**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MEETING OF SHILLINGSTONE PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT**

**7.00 PM ON THURSDAY 5th OCTOBER 2023 AT THE PORTMAN HALL SHILLINGSTONE**

**PRESENT:** Councillors R McNamara (RM) (Chairman) I Suter (IS) (Vice-Chairman), M Barlow (MB), L Gasson (LG), R Harwood (RH), R Leadbeater (RL), M Pomeroy (MP) K Ridout (KR), R White (RW) Footpath Officer Graham Rains and the Clerk D Green

In addition, there were 7 members of the public present.

**1150. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Unitary Councillor Batstone.

**1151. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION**

Cllrs Suter & Ridout previously declared interests concerning the Old Ox Community Bid committee.

Cllr Ridout re permissive path to Hine Town Lane.

**1152. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th September 2023 were approved.

**1153. MATTERS ARISING**

The Chairman provided an update in relation to several matters:

**Road Safety – Speed Surveys**

A meeting had been held with the Road Safety Team to discuss the location of the planned surveys. It was agreed that these would be based near to the Cross and near to Augustan Avenue. Speeding traffic at both of these locations was an issue highlighted in the Traffic Survey.

Data relating to the Speedwatch campaign had been requested from Dorset Police but not received.

**Permissive path - Hine Town Lane to the A357**

Dorset Council have confirmed that this route is still classified as a ‘permissive path’ and is not a Right of Way (ROW). In order to obtain ROW status a ‘Definitive Map Modification Order’ would need to be applied for. The Council unanimously **AGREED** that an application would be made.

**Defibrillator Training**

Cllr Ridout is considering training dates in early 2024. The events when arranged will be publicised in the Parish Magazine and on social media.

**Daffodil bulbs**

An additional 300 bulbs have now been obtained for planting shortly.

**War Memorial Steps**

An application has been made and is now open to comment. If approved no work will be possible in time for this year’s Remembrance Sunday event.

**1154. PUBLIC SESSION**

The Chairman noted that Dorset Police had been unable to attend the meeting as intended and would now be present at the November 2023 meeting and available to discuss solutions to the rise of anti-social behaviour in the village.

Cllr Ridout had held a very useful meeting with the Police in September; it was apparent that Police had not been receiving regular reports of incidents and had consequently treated the village as an area with few problems. The Police had advised that it is vital that residents report issues as they arise as this enables patterns of problem areas to be identified. The Police have now increased their presence in the village including in Augustan Avenue but had advised that no action can be taken against perpetrators unless there is CCTV evidence of some kind. Cllr Ridout explained that cameras covering public areas are not a legal problem providing the footage is not uploaded to social media.

Graham Rains noted that the Trailway is not property policed and that this may be a route taken by miscreants. He suggested that a police electric bike patrol could be considered. It was noted that such initiatives were taken place elsewhere.

A resident noted how difficult it is to actually lodge a report with the Police, there being several information layers to navigate, with there being no apparent difference between the processes for reporting a crime or an anti-social incident.

It was noted that the Police had been seen in Augustan Avenue in mid-afternoon but this was not very helpful given that recent disturbances have taken place between midnight and 1 A.M.

It was said that Councillors should not put themselves in any danger when confronting those responsible for the problems. The PC was requested to consider the use of CCTV, particularly along Augustan Avenue, and covering the play area and Burtons Field, being the locations where gatherings have been taking place.

The Chairman agreed to write to Dorset Police confirming the issues to be raised at the November meeting, namely:

* The difficulty process for reporting ‘anti-social incidents’
* The use of CCTV including hidden cameras and the feasibility of monitoring this
* Police presence at appropriate times of the day/night

A resident raised a question concerning the disposal of grass clippings and other vegetation from the Churchyard and enquired as to whether it could be taken by allotment holders. RH will refer the question to the Garden Club and the Yellow Bus project.

**1155. UNITARY COUNCILLOR REPORT**

The Unitary Councillor was not present and no written report had been received.

**1156. FOOTPATHS**

Graham Rains provided an update concerning several structural problems:

* Bridleway Bridge along Holloway Lane – timbers will be replaced before Christmas
* Sleeper bridge at FP 33/50 – will be repaired in 2024
* Bird Hide – will be rebuilt over the winter
* Trailway resurfacing – quotes are being sought for work to commence in spring 2024
* Foot-bridge over the Stour at Bere Marsh – will replaced at some stage

**1157. ASSET of COMMUNITY VALUE BID UPDATE**

The new owners were scheduled to take occupancy on 9th October 2023.

The CIC had secured grant funding of £477k to purchase the property as a Community Asset but it seems that this will now not be required. It was noted that the bid had been successful and the process could be repeated, if necessary, at some stage.

**1158. COUNCILOR REPORTS**

**The School –** The School had provided a written report:

• The new academic year has started really positively.

• School has moved back to 4 classes this academic year, no longer a need for 5 classes (which was needed when OF merged with Shillingstone).

• All the children from OF who wanted transport on the Dorset Council bus have a place. The bus service is working well and the children are arriving in school on time and leaving school on time.

• The school SDP has a key area for curriculum development this year:- writing - and has introduced a new writing scheme called ‘The Write Stuff’. This is very popular with the children so far and having a good impact on outcomes.

• Harvest Festival will be held at the School this year - all community members invited on Sunday 15th October at 10:30am.

**Portman Hall –**

The porch is being rebuilt and accessibility is being improved. The Newcomers Party on 30th September was a great success. It was agreed that Cllr Harwood would be the PC contact for the Portman Hall in the future (KR)

**The Church -**

The Church is closed throughout October & November to allow the roof repair to proceed. A lot of rot has been identified. It is hoped that normal services will resume in December. ‘Carols in the Pub’ should be able to take place in the Old Ox as usual at Christmas (LG)

**Allotments –**

The Clerk advised that a new allotments policy & tenancy agreement has been drafted and posted to the website. This clarifies the allocations policy and maintenance requirements and will apply to all new allotment holders. An issue has been reported concerning dog mess in the path to the old allotments, some signage will be put in place (RH & The Clerk)

**1159. PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

**New applications to consider:**

**P/FUL/2023/05526 & P/LBC/2023/05527 - Shillingstone War Memorial Poplar Hill Shillingstone -**Installation of 2 No. balustrade panels including handrail; increase height of brick pillars and associated works

There were no objections to Council’s own application for this necessary work.

**1160. FINANCES**

**i) Retrospective Payments approval:** the following payments were **APPROVED**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Payee Name** |  **£ Total**  | **Reason** |
| 01/09/2023 | Edens Landscapes Limited |  £ 252.00  | General strimming/Mowing AA |
| 04/09/2023 | Mr Kevin Sullivan |  £ 75.00  | Pavilion Cleaning |
| 04/09/2023 | Mrs Jill Sullivan |  £ 78.04  | Pavilion Cleaning |
| 04/09/2023 | Shillingstone Cricket Club |  £ 416.66  | Mowing |
| 06/09/2023 | The Poppy Shop |  £ 28.99  | Wreath & donation |
| 08/09/2023 | A J Gallagher |  £ 2,427.00  | Insurance renewal  |
| 08/09/2023 | BDO LLP |  £ 252.00  | External audit  |
| 08/09/2023 | David Green |  £ 42.00  | August expenses |
| 08/09/2023 | Total Energy Services |  £ 301.61  | Boiler service |
| 21/09/2023 | Bourton Fencing Ltd |  £ 566.40  | Repair Trailway gate |
| 27/09/2023 | Dorset Council |  £ 515.00  | Allotment rental |
| 28/09/2023 | David Green |  £ 693.38  | September 2023 pay |

**iv) New payments approval**

Clerk’s expenses £ 61.24 were approved.

**iii) Financial update & initial budget proposal 2024-2025**

The Clerk provided a 6-month financial report. It was noted that in general expenditure is on target. There have been the odd exceptional expenditures (gate repair, new laptop) but these have not proved to have adversely affected the overall financial position. There has been a significant benefit from higher interest rates on reserve deposits.

 The initial conclusion at this stage is that a budget can be set without increasing the precept above £36,295. It was suggested though that additional lengthman work to sweep pavements should be considered and quotes should be sought for this work which may impact on the final proposed budget.

The Clerk advised that there was no necessity to set a budget at this stage. This will be revisited in December when decisions can be finalised.

**1161. PLAY AREAS, RECREATION GROUND AND PROPERTY CHECK**

The Clerk provided a report:

* **Trailway Gate behind Tennis Court –** the gate and a section of fencing has been repaired
* **Hedging in the corner of the Rec** – The Chairman and Clerk have inspected the fencing from Spencer Gardens. It was noted that there is an encroaching ivy issue, although contractors have advised that the hedge itself is not causing a problem. Quotes are being sought for remedial work to deal with the ivy & strimming. A crown lift to the cherry tree in the corner has been recommended
* **Tennis Courts –** The Chairman & Clerk met the Tennis Club to discuss issues around the court. Quotes have been requested to strim a cherry tree and an ash, and also deal with overgrown shrubbery and the leylandii hedge near the Court. The Council **AGREED** that £250 of the reserve monies would be used to assist the funding of these costs.
* **Play Equipment: Multiplay -** two boards on the multi-play have been replaced and the remaining new and panels have been ordered.

**1162. CORRESPONDENCE**

The Clerk confirmed that the following items of correspondence had been circulated:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **DATE** | **FROM** | **DESCRIPTION** |
| 12/09/2023 | Dorset Council | status of footpath between Hine Town lane and Blandford Road |
| 17/09/2023 | Garry & Gillian Pickering | Request for information under FOIA |
| 19/09/2023 | Sturminster Newsletter | Town Newsletter - What's Happening in Stur |
| 25/09/2023 | Dorset Highways | Proposed Temporary Closure Various Roads, Okeford Fitzpaine |

**1163. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA**

* Anti-Social behaviour solutions
* Coronation Cup progress
* Road drainage outside the Portman Hall
* New Councillor appointment

**1164. RETIREMENT OF COUNCILLOR LESLEY GASSON**

The Parish Council recognised the long service of Cllr Gasson and presented her with a special jug decorated with bees. The Council wished Lesley well for a long and happy retirement. KR took a group photograph for the archives!

**1165. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be on **Thursday 2nd November 2023 at 7:00 pm**, at the Portman Hall. There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20:35