

## **SOBERTON PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the meeting of Soberton Parish Council held on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at the Rookesbury Hall that commenced at 7.30pm.

**PRESENT:** Cllrs J Hyland (Chairman), D Cleeve, R Cole, D Buttriss, P Henderson, J Russell-Smith, S Marland, D Salmon, J Sherwill, V Weston.

In attendance: B Gibbs, Clerk to the Parish Council with District Cllrs Lee and Pearson.

### **103/24 Apologies for absence**

Cllr N Findlay sent his apologies to the meeting. District Cllr Pearson and County Cllr Stallard also sent their apologies.

### **104/24 Disclosure of Interests**

No disclosures were made.

### **105/24 Public Participation**

No members of the public were present.

### **106/24 Minutes of the ordinary meeting held on the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023.**

**Resolved:** to approve the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

### **107/24 Chairman's comments**

The Chairman made the following comments.

The Chairman provided an update about CANS (the Climate Café) and their request to become an active working party of the Parish Council. The Terms of Reference would be circulated between meetings and a decision on their request can be taken at the next meeting in February.

Cllr Sherwill Hall said that it would ease administration if the hall hires for the Rookesbury and Soberton Village Halls could be paid on a yearly basis up front. The Clerk was asked to speak to both organisations to see if they would prefer this method of payment.

Cllr Rachel Cole spoke about the fact that she had recently given birth and was finding meeting attendances hard to manage. She was aware that she could request a period of maternity leave beyond the normal six-month (Section 85 LGA 1972) attendance requirement and asked if the Parish Council would consider this request favourably.

The Chairman commented that this can be approved by a resolution of the Parish Council recorded in the minutes.

### **108/24 Waiver of six-month Councillor attendance rule (Section 85 Local Government Act 1972).**

Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 requires a member of a Local Authority to attend at least one meeting of that Authority within a six-month consecutive period, in order to avoid being disqualified as a Councillor. This requirement can be waived and the time limit extended if any failure to attend was due to a reason approved by the Authority in advance of the six-month period expiring.

**Resolved:** to approve the waiver of the six-month Councillor attendance rule (Section 85 Local Government Act 1972) in respect of Cllr Rachel Cole's request for maternity leave. This period of maternity leave will extend until the date of the Full Council meeting in January 2025.

### **109/24 Reports from County and District Councillors**

Cllr Lee spoke briefly the following topics.

The Rural England Prosperity Fund has been extended through to May 2024 owing to the fact that the number of applications was not as high as expected. The Clerk commented that he had submitted an application to improve the football pitch at the Soberton recreation ground.

Cllr Lee also spoke about the Mayors award scheme and said that the deadline for this was the 18<sup>th</sup> February.

He concluded his report by saying that the Winchester City Council Budget/Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 consultation has now closed.

Cllr Wallace spoke briefly the drainage issues in the village. A discussion on various drainage issues in the village took place with no decisions being made.

Cllr Hyland thanked both District Councillors for their report.

### **110/24 Finance**

a) Orders for payment.

Date	Supplier	Description	Amount
12/12/23	Rookesbury Hall	December 23 Room Hire	12.75
12/12/23	Suzanne White	CANS Room Hire	24.00
12/12/23	HIOW Victim Support	2023-24 Grant support	50.00
12/12/23	WDCA	2023-24 Grant support	250.00
02/01/24	B.V.Gibbs	December 23 Salary	767.30
02/01/24	HMRC	Month 8 PAYE/NIC	152.66
08/01/24	Swanmore PC	ACSO November 23	300.56
08/01/24	Swanmore PC	ACSO December23	261.36

08/01/24	Ampfield Traffic Ltd	November 23 SID	240.00
08/01/24	Ampfield Traffic Ltd	December 23 SID	100.00
08/01/24	DM Payroll Services	Payroll processing fee	60.00
08/01/24	RP Commercial Services	Lengthsman 3 <sup>rd</sup> Visit pt 1	600.00
08/01/24	RP Commercial Services	Lengthsman 3 <sup>rd</sup> Visit pt 2	3,900.00
08/01/24	B.V Gibbs	November 23 Google	66.00
08/01/24	B.V Gibbs	December 23 Google	66.00
08/01/24	Portsmouth Water Co	Pavilion water supply	44.27
15/01/24	Ampfield Traffic Ltd	January 24 SID	100.00
		Total	6394.90

**Resolved:** to approve the Orders for Payment for December 2023.

b) Budget/Precept 2024-25

The Clerk led on this item with contributions from Cllrs Hyland and Henderson. The Clerk said that the revised budget for 2024-25 had been circulated to members between meetings. The Clerk also drew everyone's attention to the sample precept calculations circulated as a spreadsheet at the December meeting.

Cllr Henderson presented a report on behalf of the Finance Group. He made the following observations.

- The Parish Council was holding a figure of about £66,000 in its account at the end of month nine of the financial year.
- This figure was roughly on and a half times the annual precept.
- The Lengthsman scheme income should be separated from the Parish Council accounts as the Parish Council merely receives this money from the County Council in order to meet the costs of the scheme.
- It then pays out the money throughout the year to the HCC appointed contractor.
- The Parish Council should consider moving some of this general reserve to a savings account in order to receive some interest income.

Although the budget was still in draft, Cllr Hyland drew everyone's attention to the following line items.

- The Newtown and Soberton Parochial Church Council's would each be allocated £1,500 for churchyard maintenance once again.
- A figure of £700 was allocated to the annual fees for Google Space.
- £10,000 was allocated towards the Clerk's pay package.
- The Soberton Recreation Ground's maintenance costs would need to be assessed before the budget was fully approved.
- The ACSO costs would also need to be fully assessed before completing the budget.

Cllr Weston raised a point about the councillor training budget and asked if this was sufficient to meet the needs of the Parish Council.

Cllrs Hyland and Weston spoke about the amount of CIL money that had been received by the Parish Council. Cllr Hyland also spoke about the opportunities for receiving CIL fund for projects such the improvements to the Liberties Play Area and the Soberton Recreation Ground.

The Clerk began the precept discussion by reminding members that the Parish Council had received a total sum of £39,347 from Winchester City Council as its parish precept in 2023-24.

For information, a spreadsheet was circulated that showed the tax base for Soberton in 2023-24 had been 846.12 and the Band D rate had been £46.50.

It was proposed by Cllr Hyland that Soberton Parish Council should set a zero % increase on its precept for 2024-25. With a slight increase in the tax base to 851.48 this would see the precept rise to a figure of £39,590 and would also enable the Band D rate to stay at a figure of £46.50.

**Resolved:** to request a precept of £39,590 from Winchester City Council for the financial year 2024-25.

#### c) Financial Risk Assessment 2023-24

This year's Financial Risk Assessment had originally been discussed in December 2023 but had been deferred as some councillors requested more time to review it. The Clerk said he had further updated the document to take account of the recent adoption of new standing orders.

He reminded the meeting of the general headings within the document as follows.

- Proper Bookkeeping
- Standing Orders and Financial Regulations
- Payments Controls
- Risk Management Arrangements
- Budgetary Controls
- Income Controls
- Payroll Controls
- Assets Controls
- Bank Reconciliation
- Year-end Procedures

He then explained that he had provided up-to-date figures and reports for each listing. He said that the document was now up-to-date and he asked for the Parish Council approve the document as complete.

**Resolved:** to approve the Financial Risk Assessment 2023-24.

#### d) To appoint an Internal Auditor for the financial year ending 31st March 2021.

**Resolved:** to appoint Lightatouch Internal Audit Services to act as the Parish Council's Internal Auditor for the financial year 2023-24.

**111/24                      To receive any reports from the following working groups.**

a)        Lengthsman.

The Lengthsman was next due to visit in early February. The Clerk confirmed that the scheme will continue into 2024-25 and beyond as a result of fresh funding being allocated for the next five financial years. He also confirmed that he was happy to carry on as the scheme administrator.

b)        Asset management.

The Clerk spoke about the proposed improvements to the Soberton Recreation Ground. A grant application to the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) had been made alongside a grant application to the Football Foundation. The REPF application had been returned with advice on how to re-apply successfully.

One of the constraints at this time is the lack of a Land Registry document showing the Parish Council as the custodian trustee of the Recreation Ground charity.

Cllr Buttriss again spoke about the condition of the pavilion whilst other councillors commented on the appearance of the Children's Play Area. Cllr Marland was asked if he would care to join the asset management working group so that a co-ordinated approach to evaluating improvements at the recreation ground, its pavilion and the children's play area could be undertaken.

**112/24                      Planning**

SDNP/23/05457/HOUS: Chalkwood House, Chalk Hill, SO32 3PH: Replace existing doors and windows to new bi-fold doors, a veranda, new single storey outbuilding.

We are concerned that the adjacent Wayfarer's Way will be impeded during the development works. Could you please ensure this does not happen. Other than this comment the Parish Council is content to see the application determined by the delegated planning officer.

23/01012/HOU Manor Cottage Hoe Street Hambledon PO7 4RD: Double storey rear extension & ensuite to front

The Parish Council is happy for this application to be dealt with by the designated planning officer.

24/00155/TPO Inwood Hundred Acres Road Wickham Fareham Hampshire PO17 6JD: Reduction in height (approx. 20ft) of conifer boundary consisting of approx. 15 conifer trees shown in bottom right of site plan and to increase light into property.

The Parish Council is happy for this application to be dealt with by the designated planning officer.

SDNP/23/05458/FUL Wallops Wood Farm, Unit 6 Sheardley Lane SO32 3QY: Replacement of existing industrial building.

The Parish Council is happy for this application to be dealt with by the designated planning officer.

### **113/24                      The Soberton Parish Design Statement**

Cllr Hyland commented that he was still working on the draft document and that this would be ready for circulation prior to the February meeting.

### **114/24                      To adopt the Councillor Casual Vacancy Policy**

The Clerk said that he had circulated a draft document for discussion before the December 2023 meeting. He had received comments back and had incorporated those comments into the second draft.

**Resolved:** to adopt the Councillor Casual Vacancy Policy.

### **115/24                      Highways issues in Soberton**

Cllr Henderson presented an analysis of the Speed Indicator Device (SID) data that had been collected at several sites in the village over the last year. The report had been circulated to all councillors.

Cllr Henderson made the following points.

- The volume of traffic is highest along Church Road.
- Around 25% of traffic on Church Road is recorded as over the speed limit.
- This is more than on either the High Street (~ 6%) or Station Road (~ 11%).
- There is a clear 'rush hour' effect on Church road, with a clear peak in traffic at 9am and 6pm.
- There is some evidence of speeding being higher outside the period between 8am and 7pm, with the percentage of speeders on Church Road increasing towards 50%.

Cllr Henderson explained how the data was presented in the document and how he had put the drawings together.

It was agreed that the document should be passed to Cllr Nick Adams-King (HCC Portfolio Holder for Universal Services inc Highways) and Mr Patrick Blogg (HCC Director of Universal Services).

Copies would be sent to the Leader of Hampshire County Council and Cllr Stallard.

Cllr Weston asked for a vote of thanks to be recorded with respect to Cllr Henderson's report.

**102/24**                      **Date of the next meeting**

- Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024 – Full Council meeting

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.43pm