

COATES PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

TUESDAY 3 MAY 2022

7.30PM Coates Village Hall

Chair for this meeting: Gilly Torry-Harris

Councillors and Officials:	
Gilly Torry-Harris (GTH)	Chair
Harris, Stephen (SMH)	Vice-Chair
Clement-Davies, Ann (ACD)	Councillor
Dobson, John (JD)	Councillor
Hobson, Andrew (AH)	Councillor
Robbie Whitfield (RW)	Councillor
Alan Moorcroft (AWM)	Clerk/RFO

Members of the Public:
Berry, Tony (TB) Cotswold District Councillor
Hirst, Stephen (SH) Glos. County Councillor
Large, Simon (SL) Tree Warden/Village Club Secretary
2 additional members of the public attended

1. PARISH CLERKS

GTH thanked the previous clerk, Caroline Coates, for her committed service and welcomed Alan Moorcroft, the new clerk to his first meeting and wished him well in his role.

2. ELECTION

GTH and SMH stepped down from their respective roles as Chair and Vice-Chair. RW was content to take on the role of Chair and, therefore, was proposed by GTH as the new chair. SH seconded and all Councillors approved. All Councillors resolved that RW should deliver a Declaration of Acceptance of Office following the meeting, and AWM would arrange this. No offers to take on the role of Vice-Chair were received. It was agreed that GTH would continue to chair this meeting.

3. APOLOGIES

None required.

4. DECLARATION OF MEMBER INTERESTS ON AGENDA MATTERS

including Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Personal Interests

All Councillors declared that they had no such interests.

5. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING – 4 MARCH 2022

The minutes of the meeting on 4 March 2022 were approved by all Councillors and signed by the Chair.

6. REPORTS FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR TONY BERRY AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR STEPHEN HIRST

TB presented a printed report (Appendix 1 attached.)

The Tunnel House application for extension to the Inn and Barn and the siting of 6 accommodation pods is progressing, and the pub could be operational again later this year.

The Boundary Commission Consultation has closed, but CDC unanimously supports the naming of the 2 new constituencies as South and North Cotswolds.

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A new Speedwatch initiative was discussed involving possible installation of speed cameras for deterrence.

SH presented a printed report (Appendix 2 attached.)

Adult Social Care in the county is under strain with a shortage of care home beds, increasing costs and closure of care homes.

An application for a 'Build Back Better' grant has been made by the Village Club to cover the costs of an AV system, marquee, picnic benches and store room shelving at the Village Hall, which is likely to be successful.

7. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2021/22

1. ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

All Councillors had been provided with a copy of the AIAR (page 4 of AGAR) signed by the Internal Auditor, summarising the audit conclusions, together with her accompanying Report, in advance of the meeting. GTH took Councillors through the summary of audit conclusions, and Councillors noted that the Auditor had confirmed that, in all significant respects, all internal control objectives were being achieved.

AWM and GTH then took Councillors through the Auditor's accompanying Report. Councillors noted the Auditor's conclusion that good controls were in place, together with recommendations, which included updating Standing Orders and Financial Regulations to reflect actual practice regarding bank mandates, and how the Council records interests on the Agenda. Councillors agreed that any such issues are being satisfactorily addressed.

See 8.4 below for Review of Bank Mandates.

2. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (Section 1)

Councillors reviewed and reflected on all the individual statements, agreeing 'Yes' in each relevant case. All Councillors approved the AGS which was signed by the Chair and Clerk.

3. ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS (Section 2)

These had been prepared and signed by the previous RFO.

Councillors reviewed all aspects of the Statements, with reference to the Asset Register for 2021/22 and the Variations Statement.

All Councillors approved the Accounting Statements, following which they were signed by the Chair.

4. CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION

This certifies that during the financial year 2021/22, the higher of the authority's gross income for the year or gross annual expenditure for the year did not exceed £25,000.

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All Councillors approved the Certificate which was signed by the previous RFO and Chair.

5. NOTICE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS

All Councillors, together with the RFO, agreed and noted that the Notice of Public Rights, covering a period of 30 working days, would commence on 20 June 2022 when any person interested has the right to inspect and make copies of the accounting records.

8. FINANCIALS

1. APPROVAL OF YEAR-END ACCOUNTS: APRIL 2021-MARCH 2022

Councillors had considered the year end accounts copied to them in advance of the meeting. GTH took Councillors through these with reference to the Account Summary/Bank Reconciliation and Receipts and Payments sheet, which resulted in Reserves of £9,872.33 at the end of the year. The former Clerk's salary accrued for March 2022, together with an outstanding invoice for a printer cartridge (£10.51) would be paid in May 2022.

Approval of the End of Year Accounts and Reserves:
Proposed by GTH. Seconded by ACD.
Resolved with the approval of all Councillors.

2. APPROVAL OF SPEND AGAINST BUDGET VARIANCE: APRIL 2021-MARCH 2022

GTH took Councillors through the Budget Variance with specific reference to any significant variances, but all Councillors understood and accepted the reasons for variance. Overall the total spend was £2,799 less than budgeted.

Approval of Spend against Budget Variance:
Proposed by GTH. Seconded by ACD.
Resolved with the approval of all Councillors.

3. ANNUAL REVIEW OF BANK INVESTMENT ACCOUNT (Precept)

Councillors reviewed the Precept Account at Lloyds Bank with a view to deciding whether the current year's precept of £10,000.00 should remain invested in the same account. In 2021-2022 total interest earned was £1.04, but it was acknowledged by Councillors that in the current economic climate investment rates still generally remained low. Considerable time had been spent recently reviewing the terms and conditions of the Account, and all Councillors agreed that there would be no overall benefit from transferring to another investment account at this time.

Agreement to continue holding precept in existing Precept Account:
Proposed by GTH. Seconded by SMH.
Resolved with the approval of all Councillors.

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4. ANNUAL REVIEW OF BANK MANDATES (Signatories on Bank Account)

Internet banking arrangements are in place, and bank mandates are currently under review. The former Clerk/RFO has recently been removed from the mandate and is being replaced by the new Clerk/RFO, who will be the Service Administrator. Both Councillors AH and SH are now included in the mandate as 'signatures' on the accounts. Discussions are taking place with the bank about the best way to operate the system to ensure compliance with JPAG's Practitioners Guide from NALC and the Council's Financial Regulations.

It was proposed that AWM be given authority to process and authorise payments up to £100.

Agreement to continue review of bank mandates, update Financial Regulations and give AWM authority to process and approve payments up to £100:

Proposed by SMH. Seconded by JD.

Resolved with the approval of all Councillors.

5. ANNUAL REVIEW OF DIRECT DEBITS

Councillors reviewed the only Direct Debit of £35 per year payable to the Information Commissioner's Office, which is the cheapest method of payment.

Agreement to retain this Direct Debit:

Proposed by SMH. Seconded by JD.

Resolved with the approval of all Councillors.

6. VERIFICATION OF ACCOUNTS AT 30 APRIL 2022

AH produced bank statements for the Council's accounts which were checked and the balances at 30 April 2022 were verified as follows:

Precept account: £15,380.07

Treasurer's Account: £1,783.37

Verification of bank accounts:

Proposed by AH. Seconded by SMH.

Resolved with the approval of all Councillors.

7. DETAILS OF RECENT INVOICES:

1. GAPTC Internal Audit Services	£87.50
2. Former Clerk's Salary, holiday pay and expenses (01.03.22–14.04.22)	£488.50
3. Former Clerk's Homeworking Allowance (6 weeks)	£36.00
4. HMRC (PAYE)	£122.00
5. KP Gardens (Grass Cutting)	£612.00

Payments proposed by GTH and AH; Seconded by SMH

Resolved to make payments with the approval of all Councillors.

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8. PRE-APPROVAL TO PAY:

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 1. Insurance Premium (Proposed by GTH; Seconded by AH) | Up to £650.00 |
| 2. Athena Webdesigns (Proposed by SMH; Seconded by RW) | £300.00 |
| 3. Jubilee Plaque for VG (Proposed by GTH; Seconded by RW) | Up to £150.00 |
| 4. KP Gardens (Proposed by JD; Seconded by GTH) | Up to £650.00 |

Resolved to make payments when required with the approval of all Councillors.

9. ACTION POINTS FROM LAST MEETING

1. Consider new Data Retention Policy/Schedule and Update to Privacy Policy.

RW had emailed Councillors proposed drafts of a Data Retention Policy and Privacy Policy before the meeting. RW gave a summary of the proposed policies. It was agreed that all Councillors would consider them and discuss again at the next meeting with a view to approving and adopting them.

- 2(a) Review of Asset Register.

The Asset Register has just been reviewed, with AWM having increased values by 7% (in line with the CPI Annual Rate as at March 2022.) These revised values form the basis of the insurance review. Councillors have agreed that the brick built bus shelter should be classified as a building, and the locations of various portable items are being verified. The playground equipment, which has weekly safety checks, is about have its annual inspection by RoSPA, who will advise as to its condition and any necessary repairs. The inspection report will be reviewed and noted by the Council and a decision made on repairs or replacements.

Approval of revised Asset Register:
Proposed by GTH. Seconded by SMH.
Resolved with the approval of all Councillors.

- 2(b) Review and Renewal of Insurance Policy

The current insurance policy is with AXA on a 3 year contract and is due to expire on 31 May. Quotes from a number of companies have been requested, based on the updated Asset Register. GTH explained that quotes have ranged from £588 to £613 per year, but further adjustments to the level of cover are required. At the time of the meeting, all Councillors approved the AVIVA policy and quote, but further quotes are awaited and will be considered by Councillors. GTH proposed pre-approval to pay the agreed premium up to £650, which was seconded by AH and approved by all Councillors - see 8.8.1 above.

- 3(a) Website Security

GTH reported that Athena Webdesigns, who host the website, had now installed the SSL Certificate, as agreed, to improve security.

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3(b) Review and Renewal of Athena Website Package

GTH explained that the current contract with Athena is up for renewal on 1 June. It was discussed that other companies could be considered, but Councillors were not in favour of starting up a new website at this time. Athena has offered 3 potential renewal packages: WORDPRESS PRO (basic); PRO PLUS (medium) and PREMIUM. All have daily backups and an SSL Certificate, but they have different space capacities and different methods for processing software updates. The medium package is closest to what we have now, but we would need extra storage capacity.

All Councillors approved the medium option with the addition of extra space at a cost of £300 per year to be reviewed in 6 months.

Proposed by SMH. Seconded by RW.

Resolved with the approval of all councillors.

4. Trewsbury Road Junction

District Councillor TB had confirmed in his report that the trees at the junction had been substantially cleared, resulting in improved visibility, which will hopefully reduce the risk of accidents.

5. Unnamed Road

A member of the public asked for an update on the issue of the unnamed road, which is referred to as both Dark Lane and Manor Farm Road. GTH explained that a fee of £300 had been paid to CDC Address Management with a view to resolving the issue. The resident's concern was that delivery drivers were getting lost, and she would prefer the road to be called Dark Lane. RW acknowledged the issue, but confirmed that other residents would prefer it to be called Manor Farm Road, and so no consensus was possible. JD confirmed that he was looking into the issue and would report back when there are any developments.

6. Update on Dog Fouling Problem

JD reported that the situation has improved, and it is hoped this will no longer be an issue.

7. Footpath from Disabled Gate

ACD has spoken with the residents who had concerns about the footpath from the disabled gate and they are content that the issue is now resolved. It was agreed that this item can be regarded as closed.

8. Update on Path to Bus Shelter

GTH asked County Councillor SH if there had been any developments relating to the proposed path to the bus shelter. There have been none so far, but SH will continue to press this issue with the intention of Highways agreeing to a simple footpath.

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9. Co-option of New Councillor

No-one has come forward for co-option. RW may discuss this with a possible candidate.

10. ANNUAL REVIEW OF PARISH POLICY DOCUMENTS

Allocation of responsibilities:

Councillors nominated themselves to review the following policies and produce drafts before the next meeting

1. Financial Regulations	SMH
2. Health and Safety Policy	ACD
3. Asset Register	AWM
4. Code of Conduct	RW
5. Disciplinary and Grievance Arrangements	JD
6. Standing Orders	AH
7. Publication Scheme	RW
8. Risk Management	GTH
9. Reserves Policy	SMH
10. Grant policy	GTH

11. GENERAL VILLAGE MATTERS

Tree Planting

SL told the meeting that in the last year 1,600 trees had been planted around the village, including Victory Green, and the cricket pitch. Additionally, some trees have been planted on private land, but are visible to the public. GCC had donated 1,000 trees, instead of the intended 100. More trees remain to be planted next year.

The specimen trees planted on Victory Green are becoming established, but should be watered. GTH is arranging for a tree plaque to be erected on Victory Green, commemorating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. She proposed pre-approval to spend up to £150, which was seconded by RW and approved by all Councillors – see 8.8.3 above.

Village Clock

AH updated the meeting about the Village Clock. One face is not working, and the hands on the other side expand and slip off the spindle in hot weather. This is being looked at and hopefully will be rectified by a new battery.

Queen's Platinum Jubilee

SL reported on the village events planned for the Jubilee weekend, organised by the Village Club and Village Hall, which are a barbecue on Saturday 4 June at the Village Hall and the Big Jubilee Lunch on Sunday 5 June. The road closure application for Sunday (10am – 5pm near Village Hall) has been approved, and AH

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has personally agreed to organise it on the day. SL said that personal invites will be sent to every house in the village.

12. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

1. 21/03258/FUL
2. 22/0318/TPO
3. 22/00778/FUL

All councillors have now responded and AWM is to notify the Planning Department that there are no objections.

13. RATIFICATION OF APPOINTMENT OF NEW PARISH CLERK

GTH kept Councillors informed throughout the recruitment process and consulted them regarding AWM's suitability for the role of Parish Clerk and RFO. All Councillors had individually approved the appointment of AWM.

1. Terms and Conditions of Employment:

GTH took Councillors through these with reference to the Employment Contract agreed with AWM.

2. Salary Scale:

GTH explained the agreed NALC pay scale for AWM, together with a Home Working Allowance.

3. Pension Provision:

SMH confirmed that all Pensions' Regulator requirements had been complied with, and AWM had been offered the opportunity to join a pension scheme, but that he had declined the offer.

All Councillors ratified the appointment of AWM
Proposed by GTH. Seconded by AH.
Resolved with the approval of all Councillors.

14. POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION AT NEXT MEETING

None other than those referred to above.

The meeting closed at 22.15

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – TB report

Appendix 2 – SH report

Chairman Signature:

Parish Clerk Signature:

Date:

NOTICE OF NEXT MEETING: Monday 25 July 2022 at Coates Village Hall.

Electronic copies of these and previous Minutes are available from the Parish Clerk:

clerk@coatesparish.org.uk

DRAFT