**SALT & ENSON PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Meeting Held Wednesday 6th March 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 advised that he had e mailed the Clerk, prior to the meeting, with an update about the matter of **drainage problems on Sandon Bank,** referred to at the January Parish Council meeting. See item 8 below.

On a separate matter, the second member of public present advised he was concerned at the overall state of the road throughout **Sandon Bank**. Over a long period, he had reported some twenty one issues to the Highways Team at Staffordshire County Council via their website. Whilst he had received responses, the repairs were still required. Stafford Borough Councillor Aspin agreed to take his concerns to the upcoming Trent Valley Collaboration Meeting of Parishes where Staffordshire County Council Highways Department, and County Councillor John Francis, would be present. The member of the public was thanked for bringing the matter to the attention of the Parish Council.

1. **Attendees and Apologies**

Attendees: Chair - Barbara Clancy

Councillors R Walls, J Starr, C Beardmore, JD Scott, N Tonks

Stafford Borough Councillor Karine Aspin

Clerk DW Croxford

Apologies Councillor I Wimshurst

The meeting was quorate.

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

None declared

1. **Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd January 2024**

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

**4. Matters arising from those minutes**

None arisen.

**5 .Planning**

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

Thanks to the efforts of Borough Councillor Aspin it has now been confirmed by SBC Planning / Enforcement that retrospective planning permission will be required in respect of some of the structures on Brick Kiln Lane. The owner has appointed an agent to take forward.

Regarding Rainbow Cottage the matter is considered complex and has been referred to a Senior Planning Officer at SBC to review.

*Clerk and Borough Councillors Karine Aspin and Frances Beatty, to keep in close contact with the SBC Enforcement Team and update at next Parish Council Meeting.*

* **23/38572/HOU -** Barn House, Leatop, Weston Bank, Stafford, Staffordshire ST18 0BA. Proposed demolition of existing garden room, replacement garden room and first floor extension to existing bedrooms.

*Comments sent to SBC Planning confirming support.*

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**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 had been changes to constituency boundaries and that Salt is now part of a new Stone, Great Wyrley and Penkridge Constituency, That there was little progress at the moment with Serco and the proposed asylum seekers accommodation in Stafford. That there will be Council Tax increases for all at County and Borough level. And that the publication of the Local Plan will now be delayed until 2025 or 2026.
* 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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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Paid prior to the meeting** |  |  |  |  |
| **Paid To** | **Details** | **Amt** | **VAT** | **Total to pay** |
|   |   |   |   | 0.00 |
|   |   |   |   | 0.00 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **TOTAL** |  |  | 0.00 |
| **To be Paid** |  |  |  |
| Barbara Clancy | Expenses / Paper and ink | £4.99  |   | 4.99 |
| Salt Village Hall Mgmnt Ctee | Hire of VH Nov 23, Jan and March 24. 9 hrs @ £10 ph | £90.00  |   | 90.00 |
| Clerk D Croxford | GROSS Salary 1 Jan - 31 March | £833.58  |   | 833.58 |
| HMRC | Paye re above - tba |   |   | 0.00 |
| Clerk D Croxford | Expenses 1 Jan - 31 March | £88.55  |   | 88.55 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | 1,017.12 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  | **TOTAL** |  |  | 1,017.12 |

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. **Donation to St James Church, Salt.** See Minute 9 of Parish Council Meeting 3rd January 2024 for background to this request to donate towards the appeal to undertake significant essential repairs to the fabric of the Church. The Clerk has referred the matter to the Parish Council Auditor, who with up to date legal guidance from NALC, and the SPCA, confirmed the Parish Council could safely consider a grant donation and that there is no legislative intention to prevent grants / spending on Church property. Noting the scale of the total sum required, £70,000 and the current progress achieved towards it, circa £10,000, the Councillors decided at this stage to earmark, but not pay over, a donation of £1,000, until further confident progress is made over the next six months, securing the future of the Church. It was **unanimously** **RESOLVED** to transfer £1,000 into Reserves in respect of Probable Donation to St James Church, Salt. *Clerk to advise the Church Warden and effect the transfer to Reserves.*

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* + 1. It was unanimously **RESOLVED** to make the following immediate Donations:

£500 to Salt and Hopton PCC for upkeep of Burial Ground

£400 to Salt Friendship Club

£200 to the Compass Magazine

*Clerk to make the payments***.**

* + 1. 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

Probable donation to St James Church Sat £1,000

Cost of securing bench and planters adjacent Hunters Court £350

Total Earmarked Reserves £17,530

*Clerk to switch £1,930 from current account to increase reserve account to £17,530 and designate as above.*

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

* **Repairs on Bridge at Sandon Bank.** Following close liaison with Staffordshire County Council Highways it has been established that essential repairs to the bridge will be split into two different phases. Initially, there will be 2 way signals going out until 17th April where the closure will then be implemented until 17th May. Highways have agreed to the Parish Council’s request for signage such as “Access to frontages only” which is hoped will deter anyone from using Salt as a rat run. It must be noted that Highways have very little powers to prevent any vehicles from using a different route to that suggested. The route published can only be a suggested route and vehicles are entitled to choose to use a different route, providing there are no restrictions preventing this, such as weight restriction for heavy vehicles. The Parish Council are pushing hard to get the signage installed upon the bridge closure. *Clerk to remain in close liaison with Highways representative*. All information is on the Parish Council Website.
* The Clerk advised, prior to the meeting, he had been e mailed an update about the matter of **drainage problems on Sandon Bank,** referred to at the January Parish Council meeting by a member of the public. The e mail confirmed that, following the last meeting, the member of the public sent an email to the Environment Agency outlining the problems. Following this came an acknowledgement and the allocation of an 'Engagement Officer'. Nothing further to report at this stage.
* **Flooding at Bankside Cottage.** The occupants at Bankside Cottage have reported flooding on their property following the recent period of heavy rain. Numerous photographs of the damage have been provided and circulated to Councillors. The occupants have also provided copies of e mail exchanges with Stafford Borough Council Planning Enforcement. The officer appointed is planning to visit the property to help consider the possible cause, albeit remarking that the prolonged period of wet weather has seen unprecedented flooding in many areas in the district. *Clerk to write to occupants of Bankside Cottage expressing sympathy with their experience, asking them to keep the Parish Council updated with developments and making the suggestion from the Parish Councillors, those with extensive local knowledge, that an investigation of the under-the- highway drainage pipework to their property might be worth investigating for blockages.*

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* Work to secure **the bench and planters at Hunters Court** to the ground to prevent theft has yet to begin. The contractor has been employed elsewhere but will complete in the new few weeks. It was **RESOLVED** by unanimous agreement to earmark the cost of securing bench and planters adjacent Hunters Court at £350. Noted under 7 (iv) above.
* A street sign near the graveyard has been damaged. *Clerk to photograph and report to Highways via MyStaffs App.*
* Increased dog fouling has been noticed in parts of the Village. Councillor Clancy to discus deterrent signage with the Borough Council dog warden.

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

* **The Civic Amenity Skip Visits 2024**. Dates confirmed as 23rd March, 6th July and 26th October 2024. All 10.30 to 12.30. March and July at Salt Village Hall car park. October (free of charge) visit at Holly Bush Inn car park. *Details posted on Parish Council Website and Agreement form returned to Council by Clerk.*
* **Subsidised Bus Route**. A letter was approved and sent to the Senior Transport Coordinator at Staffordshire County Council in support of a campaign, begun by Sandon and Burston Parish Council, for a subsidised bus route linking local Parishes who currently are ill served by bus services. Thanks were expressed to Councillor Starr for drafting and posting the letter.
* **Mowing and Strimming 2024**. The existing, long standing and local contractor has submitted the proposed programme and costs for 2024 season. The Contractor also provided up to date insurance certificates for Employers Liability and Public Liability. It was unanimously **RESOLVED** to accept the programme as follows at the price of £500 + VAT. (10 cuts of Village Green @ £7.50 / 10 strims of Casey bench @ £7.50 / 14 cuts of verge adjacent Hunters Court @ £25 = £500 +VAT). *Clerk has advised contractor of Council’s acceptance.*
* 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 at Salt Village Hall during 2024 as follows:

1st May – **Annual Meeting of the Parish Council** **7 p.m.**

*followed by the* **Annual Parish (Public) Meeting 8 p.m.**

then Wednesdays at 7.30pm.

3rd July, 4th September, 6th November.

**11. Meeting closed at 20.45 hrs**

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

Chair Cncllr B Clancy Clerk DWCroxford

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

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