

27/2023

UPTON BISHOP PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on

Thursday 7th November 2023 at 19.00 at the Millennium Hall, Upton Bishop

Present

Councillors: Mark Rusby (in the Chair), Mike Tyers, Andy Parr, Paul Newman and Keith Cornwall

In attendance

Clerk Helen Tinson – on behalf of HALC (Herefordshire Association of Local Councils); and 12 members of the public.

1. Consideration to access HALC Clerk Cover for the meeting:

It was RESOLVED: to access HALC's CiLCA qualified Clerk Cover for the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence: Cllrs Michael Wallace and Mark Shuttlewood; Ward Cllr Barry Durkin. Cllr Karl Lumsden was absent with no apologies.

3. Declarations of interest & written dispensation requests: Cllr Mark Rusby declared pecuniary interests in agenda items 6.62 and 6.67 (reimbursement of expenses) and agenda item 9 (Veteran's Support); and Cllr Paul Newman declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 12 (Website).

4. Minutes:

4.1. Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 5th September 2023:

It was RESOLVED: to approve the minutes as a true and proper record of the meeting. The minutes were signed by the Chair.

5. Public Participation Open Session:

5.1. Ward Councillors Report: The Chairman reported that Ward Councillor Durkin is still on sick leave and therefore there was no report. Cllr Graham Biggs (Ward Cllr for Backbury Ward) continues to provide support as needed during Cllr Durkin's absence.

5.2. Representation from Members of the Public:

5.2.1. A member of the public raised a query concerning the traffic light sequencing at the crossroads of the A449 and B4224. The resident was advised to submit a report on Herefordshire Council's 'Report a Problem' website. The Chairman stated he would also submit a report.

6. Finance:

6.1. External Auditors Report:

Members were informed that the External Auditor, PKF Littlejohn, have asked for a full review of all bank records for the last five years. It was confirmed that the review was submitted in October, and following direction from the auditor, the AGAR Accounting Statement has been updated and published on the website. The auditors confirm they have yet to finalise the audit.

PKF have requested that the draft minutes are amended to include the following comment:

'PKF had asked for a review of bank records to establish the opening balance of the 2021/22 year (which in practice meant checking the 2020/21 figures too) for the 2022/23 AGAR comparative figures. It was agreed that now the Council has access to the bank records, it would be worthwhile checking earlier years to try and find the cause of the historic discrepancies. PKF confirm that the work on the objections to the 2022/23 AGAR is ongoing.'

6.2. Bank Balances: Current account £15,300.78 and Reserve Account £10,870.40. Total available funds £26,171.18. It was confirmed that a monthly Bank Reconciliation is completed and verified by the Chair and Vice Chair.

6.3. Income v Expenditure: Annual income at 31.10.23 is £19,746 including the second precept payment and the first Lengthsman grant payment. Expenditure is £21,095.80.

6.4. Draft Budget 2024/25: Members noted that the first draft budget was issued at the meeting on the 5th September and published thereafter. However, the External Auditor have since advised that the Parish Council will be liable for their audit fees, anticipated in the region of £3000, and it was recommended that a provision is allowed in the draft budget for the next financial year. Accordingly, the budget was revised and three additional options published, each accounting for the anticipated fees with one option to maintain the precept at its current level, and two options to increase the precept by 2.5% and 4.69% respectively.

A member of the council raised a query concerning a standing order that he understood requires the budget to be considered over three consecutive meetings. It was agreed that Cllr Tyers and Cllr Cornwall would review the Standing Orders during the meeting and to defer the vote until later in the meeting.

6.5. Emergency Purchase of Council Laptop: Members were informed that the Clerk's Laptop had failed to start when it was powered up on Thursday 12th October. A report was presented detailing the actions taken to first attempt to repair the laptop and, when this failed, to purchase a new one. The report is attached to these minutes as Appendix A.

6.6. Payments:

It was RESOLVED: to approve the following invoices for payment:

6.6.1. William Dereham, IT consultancy (Microsoft renewal & outlook), £80.00

6.6.2. Mark Rusby, Refund of Microsoft renewal invoice payment, £59.99 inc. VAT. Cllr Rusby abstained from voting in accordance with his declaration of interest.

6.6.3. HALC, Clerk cover September, £279.12 inc. VAT

6.6.4. Buses4us, Contribution to setting up the Daffodil line, £994.00

6.6.5. Wayne Reed, Lengthsman work September, £576.00

6.6.6. Millenium Hall hire, July & September, £40.00

- 6.6.7. Mark Rusby, Refund of purchase of new laptop for UBPC, £349.00 inc. VAT. Cllr Rusby abstained from voting in accordance with his declaration of interest.
- 6.6.8. William Dereham, IT consultancy (new laptop work), £120.00
- 6.6.9. Helen Geach, IT consultancy (Renew annual website domain name), £232.00
- 6.6.10. Wayne Reed, Lengthsman work October, £864.00
- 6.6.11. HALC, Clerk cover November, £279.12 inc. VAT \

6.7. Receipts:

Members noted the following receipts:

- 6.7.1. Payment from HC for 2nd Precept payment of 2023, £9313.00
- 6.7.2. Payment from HC for 1st payment under the Lengthsman grant scheme, £1120.00

7. Highways:

7.1. **£125,000 Traffic Calming Project:** There was no update to report. The Chairman noted that he and Cllr Parr are maintaining contact with Herefordshire Council and Balfour Beatty.

7.2. **Lengthsman:** Members were informed that the focus in October had been on the eastern side of the parish (Tanhouse/Kempley Rd - plan area C); the focus for November is the western area (Phocle Green- plan area A) and Central areas (Crow Hill/Crews – plan area B). This has included tidying the war memorial for Remembrance Day). The Parish Emergency Plan (PEP) co-ordination team were stood up in response to Storm Ciaran but all roads were reported to be draining well.

8. Planning:

8.1. 232750: Tan House Stables, Upton Bishop, HR9 7UP: Conversion and extension of existing outbuilding to be used as ancillary accommodation to the main dwelling.

Members considered the application and raised no objections.

It was RESOLVED: to 'Make a General Comment' noting no objections. Cllr Mike Tyers abstained from the vote.

8.2. 233014: 9 The Pastures, Upton Bishop, HR9 7UU: Single story side extension.

Members considered the application and raised no objections.

It was RESOLVED: to SUPPORT the application noting no objections.

Cllr Mark Rusby left the room in accordance with his declaration of interest. Cllr Mike Tyers chaired the next item.

9. Veterans Support:

Members received a report concerning a request received for financial support towards an outreach centre in Ross on Wye to support Veterans in the south of the county. A parish consultation has been carried out with local veterans. It was concluded that they would be pleased to support the project by volunteering time but did not feel they would use the project themselves.

It was RESOLVED: to support the project but not to pledge financial aid at this time.

Cllr Mark Rusby returned to the room and resumed the chair.

10. Recruitment:

Members were informed that actions are ongoing to actively seek a new clerk, via HALC and from an advert on the website and local social media pages. It was noted that a number of other local parish councils close to Upton Bishop are also seeking a clerk and that the Chairman has been in contact to inform them of this vacancy in case any applicants are looking for more than one council. Everyone present was asked to spread the word.

11. Footpaths:

Members received a report noting that some minor tidying has been carried out and some gates installed, with the rest to be finished in the New Year.

12. Website:

Members received a report noting recent events that have taken place in the parish during September and October, and publicising forthcoming events, of note:

- The concert for Ukraine with the Blue Mesnies on 10th November
- The American Evening on 24th November
- The Christmas Fayre on 2nd December

13. Items for the next Agenda: Members raised the following items for the next agenda:

- 13.1. Update on External Audit
- 13.2. Update on Traffic Calming Scheme
- 13.3. Update on Clerk Recruitment
- 13.4. Consider the use of the Millenium Hall and Land for community benefit

14. Draft Budget 2024/25: Members returned to this agenda item and were informed that Cllrs Tyers and Cornwall had read the Standing Orders and had been unable to locate an order requiring the budget to be considered over three consecutive meetings. Members noted that if a decision was not made at this meeting, it may be necessary to call an Extra Ordinary Meeting to agree the precept in order to meet the precept submission deadline set by Herefordshire Council.

It was RESOLVED: to suspend the Standing Order if identified post meeting to allow a vote on the draft budget.

It was RESOLVED: to approve the draft budget v3 with no increase to the precept, which is to be set at £18,626.00. The budget as agreed is attached to these minutes as Appendix B.

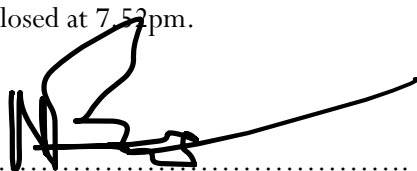
15. Chairmans Closing Remarks:

The Chairman had nothing further to add.

16. Date of the Next Meeting:

- 16.1. Tuesday 6th February 2024, 7pm, Millennium Hall, Ordinary Parish Council Meeting

The meeting closed at 7.52pm.

SIGNED 

DATE .. 6 Feb 24

APPENDIX A: RECORD OF ACTIONS FOLLOWING FAILURE OF PC LAPTOP

Report By Cllr Mark Rusby

The Parish Council computer/laptop failed to start when I tried to power it up on Thu 12 Oct 23.

Not having a working computer/laptop would see the Parish Council unable to function or operate effectively, given that the majority of work is now done electronically and online.

Given the situation, it was confirmed with a fellow councillor that this was considered an emergency that exposed the PC to a high level of risk, and as such it was reasonable that a new computer was purchased as soon as possible.

Under Financial Regulations paras 4.1 (Expenditure by RFO/Chairman up to £500) and 4.5 (Emergency and extreme risk), the simplest and quickest action was for me to use my credit card (the PC currently does not have a credit or debit card for electronic purchases), purchase a new computer, and then claim the money back. I would look to clear the payment with the Parish Council at the earliest opportunity, which was the next PC meeting on 7 Nov 23. This emergency action was in line with the PC Risk Management Policy (Section 3 bullet 8).

Incident Actions:

Thu 12 Oct - The immediate action was to call an IT expert (William Derham IT Consultants) to try and effect a repair of the laptop. Despite his best efforts, the computer could not be repaired and he advised that the only option was to purchase a new laptop.

Thu 12 Oct - With the IT consultant a review was carried out to find a new laptop that provided the best value for money for the Parish. It was decided to purchase an ASOS Vivobook 15 X1500EA (15"/i3/255 GB SSD/8GB RAM) laptop for Curry's for £349, as this could be purchased and collected immediately.

Thu 12 Oct – Post initial risk assessment, the laptop was paid for online using my credit card and I collected the laptop from Gloucester shop the same day (this saved the PC from any delivery charges).

Fri 13 Oct – Chairman carried out the following actions:

- a. Engaged the IT consultant to return to set up the new laptop and all the associated email accounts and required software.
- b. Directed the IT consultant to extract the old laptop hard drive to be retained by the Parish Council to ensure the security of any information on the old laptop.
- c. The old laptop hard drive was retained and stored with the two backup hard drives.
- d. The old laptop to be disposed of responsibly through the Ross electronic waste disposal facility.
- e. The invoice to purchase the new computer/laptop was forwarded to the parish clerk's email address as a record of actions, for payment and auditory purposes.
- f. The IT consultant invoiced for his work (£120) and forwarded to the parish clerk's email address as a record of actions, for payment and auditory purposes

Wed 18 Oct – Chairman submitted an insurance claim of £469 to the PC insurance company (BHIB insurance), to reclaim the costs of the purchase and setup of the new laptop.

Tues 7 Nov 23 – submit invoices for clearance with the Pc and update as per this note.

APPENDIX B: AGREED BUDGET 2024/25

	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	Expected	Budget
EXPENDITURE	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	yr 31.3.25	yr 31.3.25
Clerks Salary inc PAYE	£624.00	£6 24.00	£624.00	£624.00	£624.00	£624.00	£624.00	£624.00	£624.00	£624.00	£624.00	£624.00	£7488.00	£7,488.00
PAYE Admin	£13.00	£13.00	£13.00	£13.00	£13.00	£13.00	£13.00	£13.00	£13.00	£13.00	£13.00	£13.00	£156.00	£156.00
Clerks Home Allowance	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00	£ 10.00	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00	£120.00	£120.00
Clerks mileage	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00			£10.00	£10.00	£100.00	£100.00
Stationary	£8.00	£8.00	£8.00	£8.00	£8.00	£8.00	£8.00	£8.00	£8.00	£8.00	£8.00	£8.00	£96.00	£96.00
IT software					£80.00								£80.00	£80.00
Audit		£3,000.00				£277.00						£210.00	£3,487.00	£3,487.00
Insurance			£408.00										£408.00	£408.00
HALC subscriptions										£596.00			£596.00	£596.00
ICO	£42.00												£42.00	£42.00
Website	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00	£120.00	£120.00
Meeting Hall Hire	£42.00	£42.00	£42.00	£42.00	£42.00	£42.00	£42.00	£42.00	£42.00	£42.00	£42.00	£42.00	£504.00	£504.00
Training & recruiting			£100.00			£100.00			£100.00			£100.00	£400.00	£400.00
Lengthsman	£432.00	£432.00	£432.00	£432.00	£432.00	£432.00	£432.00	£432.00	£432.00	£432.00	£432.00	£432.00	£5,184.00	£5,184.00
PWLB													£ -	£ -
IT support - Website/Ckks computer	£52.50		£52.50			£52.50			£52.50				£210.00	£210.00
Parish event					£250.00								£250.00	£250.00
S137 Donations						£500.00							£500.00	£500.00
Contingency	£250.00	£250.00	£250.00	£250.00	£250.00	£250.00	£250.00	£250.00	£250.00	£250.00	£250.00	£250.00	£3,000.00	£3,000.00
VAT													£ -	£ -
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£1,493.50	£4,399.00	£1,959.50	£1,399.00	£1,729.00	£2,328.50	£1,399.00	£1,399.00	£1,541.50	£1,985.00	£1,399.00	£1,709.00	£22,741.00	£22,741.00
INCOME														
Precept	£9,313.00					£9,313.00							£18,626.00	£18,626.00
VAT Recoverable													£ -	
Lengthsman grant	£854.00			£854.00			£854.00			£854.00			£3,416.00	£3,416.00
Donations & Grants													£ -	£ -
TOTAL RECEIPTS	£10,167.00	£ -	£ -	£854.00	£ -	£9,313.00	£854.00	£ -	£ -	£854.00	£ -	£ -	£22,042.00	£22,042.00

