

**Aynho Parish Council**

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Draft Minutes of the Ordinary meeting of Aynho Parish Council held on Monday 04 March 2024 at 7:30pm in Aynho Village Hall Committee Room.

Dawn Willis (DW) welcomed everyone and said Leslie Leighton has resigned so a new Chair is required.

*Les Horley (LH) proposed DW as Chair; seconded by Ray Willis (RW) Resolved: unanimous*

PC Cllr Attendees: DW, RW and LH

Stephen Brook (SB): Finance Officer

Introducing Danny Moody (DM) from NCALC

Minutes: Rebecca Horley

**303.** To receive and approve apologies for absence.

Cllr Jeremy James (JJ) sent apologies.

*Proposed (P): LH Seconded (S): RW.*

**304.** To approve for signature the minutes of the meetings held on 6 November 2023 and 4 December 2023.

These cannot be approved because they have not been written up and received. Agree to write to past Chair and see if he will be willing to provide minutes for next meeting. If not will have to be completed from memory.

*P:LH and S:RW. Resolved: unanimous.*

**305.** To receive any declarations of interest on items on the agenda.

None

**306.** To elect a vice chair of the council.

The Vice Chair has also resigned so need to elect.

*DW proposed RW, S: LH. Resolved: unanimous*

**307. Public participation session** (15 minutes max)

Why have all the councillors resigned? There are a variety of reasons – number of disagreements. It is not up to any of us councillors to provide reasons.

Now have to recruit 5 new councillors? – correct. Arrangements will be temporary at the moment.

Co-opts until 2025 elections when everyone is up for re-election.

Need a minimum of 3 to make a decision at these Aynho Parish Council (APC) meetings.

If anyone wants to join what do you do? DM explained the procedure and advised on how APC must implement.

If more than the number required apply, what do APC do? If you get more than 5. Could interview or present publicly and make a decision at an APC meeting. Co-option policy is available.

We have 9 councillors which is traditional for Aynho. 600 residents.

Tree cutting query raised – is it correct that approval to prune trees on Croughton Rd is not APC business but a County matter? That is true. Bottom of Portway works undertaken today was just the base of the tree clearance.

Can APC put pressure on County to deal with potholes on Kings Sutton turn and Roundtown? We will do our best but individuals can use Street Doctor and the more who do it the better.

Chair is temporary until May 2024, as is the Vice Chair. DM reminded that Chair is elected for this meeting only. At the next meeting APC will elect that position again so DW only has Chair at the moment.

**308.** To note recent councillor resignations, to note public notice of the vacancies, and to confirm next steps in terms of advertising for candidates to fill the vacancies by co-option.

Covered in previous item.

Note resignations. Has proper notice been given now that it is clear that there is a requirement for individual notices to go out for all 5. All will have different resignation dates but the start dates will all be the same.

LH to action. *P: DW, S: RW. Resolved: unanimous*

**309.** To create the unpaid post of Acting Clerk and to appoint a member of the council to that post to carry out all the duties assigned to the Clerk and Proper Officer.

Need an interim Clerk which will be an unpaid post.

LH appointed. *P: DW, S: RW. Resolved: unanimous*

**310.** To consider how to fill the post of Clerk and Proper Officer in the short, medium, and long term and to appoint a Recruitment Committee comprised of three councillors with delegated authority to recruit and appoint such officers as directed by the council.

DM is able to assist with appointment. Suggested 3 different arrangements: one unpaid acting clerk by a councillor because you cannot do it paid. Not ideal because you have enough to do as a member. This is a stop gap measure. Big challenge to recruit a permanent clerk because not many available. Lots to do on APC to put it back on its feet for the coming months. So best to find an interim clerk perhaps from elsewhere so they can hit the ground running. Post has been missing for almost a year. So get an interim – perhaps sufficiently long to allow a proper recruitment. Permanent clerk does not necessarily have to have previous experience so for the purposes of tonight establish a committee to agree the Heads of Terms (HoTs) to recruit an interim clerk in the next week to 10 days for an immediate start. Busy time of year presents an additional challenge. So specify number of hours, hourly rate and length of contract. Maybe a 6 month contract to Sept/October with a view to getting a permanent clerk.

Interim clerk can be sorted and agreement to HoTs now.

Previous contract had a rate of £15.30/hour and was for 30 hours per month.

On 1 April 2023 – new rates were introduced. With the National Minimum Wage one cannot go below and APC need someone now to get APC out of this hole. £20/hour is a more likely offer.

LH suggested £20/hour; 6 months; 30 hours. *P: LH, S: DW. Resolved: unanimous*

DM advised that APC need a Recruitment Committee – this will be made up of JJ, DW and RW (if JJ cannot then LH will). This will be a delegated committee which is minuted. Confidential committee so the meetings will be public but at some point, the committee will be excluding public from certain items. Action: set up Recruitment Committee.

Closing date of applications for the interim to apply: 18 March.

*P: LH, S: RW. Resolved: unanimous.*

A question was raised as to why there has not been a clerk in post? Cllr Dean and then Cllr Leighton acted as clerk but the post was not advertised.

### **311. Finance**

**311.1.** To review and approve a schedule of bills for payment.

List sent – all items down to repayment of Saylex loan are down for completeness.

List is more or less what has been agreed in the past and 3 items only just very recently been added.

Donation to church is just the printing as the Village newsletter is very important to people. To reduce cost could the newsletter be produced every other month? Not APC's decision because it is a church newsletter but APC does have space in it for APC matters.

OK to pay items: £650 to church to help with printing and £225 to Katherine House and £225 to Air Ambulance.

Total payments come to: £ 5028.25

All agreed to pay *P: RW S: LH. Resolved: unanimous*

Re: payments and returns. Park Club draw monies are ring fenced for sports field. Expecting income from the Quiz night before end of financial year.

**311.2.** To delegate authority to the Acting Clerk and/or RFO to approve for payment any bills presented to the council that cannot wait to be approved at a meeting of the council. Such payments to be reported to the next meeting of the council.

Sensible to delegate approval of bills that can't wait.

*P: LH S: DW. Resolved: unanimous.*

**311.3.** To review the budget for 2024/25.

SB mentioned draft budget from end of last year. Not having a clerk for last 9 months means we do have unspent money on that item. Some items like grass cutting a bit more than planned. Underspent on maintenance. Not done anything on parking and highways. Net result is that we have spent less than the budget allowance. Money for sports field is ringfenced and they have made a profit so they get to keep it. Income has been much as expected. £14k underspend carries forward. Street light payments will end next year. Makes provision for clerk and there is flexibility to deal with the transition.

*Budget P: LH, S:RW, Resolved: unanimous.*

**311.4.** To review and confirm bank signatories and to review arrangements for the council's banking.

Only JJ is now available so need 2 more bank forms signed. Others come off automatically. Not looking to change banks at least at the moment as this one works for now. For ease extra signatories should be all 3 councillors present. *P: LH, S: RW. Resolved: unanimous.*

DM mentioned that the Unity Trust Bank has a dedicated manager set up for parish councils. Something to consider at some point, ie at a quieter period.

**312.** To review and update councillors' areas of responsibility

For interim:

RW – maintenance of the village and including H&S checks at the pavilion

DW – pavilion bookings

LH - Sports field facilities including cricket liaison – *P: LH, S: DW. Resolved: unanimous*

Park Club Draw – perhaps should go back to being at arms length from APC (money raised - half to sports field and half to ?? ) but APC do not need to get involved.

Planning applications – add to next month to decide. - Action.

*P: LH S: RW. Resolved: unanimous.*

**313.** To consider and make arrangements for the Annual Parish Meeting for Aynho to be held on 13 May 2024.

This year will be very different. Normally at the Annual PC meeting we have a recap. Would like to see this one of recruitment, how conflict is resolved and how we want to be open with our business. Opportunity to showcase what we do. New things – Bridge, dog walking. Emphasis on going forward. Have an open event and a way to bring the community together.

AGM and the Parish Meeting do not have to be on the same night.

AGM on 13 May 2024 when formally elect Chair and Vice Chair; and the Parish Meeting on 20 May 2024.

*P: DW S: RW. Resolved: unanimous*

**314.** To consider creating a new website with Parish Online and registering the domain name aynhoparishcouncil.gov.uk. Current website is very out of date. We have been asking for review for a long time. Perhaps archive and start again? May have to spend some money to get this done for us.

Church/Village Hall and Parish Council – differences need to be made clear. Access to the website for uploading is very difficult. Perhaps consider when APC has more members to help out.

DM advised: APC has a legal obligation to publish on the website so it either gets control of the existing one or start afresh. £350 would provide APC with a dedicated website which you can do immediately. Domain name expected is .gov.uk website and this is free to any parish council so use it. Website is maintained by the Clerk in terms of content. Design of website will be fixed by the provider as an off the shelf. But it's only generally for the parish council so the other links to the church etc will not be covered. Aynho would probably need a separate community website.

Aynho.org was devised in 2015 as a basis of keeping it in house. The previous Chair was in control of it. The annual renewal fee could possibly still be paid for Mr Leighton to continue for the benefit of the village etc. To be decided at a future date.

Set up new website now and leave the other one. LH action now.

*P: LH S: DW. Resolved: unanimous.*

Propose to spend £500 to do this now. *P: DW S: RW. Resolved: unanimous*

**315.** To approve the grass cutting contract for 2024.

RW approached 5 companies. No one wants the job – too big or too small or too expensive. Of names put forward – various responses and some declined to comment. The tender has to be renewed every 2 years. At the moment, we have a way forward to combine the cricket and APC requirements but need to do final check with cricket. We almost need to do the first cut now so need to get this finalised.

If agree RW would like to speak to Ed Flint and start early and we can review it as we go. We do not have much choice at the moment. LH: Suggested increase the cuts if we can. *P: RW, S: DW. Resolved: unanimous.*

**316.** Agree to new hire costs for Pavilion and Sports Field users. Agree to terms and conditions regarding outstanding payments

We have experience of some not paying their bill (one whole year without payment) and charges haven't gone up for some time. Football rates agreed last year. New rates to consider:

Pav Hire - £5/hour for villagers or £8 for non-villagers. £25 half day. £50 full day.

Tennis - £4/hour and free for villagers. Not businesses. For them it will be a minimum of one hour and then half hour rates - £6/hour

Cricket pitch - £20/half day.

*P: LH S: DW. Resolved: unanimous.*

SB to update the invoice to tennis and consider perhaps pay in advance for businesses?

Notice will be put up on the pavilion.

*P: LH S: DW. Resolved: unanimous.*

**317** To confirm the date and time for the next meeting.

Monday 8 April 2024 @ 19:30 at Aynho Village Hall. Agreed.

#### Information about this Agenda

The role of Clerk to Aynho Parish Council is currently vacant and, as such, the functions ordinarily completed by the Clerk are being fulfilled by Councillors until a new Clerk has been appointed. In the meantime, all correspondence can be direct to the Clerk's email and the telephone number noted in the introduction.

#### Apologies

Apologies for absence including a general reason (i.e. illness, holiday, work etc.) should be notified to [clerk@aynho.org](mailto:clerk@aynho.org) prior to the start of the meeting.

#### Declarations of Interest

Members should disclose any interests in the business to be discussed. They are also reminded that the disclosure of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (i.e., money) will require that the member withdraws from the meeting room during the transaction of that item of business. They should declare these either before the meeting or at the start of the relevant agenda item.

#### Local Government and Finance Act 1992 – Budget Setting, Contracts & Supplementary Estimates

Members are reminded that any member who is two months in arrears with Council Tax must declare that fact and may speak but not vote on any decision which involves budget setting, extending, or agreeing contracts or incurring expenditure not provided for in the agreed budget and could affect calculations on the level of Council Tax.

#### Evacuation Procedure

If notified by the Clerk or any Councillor to evacuate the building, do this via the nearest available fire exit. Members and visitors should proceed to the assembly area directly in-front of the village hall and await further instructions.

#### Access to Meetings

If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the Clerk, giving as much notice as possible before the meeting.

#### Mobile Phones

Please ensure that any device is switched to silent operation or switched off.