

# CHRISTCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of a Meeting of Christchurch Parish Council held in the Community Centre on Monday 15 May 2023 at 7.30pm

**Present:** Cllrs J Hughes (Chairman), J Bliss, P Owen, A Sparrow, Cllr D Roy (FDC), D Gibbs (Clerk), Five members of the public

**001/23-24 Apologies for Absence**  
Cllr M Summers (FDC)

**002/23-24 Acceptance of Office**  
The four members of the Council signed their Declaration of Acceptance of Office in the presence of the Clerk.

**003/23-24 Election of Chairman for the Municipal Year 2023/24**  
Cllr Hughes was proposed by Cllr Owen, seconded by Cllr Bliss and duly elected.

**004/23-24 Election of Vice Chairman for the Municipal Year 2023/24**  
Cllr Sparrow was proposed by Cllr Bliss, seconded by Cllr Hughes and duly elected.

**005/23-24 Chairman's Announcements**  
The Chairman noted the retirements of former Councillors Aldridge, Gladwin and Miller and thanked them for their contributions to the Council. He noted that three vacancies remain following the election, but no potential candidates were present. He advised members that he would be presenting the Local Highway Improvement application to the member panel for their consideration and also noted that the data from the vehicle-activated speed sign showed that more than half of vehicles were exceeding the speed limit, with a top speed of 67mph recorded in a 30mph limit.

**006/23-24 Public Time**  
Ms Nason reminded members of a previous arrangement whereby the Council provided a monthly grant to The Heron and asked whether this approach might be revived. The Chairman noted that an application for financial assistance was to be considered under item 016/23-24(m) and agreed that this request would be considered as part of that discussion.

Mr Simpson noted that the Council had suggested a meeting with residents of Wayside Estate regarding the trees on the Recreation Ground, but that no meeting had taken place. He asked who the trees belong to and the Clerk confirmed that they belong to the Recreation Ground charity.

Mr Sadler advised members that he has arranged for a tree surgeon to pollard the tree behind his property. The Chairman will report this to the Recreation Ground charity trustees at their next meeting.

Mr Sadler also asked who received the recycling credits for the bottle bank outside the Community Centre. The Clerk confirmed that the Parish Council no longer receives payments for this.

Cllr Owen reported that a resident had approached him for permission to remove a tree from the verge outside their property in Crown Avenue. The Clerk will investigate.

#### **007/23-24 Membership of the Council**

As no prospective co-optees were present, members resolved to defer this item until the June meeting.

#### **008/23-24 Annual Meeting of the Parish Council**

- a) Standing Orders and Financial Regulations - The Clerk confirmed that the Council has adopted the latest model documents and members resolved to re-adopt them.
- b) Confirmation of insurance arrangements - The Clerk confirmed that the Council holds adequate insurance against all risks with Ansvar Insurance arranged through Community Action Suffolk with a renewal date of 1 October.
- c) Review of the Council's subscriptions to other bodies - The Council holds subscriptions to the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Association of Local Councils, renewed in April and to Cambridgeshire ACRE, renewed in March. Members resolved to continue both subscriptions.
- d) Appointment of an Armed Forces Champion - Cllr Owen agreed to undertake the role.
- e) Confirmation of the Council's register of assets as at 31 March 2023 - Members confirmed their acceptance of the register.
- f) Confirmation of meeting dates for the municipal year - Members resolved that the Council will meet on the second Monday of every month, namely 12 June, 10 July, 14 August, 11 September, 9 October, 13 November, 11 December, 8 January, 12 February, 11 March, 8 April, and 13 May.

#### **009/23-24 Confirmation of Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 April were correctly recorded and signed as being a true record.

#### **010/23-24 Matters Outstanding**

- a) Bus shelter improvement project - No progress.
- b) Pavement outside Field Lodge, Upwell Road - The works will be carried out under two separate contracts.
- c) Affordable housing proposal - The Clerk reported that several sites have been identified and details passed to Cambridgeshire ACRE.
- d) Skate park repairs - The repairs have still not been carried out.
- e) Household items outside property in Upwell Road - Members reported that there has been no improvement.
- f) Recreation Ground trees - see 006/23-24 above.
- g) Trees overhanging Padgetts Road - The landowner will remove the overhanging branches.
- h) Wayside Estate pedestrian safety - A meeting will be arranged with a Road Safety Officer.

#### **011/23-24 Police Report**

The Clerk reported that no meetings had taken place. A recent speed enforcement session led to one driver being caught driving at excessive speed in Church Road. Further visits are being arranged.

#### **012/23-24 County & District Councillors Reports**

Cllr Roy introduced himself to members and explained his plans for stronger links between the District Council and rural communities. The District Council's committee structure and membership will be confirmed shortly. Speeding remains a major concern for local communities and Speedwatch is a useful tool in the battle to reduce

speeds. Cllr Roy is also the Neighbourhood Watch lead for Fenland. Cllrs Roy and Summers would like to attend village events or offer member surgeries to better understand the needs of the local community.

#### **013/23-24 Clerk's Report**

The Clerk reported on correspondence received.

#### **014/23-24 Members and Residents Issues**

Cllr Owen mentioned the poor state of some of the roads around the village and asked whether the District Council has any powers to intervene on behalf of the Parish Council. Cllr Roy explained that he shares members' concerns, particularly regarding the durability of the repairs carried out by the dragon patcher.

#### **015/23-24 Recreation Ground Extension**

Cllr Hughes reported that the field now has significant weed growth. He will check the condition of the recently-planted hedgerow. The steering group is working on the preparation of a master plan to support a bid for funding from the Whitemill Environment Fund in July.

#### **016/23-24 Finance**

- a) Members approved the audited accounts for 2022/23.
- b) Members reviewed and approved the Governance and Management Risk Assessment.
- c) Members approved the Internal Audit Report. No issues were raised requiring their attention.
- d) Members approved the Annual Governance Statement 2022/23, which was signed by the Chairman.
- e) Members approved the Accounting Statements 2022/23, which were signed by the Chairman.
- f) Members approved the Certificate of Exemption for 2022/23, which was signed by the Chairman.
- g) Members confirmed the dates of the period for the exercise of public rights as Monday 5 June to Friday 14 July.
- h) Members resolved to reappoint Ivan Cooper as Internal Auditor for the 2023/24 financial year.
- i) Members considered the options for the publication of an annual report to residents. They agreed to discuss with the Editor the possibility of including it in The Heron.
- j) The management accounts as at 30.4.23 showed income of £9,250.00 and expenditure of £1,077.73, resulting in a surplus of £8,172.27 and total funds held of £49,490.53.
- k) Members noted the following sum received since the last meeting:

Fenland District Council (precept instalment).....	£ 9,250.00
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- l) Members approved the following accounts for payment:

Clerk salary and home office allowance .....	£ 441.13
I Cooper (audit fee).....	£ 140.00
- m) Members considered a grant application from The Heron. Cllrs Hughes and Sparrow declared non-pecuniary interests in this item due to the involvement of members of their households as committee members of the applicant organisation and took no part in the decision making. The remaining members agreed to award a grant of £1,500.

**017/23-24 Golden Age Fair - 30 June**

The District Council will be holding a Golden Age Fair in the Community Centre on 30 June from 11.00 to 2.00. Members agreed to use the opportunity to present ideas for the Recreation Ground Extension and the annual report of the Council.

**018/23-24 Matters for Next Meeting**

None.

**019/23-24 Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next Meeting of the Parish Council will be Monday 12 June