

MINUTES OF COATES PARISH COUNCIL (CPC) MEETING
THURSDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2023
7.30PM Coates Village Hall
Chair for this meeting: Robbie Whitfield

Councillors and Officials:	
Whitfield, Robbie (RW)	Chairman
Gilly Torry-Harris (GTH)	Councillor
Harris, Stephen (SMH)	Councillor
Brown, Jacqueline (JB)	Councillor
Wilson, Phyllida (PW)	Councillor
Alan Moorcroft (AWM)	Clerk/RFO

Members of the Public:
McKeown, Mike (MMc) CDC councillor
1 member of the public

Due to circumstances the order of the meeting departed from the agenda. The notes are recorded in the order that the items were discussed.

1. APOLOGIES

Simon Large (SL, Tree Warden) sent apologies for being unable to attend the meeting.

2. DECLARATION OF MEMBER INTERESTS ON AGENDA MATTERS
including Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Personal Interests

None.

3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING – 3 OCTOBER 2023

The draft minutes were agreed and signed.

5. RECEIVE REPORTS RELEVANT TO COATES PARISH

AWM on behalf of SL. Update requested from tree surgeon re removal of tree near Village Hall; no firm date yet. Villagers informed.

MMC updated the councillors regarding CDC matters. Finances remain tight, but not yet critical. Currently eating into reserves. A consultation is to be held on how to balance the books before finances become an issue. Uncertainty remains over future funding. CDC continues to look at cost saving possibilities.

At 7:13 JB arrived. She had been delayed by traffic issues.

CDC continue to promote green issues through their partnership with Make My Home Green which has seen further enquiries and orders. They are also looking to extend the number of EV charging points across the region.

RW understands the need for cost cutting but wondered if any policy is in place to protect vulnerable customers. MMC confirmed there was such a policy and will check to see if this a written policy.

6. ROADS, SPEED CAMERAS

Stephen Hirst (Gloucestershire County Council (GCC)) was not in attendance. AWM to chase regarding missing road signs.

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The initial question to consider regarding speed cameras is whether GCC would install them if CPC are able to raise the finance for their purchase. AWM will try and establish who is responsible for this at GCC.

4. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The councillors had no comments regarding the applications for Setts (23/03341/FUL) or Larch House (23/03416/FUL). The application for Dockem House (23/02419/FUL) had just been received and the councillors had not had sufficient time to consider; any subsequent comments will be made to AWM in advance of the deadline for comment.

The applicant for the development next to Sarona (23/0350/FUL) attended the meeting. The applicant had moved back into his parent's former home. The intention was to build a new property and then sell Sarona. The applicant has spoken to a number of neighbours and they had raised no objections; the councillors established that not all potential neighbours had been approached. Questions were asked about the proposed cladding and how much taller the new building would be (1.1m). RW explained the process to the applicant. CDC are responsible for making decisions on applications. CPC, like other members of the public, can only express views on any applications. If any views are made then they will be on the CDC website which is open for anybody to view.

The councillors had a brief discussion on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Some CIL is expected in 2024 and the councillors will give some thought as to how this could be spent.

7. FINANCIALS

JB had undertaken the last Internal Control (IC) review; this was satisfactory. SMH volunteered for the next IC review; AWM will send SMH the relevant material.

Bank transfers. AWM confirmed that the Financial Regulations (5.5) enable him to undertake bank transfers up to £4,000, subject to subsequent approval by the councillors at a meeting. The councillors proposed and seconded acceptance of the bank transfers made by AWM on 3 (£500) and 27 October (£500) and 1 November (£300).

A VAT claim for £1,116.42 was made on 24 October and received on 2 November. This claim included the playground repairs (£515.91).

It was proposed and seconded that payment be made against the invoices received; postage for VAT claim £3.45, tree survey £264.00 and payroll £14.00.

Contractual and statutory payments had been made for PAYE on the clerk's wages (5 October and 20 November) and clerk's salary, in accordance with the National Pay scale, and WAH allowance (20 November). Payments for grass cutting of £306.00 were made on 16 October and 1 November. The wages of the clerk as per the National Pay scale have recently been increased. AWM left the meeting while the proposed increase was considered. The councillors proposed and seconded the wage increase at scale 11 on the National Pay scale. There will be arrears of pay and AWM will calculate these for payment in January.

It was proposed and seconded to pay for printer cartridges (£37.50) and training for PW (£35.00). The request for a contribution of £160 from The Watershed was considered by the

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councillors. It was proposed and seconded that this amount be paid. AWM to obtain clarification on how any future contributions are calculated and what amounts are being paid by other parishes.

The councillors considered the bank reconciliations at 26 October (precept £11,670.98) and 27 October (Treasurers) £835.38 and compared the 2023/24 spend to date against the budgeted amounts. The VAT repayments had not been included in the budget and will be factored into future budgets. Notwithstanding the potential additional spend the playground is showing a large underspend; this was put down to the fluctuating nature of the playground repairs. The bank reconciliations were agreed and the councillors were satisfied with the spending to date, and the reasons for variance from the original budget. A brief review of the draft 2024/25 budget was undertaken and will be considered in more detail at the January meeting.

The calculation of the likely reserves at 31 March 2024 were considered. It was proposed and seconded that an amount of £5,000 be placed in a 32 day notice account at Lloyds; this will increase the interest received from 1.3% to 2.6%.

The councillors considered the appointment of either a GAPTC appointed auditor or an external appointment. The councillors have been satisfied with the GAPTC service to date, which is considerably cheaper and proposed and seconded the appointment of a GAPTC Internal Auditor.

8. TREES

The tree survey from AJ Arborists was considered. It was proposed and seconded that an estimate be obtained of the costs of the items identified as minor. Advice is also to be sought as to whether the apple trees should be pruned in January.

9. PLAYGROUND

It was proposed and seconded that Ian Park be instructed to undertake jet washing the surfaces of the playground equipment at a cost of £50.00. It was also proposed and seconded that Greenfields be appointed to undertake the remedial work to the see saw at a cost of £163.00

10. MAINTENANCE OF COUNCIL ASSETS

Contact has been made with Simon Gilchrist, clock repairer and he will view the clock shortly.

AWM has established that the churchyard is billed separately from CPC for grass cutting; because of their close proximity the contractor undertake cuts in both areas on the same day. AWM is making arrangements with the contractor to establish which areas are cut.

11. ROADS

It was agreed that CPC will make a 20mph motion for traffic through the village in line with the nationwide campaign. AWM to obtain suitable wording for a motion.

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12. ACTION POINTS FROM LAST MEETING

JB is to inform the Village Hall committee of the offer from the RAU of the use of their facilities; JB had been unable to attend the last meeting or otherwise this would have been done then. This will be confirmed in writing.

13. ANNUAL REVIEW OF PARISH POLICY DOCUMENTS

It had not been possible for RW and AWM to meet to discuss the suggested changes to the Publicity Scheme Policy. The aim is to have this done by the January meeting.

To complete the Risk Assessment CPC need a risk assessment on the village hall. This is being put in place by the Village Hall committee and should be available shortly.

CPC believe they have done everything within their power to further biodiversity and no further action is required.

It was agreed that the Transparency Code should be placed on the website.

The Monitoring Officer for any actions under the Disciplinary & Grievance policy is Angela Claridge, Director of Governance & Development CDC.

AWM has just taken possession of a number of historical parish council records, including minute books dating back to the 19th century. It was proposed and seconded that these be made available to the historian writing a history of Cirencester and surrounding parishes, subject to them being reviewed from a GDPR perspective.

14. OTHER ITEMS

It is thought that CPC cannot add anything to the Zero Hour campaign and so no action will be taken.

RW explained that in previous years the Remembrance wreath had been paid for privately. It was proposed and seconded that CPC would take responsibility for this payment.

15. POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION AT NEXT MEETING

The date of the January meeting is to be revised to 16 January (if possible) and the date of the March meeting is to be decided.

The meeting closed at 10:00pm.

Chairman Signature: 
Parish Clerk Signature: 
Date: 16/01/24

NOTICE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 16 January 2024 at Coates Village Hall.
Electronic copies of these and previous Minutes are available from the Parish Clerk:
clerk@coatesparish.org.uk