**SALT & ENSON PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council**

**Held Wednesday 7th May 2025 at Salt Village Hall at 7.00pm**

**Minutes**

Public Open Forum – No members of the Public were present.

1. **To Elect a Chair and Vice Chair and accept their signed declaration of office forms**

Cllr Barbara Clancy was proposed and unanimously elected as Chair.

Cllr Jennifer Starr was proposed and unanimously elected as Vice Chair.

Declaration of Office Forms to be completed and countersigned by the Clerk.

Retiring Vice Chair Councillor Robert Walls was thanked for his time in office.

1. **Attendees and Apologies**

Attendees:

Chair - Barbara Clancy,

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

Stafford Borough Councillor Karine Aspin

Clerk DW Croxford

The meeting was quorate

Apologies – None received.

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

None declared

1. **Election of Other Officers**

Councillor B Clancy will be the Council’s representative on the Salt Village Hall Management Committee

1. **Minutes of the meeting held on 5th March 2025**

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

**6. Matters arising from those minutes**

None arisen, albeit is noted that a decision from Stafford Borough Council Planning Office is still yet to be made on the application 24/38837/LDC Brick Kiln Lane. An extension of time to 31 January 2025 was originally granted and nothing else has been recorded on SBC Planning portal since.

*Stafford Borough Councillor Aspin agreed to investigate.*

**7. To discuss planning applications received as below**

None received at date of publication of Agenda.

* Brought to the meeting was information that informal “development work” had begun on the historic registered Battlefield site, north of Within Lane and to the west of Weston Bank. To be further investigated and monitored and the next meeting to consider the Clerk bringing to the notice of the SBC Planning and Conservation Officer, and the Historic England organisation, if required.

**10/25**

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

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

Approved to be paid.

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|  | **To be Paid** | |  |  |  |  |
|  | Black Rose Solutions Ltd | Annual Audit Fee | £96.25 | 19.25 | 115.50 |  |
|  | SPCA | NALC Affil/ Annual Sub | £147.10 |  | 147.10 |  |
|  | Cncllr Starr | Reimbursement re Compost | £16.00 |  | 16.00 |  |
|  | Zurich Municipal | Annual Insurance Premium | £397.50 |  | 397.50 |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | 0.00 |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | 0.00 |  |
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|  |  |  |  |  | 676.10 |  |

These were approved by all present.

* + 1. To receive and approve the financial statement and bank reconciliation.

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

* + 1. To receive and note the **Internal Audit Report** **for 2024 - 2025**– This had been circulated prior to the meeting and was approved by all present.
    2. To agree the **Annual Governance Statement** **for 2024- 2025** - This had been circulated prior to the meeting and was approved by all present.
    3. To agree the **Annual Accounting Statements for 2024-2025** - This had been circulated prior to the meeting and was approved by all present.
    4. To approve the **Certificate of Exemption** **for 2024-2025** from limited assurance review by Forvis Mazars and certify as exempt - This had been circulated prior to the meeting and was approved by all present.
    5. The **exercise of Public Rights** period was set as – Publication on Website 2nd June 2025. Period to run from 3rd June to 14th July 2025 in accordance with Forvis Mazar’s guidance.
    6. To Confirm the Appointment of Internal Auditor for 2025-26 – This was confirmed by all present as Black Rose Solutions Ltd. **It was unanimously agreed** **to commit to a two year fixed price agreed appointment of Black Rose Solutions Ltd at £105 +VAT p.a. to include an interim Audit too**.(2025-26 Budget £150) *Clerk to advise Black Rose Solutions Ltd*
    7. **Insurance Renewal 2025-26** – Annual Renewal with Zurich Insurance was approved by all present. Payment of Annual Premium approved at £397.50. (2025-26 Budget £450) ( last year £431.16) *Clerk to make the payment.*
    8. **Donation to St James’ Church Salt** of £1000. Earmarked in Reserves since 3/24.

Funds raised so far by parishioners and others have reached over £40k.The Church is now in a position to begin work in Autumn 2025. Letter received from Church seeking the £1,000 we agreed in principle to earmark in 3/24. PC Minutes refer. Exchange of e mails with Auditor confirms PC’s intentions. **Was unanimously agreed to pay a grant to Church of £1,000 already earmarked**. *Clerk to transfer the earmarked £1,000 from reserve to current account and make the payment from current account.*

11/25

* + 1. **Clerk Pay review**

It was noted that the Clerk has been on SCP7 since June 2020. Current contract (extract circulated to Councillors before the meeting) indicates annual moves up the scale would have been appropriate.

It was agreed that the Clerk should now be on SCP12 rate.

**It was unanimously agreed to increase Clerk Pay to SCP12 £14.36 per hour wef 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 and then review.**

**9. To approve Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Risk Assessment, Data Protection Policy and Asset Register**

These had been circulated prior to the meeting with no amendments from the previous year. **Unanimously RESOLVED to be approved for 2025-2026.**

Both Standing Orders and Financial Regulations were updated during 2024 to latest NALC templates.

**10. Reports**

* Report received from County Councillor – No report received.
* Report from Borough Councillor Frances Beatty – No report received.
* Borough Councillor Karine Aspin – advised that Staffordshire Fire and Rescue are holding an open day on 10th May at Beaconside Fire Station, and that Staffordshire Police are holding an open day on 14th June at the Staffordshire Showground. She further advised that little progress had been made at Borough or County level in respect of finalising Devolution plans. The final proposals must be before Government in November. Finally she observed that following SBC halting the Local Plan process in March there has been a significant increase in planning applications seen.
* Report from Village Hall Management Committee – Councillor Clancy advised that the quotation brought to the March Parish Council meeting for repairs to parts of the roof and ceiling areas of the village hall from a local builder in the total sum of £2,388 had been confirmed reasonable by the VHMC. In response to the request to the Parish Council for financial support towards this work**, the meeting agreed to offer the VHMC £600 towards the total cost of these works**. *Councillor Clancy will advise the VHMC and if accepted Clerk to arrange payment.*

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

* Update following meeting with Highways Officer Wednesday 26th February 2025 – no tangible progress made here with the proposals mooted in February. An attempt to join in and begin the ditch clearance in tandem with the recent resurfacing of the road next to the ditches was advised as impractical by Highways. *Clerk to continue to regularly check the position with Highways.*
* At the November 2024 Parish Council meeting it was noted that a tree on the verge at the end of Hunters Court was looking unhealthy. Councillor Walls reported the tree had survived the winter and removal is not required.
* Two road signs in the village, at Trentfield Lane and The Meadows are in poor condition. *Clerk to ask Highways to replace.*

**12/25**

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

* Councillors were reminded of the meeting to discuss the local impact of new Solar Farms was taking place at Stow-by-Chartley Village Hall on 19th May 2025 at 6.30 p.m. Invitations, Agenda and background notes circulated.
* Clerk advised of the developing NALC advice to move to a **.gov.uk** domain. Further research will be undertaken and will be on a future agenda.
* All other items of note had been circulated to all prior to the meeting.

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

To note dates of other future meeting during **2025** as follows: Wednesdays at 7.30pm

2nd July, 3rd September, 6th November

**14. Meeting closed at 20.00 hrs**

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

Chair.............................................. Clerk. DW Croxford.

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

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