**SALT & ENSON PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Meeting Held Wednesday 3rd January 2024**

**at Salt Village Hall, Salt at 7.30 pm**

The meeting began at 7.30 p.m.

**Public Open Forum** – Two members of the public attended.

A member of the public spoke about what he perceived to be **drainage problems on Sandon Bank**. He had brought the matter to previous Parish Council meetings and spoke again of his concerns.

These are in respect of field 5588, which he has owned since 1987, and is a traditional hay meadow with wild flowers and plants. The field drains to a watercourse which flows through Babbs Covert, out onto Salt Lane, alongside the wood down to Salt Banks.

Following the sale of the property Park View to the present occupants a large extension was added and this involved re routing the drains. Wet areas of standing rancid water then became apparent at the top of field 5588 directly opposite Park View, and soap bubbles and foam could be seen in the watercourse.

In 2023 another large extension was added with the potential to make the drainage problem worse. The member of the public reminded the Parish Council that he had made them aware that he had contacted SBC Building Control with his concerns. SBC Building Control was of the opinion that all effluent would be contained in the property’s Cesspit and not leak.

The member of the public then advised that testing of the water entering field 5588 had been undertaken confirming the presence of Coli forms and E Coli (human gut bacteria), indicating the water is toxic.

The member of the public had already been advised of the method of reporting concerns via the Environmental Agency web site and , as well as continuing to undertake random water tests, he will report the matter to the Environment Agency himself.

He further advised that as fodder from this field is fed to animals which enter the food chain, then additional “Red Tractor” tests will need to be undertaken.

The Parish Council thanked the member of the public for his diligence, for bringing that matter to their attention, and for agreeing to report it to the Environment Agency for further investigation. The Parish Council asked to be kept informed.

On a separate matter, the second member of public present sought clarification on which agency to contact to seek repairs to an adopted highway. He was advised to contact the Highways Team at Staffordshire County Council via their website or MyStaffs App.

1. **Attendees and Apologies**

Attendees: Chair - Barbara Clancy

Councillors R Walls, J Starr, I Wimshurst, C Beardmore, JD Scott

Stafford Borough Councillor Karine Aspin

Clerk DW Croxford

Apologies Councillor N Tonks

The meeting was quorate

1. **Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests relating to items on the agenda**

None declared

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1. **Minutes of the meeting held on 1st November 2023**

This was agreed as a true and correct record by all present.

**4. Matters arising from those minutes**

None arisen.

**5 .Planning**

* 23/37686 HOU – The Old Vicarage - Demolition of the existing conservatory. Replacing it with a single storey side and rear extension. SBC have advised the application has now been replaced as **23/38520/LDCPP (Lawful Development Certificate Proposed).** No further action required.

**Updates on Structures on Brick Kiln Lane and Rainbow Cottage, Salt**

Very regretfully the report from SBC Enforcement to Borough Councillor Frances Beatty is still awaited noting that the Enforcement Officer at SBC has visited the sites.

*Clerk and Borough Councillors Frances Beatty and Karine Aspin, to keep in close contact with the SBC Enforcement Team, seeking the report which has been awaited for some considerable time.*

**6. Reports**

* Report from County Councillor John Francis – no report received
* Report from Borough Councillor Frances Beatty – no report received. Borough Councillor Aspin advised that there was little progress at the moment with Serco and the proposed asylum seekers accommodation in Stafford. Also that the Stafford Market Square development had been completed and that SBC had purchased the old Coop building and the Guild Hall property in readiness for development. Also that the new annual charges for brown bin disposal have been published. And finally that the Local Plan remains currently on hold pending review.
* Report from Village Hall Management Committee – Councillor Clancy advised nothing to report.

**7. To receive Financial Statement and Clerks report**

* + 1. To approve financial payments, receipts and transfers.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Accounts for approval** |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Paid prior to the meeting** | |  |  |  |
| **Paid To** | **Details** | **Amt** | **VAT** | **Total to pay** |
| Stafford BC | Uncontested Election Fee 2023 | £109.22 |  | 109.22 |
| Data Protection Office | Annual GDPR Fee (by DD) | £35.00 |  | 35.00 |
| Rose Harrison | Plants | £29.56 |  | 29.56 |
| Vision ICT | Annual Website / e mail hosting fee | £152.38 | £30.48 | 182.86 |
| Clerk D Croxford | Net Salary 1 Oct - 31 Dec (inc backpay) | £794.38 |  | 794.38 |
| HMRC | Paye re above | £193.80 |  | 193.80 |
| Clerk D Croxford | Expenses 1 Oct - 31 Dec | £114.10 |  | 114.10 |
| 02/24 |  |  |  |  |
| **TOTAL** | |  |  | 1,458.92 |
| **To be Paid** | |  |  |  |
| Barbara Clancy | Expenses / Paper and ink | £12.98 |  | 12.98 |
|  |  |  |  | 0.00 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | 12.98 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  | **TOTAL** |  |  | 1,471.90 |

These were approved by all present.

The clerk had circulated the **financial statement** and **bank reconciliation** reports and both were approved by all present.

* + 1. The final **Budget / Precept request for 2024-2025** had been circulated by the Clerk before the meeting for consideration. **RESOLVED** by unanimous agreement to set the annual budget for 2024-2025 at £8,485 and to submit a precept request to Stafford Borough Council of £8,125 plus £360 concurrent function funding. *Clerk to apply to SBC for this sum.*
    2. The Clerk highlighted the **Earmarked Reserves** position. The **Earmarked reserves** currently banked in the Reserve account total £15,600 and are broken down thus: General Reserves Fund £8,100, Cost of Elections Fund £5,000, Computer/Printer £500, Village Notice Board at Holly Bush £2,000. It was **RESOLVED** by unanimous agreement to increase and reset the Earmarked Reserves for 2024 as the following

General Funds Reserve £8,100

Cost of Elections Fund £5,500

Computer/ Printer Reserve £580

Village Notice Board £2,000

Total Earmarked Reserves £16,180

*Clerk to switch £580 from current account to increase reserve account to £16,180 and designate as above.*

* + 1. National Salary Award for Clerks 2023-24

The Council takes note of the NJC National Salary Award and authorises its implementation. The Council authorises the element of back pay from the date of implementation of the award.

**8. To discuss Highways issues and note any requiring reporting**

* There were no matters requiring reporting. There may well be problems that emerge when the present floodwater recedes.

**9. To review correspondence received and consider items of business for the next meeting.**

* **The Civic Amenity Skip Visits 2024**.  *Clerk to advise SBC Contracts Department the Parish will seek three skip deliveries in 2024, at broadly the same times of year as in 2023, and at the same two venues. Each visit will be of two hours duration. In accordance with SBC’s offer, following the problems with the October 2023 visit, PC Minutes of 1st November 2023 refers, the Parish will be pleased to pay for only two of the three requested visits in 2024.*

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* A letter from the Secretary and the Church Warden of **St James Church Salt** had been received and was circulated at the meeting. The letter outlined plans to undertake the significant and serious repairs to the fabric of the property which are considered essential. The extent of the work has been scoped, tenders issued and a contractor identified. The current cost is in region of £70,000. Following an appeal some £10,000 has been raised towards the final cost and the Parochial Church Council are now seeking grants from appropriate charities and organisations, as well as continuing to fund raise on a regular basis, to meet the total required. The Parish Council have agreed to consider donating a sum in the next Parish Council financial year. This subject to clarifications from the Parish Auditor and the SPCA that the Parish Council may safely proceed. Councillors agreed to consider at the March Parish Council Meeting. *Clerk to seek the clarifications required.*
* All other items of note had been circulated prior to the meeting.

**10. To inform attendees of dates of future meetings**

Dates of future meetings during **2024** as follows: Wednesdays at 7.30pm.

6th March, **1st May (Annual Parish and Council Meetings),** 3rd July, 4th September, 6th November.

**11. Meeting closed at 20.30 hrs**

Signed .......................................... .........................................

Chair Cncllr B Clancy Clerk DWCroxford

Date...................................

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