7. above. This invoice was paid by Jan Hertz and we need to reimburse him direct. **Approved.**
- **NamesCo invoice:** Domain renewal - £215.99 See explanation under 7. above. This invoice was paid by AL and we need to reimburse him direct. JW, NJ and JH: **Approved.**
- **Pamber Parish Council:** Lengthsman - £768.00 (paid by Pamber Parish, but we need to record our approval). AL/JW confirmed as accurate. **Approved.** SW noted she had already advised the Clerk to Pamber Parish to go ahead and pay the invoice, as it was overdue.

b. **New Payments Due:**

- **BDBC:** Play Area Inspection Invoice dated 23/08/24 - £53.04: All: **Approved (SW noted that this invoice is now overdue and needs to be paid asap).**
- **Auditing Solutions Limited:** Invoice for 2024 Audit - £600.00: All: **Approved. (SW noted that this invoice is now overdue and needs to be paid asap).**
- **Cryoserver** Invoice: £299.38. AL noted this is the cloud storage service for the Parish Council emails/communications and is for a two year renewal. Next invoice is not due until 2026. **Approved.**
- **Clerks** Invoice for Q3 (of the calendar year) 2024 - £1000.00. **Approved.**

c. **Receipts/Income Received:**

- **BDBC:** Parish Payment for 24/25 - £3662.00. AL noted that the precept payment from BDBC had now been received and credited to our bank account.

- d. **Bank Reconciliation** – AL provided copies of the cashbook summary for Q1 and Q2 of our financial year, (commencing 01/04/2024), reconciling outgoings with our stated budget. The only variation to note was that the bill for this year's Audit was more than expected (the

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Auditor has increased their fee). **Approved.** JW and NJ signed on behalf of the council as a true record of the council's accounts. SW noted that copies of all the council's financial documents, including monthly bank statements and copies of the cashbook summaries – were available to view on the website under the 'Financials' tab for 2024.

Action: AL/JW to login to Lloyds online banking and create payment instructions to pay all the invoices which are due for payment, by **30th September 2024.**

9. Policy Review: (note the review of all policies and codes for 2024, is now complete and current versions of all documents are available under the Governance and Health and Safety tabs of the website).

a. **Financial Risk Register** – See note above under '7. Audit 2024, sub-point 7' and the Auditor's comments regarding the need to complete the review and ensure that the council's insurance policy adequately covers the risks identified in the updated report. AL risk registers would be completed by the end of 2024.

b. **Updated Health & Safety Risk Assessment** – see comment above under '7. Audit 2024, sub-point 7'. JW confirmed that the Health and Safety risk assessment would be concluded before the end of the year. **Action SW:** – see previous note under the same.

10. Matters Arising – National Grid Powerline Upgrade Works and any further road closures. Members noted that the national grid powerline upgrade works had caused some disruption involving the repeated closure of Meadham Lane but that generally the road closures were notified in advance and the signage, clear. SW noted that further information was available about the works on the National Grid website and JW commented that the works here were a small part of a much bigger project, involving the upgrade of powerlines across Hampshire through to Devizes. Members confirmed they had received no specific complaints to the (directed to the parish council) from residents.

11. AOB. No further matters raised.

12. Proposed Dates of next meetings:

Last Quarterly Meeting of 2024 – **Tuesday 10th December 2024**, in Hannington Village Hall, at the usual time of **7.00pm.**

Approved at the Quarterly meeting of the Parish Council, held on Tuesday 10th December 2024.

Signed:
Cllr. Alex Lowrie

Chair, Hannington Parish Council

Dated:

Tuesday, 10th December
2024.

End.