

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 5th December 2023 at 7.00pm at Longford Village Hall

1. Attendance noted as

Cllrs J Ford (Chair), C Byers (Vice-Chair), G Bocking, K Doherty, L Gough, R Harris, R Meeks.

Also present: Mrs J Shirley (Clerk), Borough Cllr S Hands.

Members of public present: One member of public.

Apologies: Cllr C Young, Borough Cllr P Ockleton.

2. Declarations of interest in items on the agenda

None.

3. Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 7th November 2023

Council resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 7th November 2023. Proposed by Cllr Byers, seconded by Cllr Gough, all in favour.

4. Public Participation

A representative of the Longford Football Club addressed the meeting and requested that no more trees be planted on the playing field, due to the leaves dropping onto the football lines. There was also a discussion about the car parking and that the access to the overflow parking area becomes blocked by vehicles in the car park.

County Councillor Report: No report.

5. Finance / Procedures

- Council received the latest bank reconciliations and budget report for the 2023/24 accounts.
- Council reviewed the final draft of the budget for 2024/25 and noted that the taxbase won't be known until later this week. The Clerk recommended that Council approve that the Projects budget be adjusted up/down as required to ensure a 0% increase on the band D average council tax. Cllr Byers proposed accepting the draft budget and recommendation, seconded by Cllr Doherty. All in favour. **Action: Clerk** to submit precept request.
- Council noted that the NALC pay scales for 2023/24 have been agreed, backdated to 1st April 2023, any arrears to be paid with the December salary payment.
- Council approved payment of invoices; **Action: Cllr Ford and Cllr Byers** to authorise the online payments. Clerk's salary to be paid by monthly standing order from January 2024 onwards.

Invoice date	Details	Gross
08/11/23	Edge IT Systems Ltd	£183.90
31/12/23	HMRC Q3	£435.61
01/12/23	Redhand	£1056.00
13/11/23	BJ Unwin Forestry Consultancy Ltd	£480.00
30/11/23	Salaries November & December 2023	Confidential

6. Parks, Open Spaces & Allotments

- A report was received from Cllr Byers regarding the community orchard and wildflower areas on the playing field and Sivell Close. Six more trees have been planted in the community orchard and the walnut tree that died has been replaced. All orchard trees have been mulched around the bases. A further six trees to be planted this coming weekend, along with several other maintenance activities. Additional tree supports needed for the horse chestnut and rowan trees. Cllr Byers would like Council to purchase a cordless pressure washer to clean the play surfaces, to be added to the next agenda. **Action: Clerk.**

- b) Council received the tree inspection report and list of recommended works. Some of the minor works can be undertaken by the working group. The playing field working group and the Clerk to meet to go through the priorities and request quotes to budget for the larger works. **Action: Working Group / Clerk.**
- c) Council considered signage for overflow car park and agreed to purchase one "Overflow Car Parking" sign size 400x300mm at a cost of £19.13+VAT and a post at a cost of £106.33+VAT. **Action: Clerk** to order the sign and post and discuss with the village hall committee regarding road markings to keep the emergency access points clear.
- d) Council considered its response to the Biodiversity Duty and resolved to adopt the model policy as drafted, proposed by Cllr Byers and seconded by Cllr Doherty, all in favour. The action plan to be reviewed annually in the autumn. **Action: Clerk.**
- e) The next playing field working party date is 9th December to plant trees in the community orchard. A further working party date will also be organised potentially 20th January.

Borough Councillor Report: Cllr Hands reported that the section 106 review is almost complete, and we will be advised if there is any s106 monies due to the parish. A joint meeting has been arranged with landowners regarding the sewerage problem, Cllr Byers was invited to join the meeting. Longford PC's wildflower area was featured in the Tewkesbury Borough News.

7. Planning

- a) There were no planning applications to consider.

8. Highways

- a) There was no update from the Road Safety Working Group. Cllr Harris noted that some section 106 monies has been identified for keeping the roadside hedges clear on the road between Longford and Twigworth.

9. Council discussed "Future proofing" of the Council's projects to ensure continuity.

Council will set aside an amount of budget amount annually for an earmarked reserve for future maintenance and will also actively seek to engage with younger generations and through local sports groups to encourage involvement with the orchard and wildflower area projects; this has been included in the Biodiversity action plan.

10. To receive reports from representatives for information only:

- Allotments: water taps have been switched off for the winter.
- Finance: Cllr Meek will undertake a review of the accounts.
- Personnel: Cllr Doherty and Cllr Young will arrange the Clerk's annual appraisal. It was noted that the parish office will be closed for 3 weeks over Christmas; the out of office messages will direct callers / emails to the Chair and Vice Chair. **Action: Clerk.**
- Village Hall: Cllr Byers now holds the parish council's key for the village hall. Cllr Doherty gave an update from the latest village hall committee meeting. The village hall bins have insufficient capacity and they may decide to padlock the bins to prevent misuse. The village hall committee were invited to contact Cllr Hands regarding the matter.
- Playing Field: a plaque had been installed on a playing field bench without permission. It was agreed to laminate a notice to attach to the bench advising of removal of the plaque after 14 days and inviting the family to get in contact with the council. A follow-up post on social media will be published if required. **Action: Cllr Meeks / Cllr Byers.**

Next Meeting to be held on 6th February 2024 at 7.00pm (no meeting in January).

Meeting closed at 8.20pm.