

ALSTONEFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Alstonefield Parish Council was held on Wednesday 22nd February 2023 at 7.00 pm in Alstonefield Village Hall.

Present: Chair: R Hignett (RH), Vice Chair: G Campbell (GC), A Hayes (AH), S Jeffery (SJ), C McIlroy (CM), M Newman (MN) and the Clerk, M Jinks. There were four members of the public in attendance, including R Longdon (RL).

23.02.1 Apologies

The District Councillor, Edwin Wain, had sent his apologies.

23.02.2 Minutes of the previous meeting

The draft minutes of the previous meeting had been published and forwarded to members of the Council in advance of the meeting. These were confirmed as a true record of proceedings and signed by the Chair.

23.02.3 Declarations of personal and prejudicial interest of councillors related to published agenda

None declared.

23.02.4 Vacancy for Councillor

Rebecca Longdon had been invited to the meeting following her expressing an interest in becoming a Councillor; she gave a brief introduction and was then unanimously co-opted to the Council. RL signed the relevant Declaration of Acceptance of Office, which was witnessed by the Clerk.

23.02.5 Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported back on the action that he had taken following the previous meeting. Within this, he advised that, following a personal inspection, there was no visible debris on the lane from Lode Mill to Milldale. This was confirmed by RH and AH and so no report had been submitted to SCC.

The clerk also advised that he had confirmed the Alstonefield lengthsman had renewed his public liability insurance.

23.02.6 Items to/from the District Councillor

Nothing advised

23.02.7 Planning matters, decision notices and appeals

Application NP/SM/1122/1439 concerning the installation of a solar powered ticket machine at Alstonefield toilets carpark was discussed. Allowing for the fact that there are two other carparks in the village, there were strong concerns that this would cause significant roadside parking which would become a highways safety issue. The Clerk was instructed to respond setting out the council's objections.

Application NP/SM/0123/0058 concerning renovation work and a new garage at "Dovecliff", Milldale was discussed. The applicants were in attendance and were able to answer various questions. The Clerk was instructed to respond stating that the Council had no objections.

The Clerk advised that Application NP/SM/1022/1303 (barn conversion on Gypsy Lane) had been granted permission, but with significant conditions.

The Clerk further advised that Application NP/SM/1222/1612 (solar panels on Manifold Cottage) had been refused.

It was noted that the the applicant for NP/SM/1021/1062 (internal alterations at The Cottage) had appealed against some of the conditions. As the Council had not objected in the first instance, no further action was deemed necessary.

23.02.8 Financial matters - items of expenditure and income

Car park monies had kindly been collected by AH in the sum of £60.32

The following payments were approved:

Chq 1492	Peter Frost - Lengthsman	£1,263.60, no VAT
Chq 1493	Hartington Patients Group - donation	£100.00, no VAT
Chq 1494	Gordon Campbell – Microsoft licence	£101.52, no VAT

After taking into account the above transactions, the Council had balances of £14,685 in the current account and £4,047 in the deposit account.

The Chair advised that he had been approached by the Village Hall Committee to see if the Council would part fund a generator for emergency purposes. Whilst the Councillors were open, in principle, to the idea, they need more information on the type, scope, cost etc. The Chair to enquire further. SJ enquired whether there were any other “greener” alternatives to diesel or propane. MN agreed to see if he could find any other funding sources.

The clerk has been approached by the Community First Responders that the Alstonefield defibrillator needed a new battery (approx. £350) and would need replacing completely in three years (approx. £1,200). There was much discussion as to whether the machines were cost efficient, with the Vice Chair stating that he could find no evidence that a rural machine had saved any lives. The Clerk would revert to the Responders and (a) enquire whether there were more cost-effective machines and (b) suggesting they look for a grant from the Leaden Boot committee.

It was agreed to increase the Lengthsmens’ hourly rate from £11 to £12. This would, in future, be reviewed on an annual basis. The Clerk as tasked with locating their initial contract and job specification for review at the next meeting.

23.02.9 Bank account and signing mandate

Progress had been made! GC and RH were now “up and running.” It had proved too difficult to set the Clerk up as a non-signing user and so he had been added to the mandate as an equal signatory. This was deemed acceptable as any payments still needed two authorisations. The Clerk’s addition was currently waiting ratification from the bank.

23.02.10 Policies update – ownership of land assets.

GC advised that he had determined that Archford Moor quarry, Lode quarry, Blunder Castle (near Dale Bottom) and “The Bog” were all unregistered properties. Ther was some discussion as to whether it was wise to try and register ownership – the balance between acquiring an asset and, also, a potential liability! The Clerk was asked to seek guidance from SPCA.

23.02.11 Items for community magazine

The Clerk was instructed to withdraw the vacancy for a Councillor in addition to advising about the village “clean up” day – see item 23.02.16

23.02.12 Highway issues

It was noted that some initial work had been done on the potholes near Lode bridge. However, the scree/debris remained an issue.

23.02.13 Correspondence and electronic communication

The Leaden Boot committee had advised that they were open to grant requests; the Clerk had requested an application form.

The proprietor of The George had e-mailed the Clerk in response to recent Minuted items about the pub frontage. He stated he would be happy to clarify matters if he was approached directly.

SPCA advised that they now had a “Playground Inspection” course available. RH stated he would take on the responsibility of a monthly inspection. The Clerk would send a copy of the Risk Assessment as a reminder.

23.02.14 Bad Weather Action Plan

SJ advised that little work had been done on this – the consideration of a generator had effectively taken this item’s place.

23.02.15 Coronation Events

CM noted that last year's Jubilee events had gone down well and been warmly received. He suggested we look to do something similar. It was noted that the Council should ascertain the Village Hall's plans to ensure there was no conflict or repetition. RH to contact them. The Clerk advised that there was a SMDC grant available of £435 towards Coronation events – the application deadline was 22 March.

23.02.16 Any other business

The Chair suggested March 25 for the Village Clean Up day. All residents to be encouraged to take part and to contact any Councillor with any ideas/initiatives they might have.

Date of next meeting

Wednesday, 5th April 2023 at 7.00 pm in the Village Hall.

The meeting was declared closed at 8.24pm

These minutes remain draft until formal approval at the next parish council meeting.