

## **SOBERTON PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the meeting of Soberton Parish Council held on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023 at the Rookesbury Hall that commenced at 7.30pm.

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

In attendance: B Gibbs, Clerk to the Parish Council with District Cllrs Lee and Wallace, County Cllr Stallard and five members of the public.

### **76/24 Apologies for absence**

All councillors were present.

### **77/24 Disclosure of Interests**

No disclosures were made.

### **77/24 Public Participation**

A parishioner asked questions about the most recent planning applications at “Beriton” in Heath Road. Cllr Weston said that the two applications had been submitted to address the comments made in the planning inspector’s report. She continued by saying the planning inspectorate had granted outline planning permission on appeal and that reserved matters approvals are now being sought for access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale.

The owners of the Traveller’s Rest spoke about their current planning application and asked if the Parish Council was going to comment on the application. Cllr Weston said that the application was due to go before the WCC Planning Committee in December. Cllr Wallace offered to speak to the applicants outside this meeting if they wanted any guidance on what happens next.

A member of the Soberton and Newtown Community Group (a resident) spoke about the proposal to test soils at the West Dene development. She asked if it was possible for the group to receive grant funding. The Clerk said that he would send the group a current grant application form. It was also proposed that money should be allocated in the 2024-25 budget.

### **78/24 Parish Council co-option**

Following Mr Stuart Doherty’s resignation, the Parish Council had received an application from Mr John Russell-Smith of Flintstone, Church Road, Newtown.

Mr Russell-Smith spoke to the Parish Council. He introduced himself to everyone and explained the reasons why he had applied to fill the vacancy and he also highlighted the qualities and skills he felt he could offer the Parish Council.

There followed a brief session where Mr Russell-Smith answered questions from councillors.

Following on from the discussion and a secret ballot, Cllr Buttriss proposed and Cllr Cole seconded a motion to co-opt Mr Russell-Smith on to the Parish Council.

This motion was resolved unanimously.

The Clerk then asked Mr Russell-Smith to sign a declaration of acceptance. Having signed the declaration of acceptance Mr Russell-Smith joined fellow members of the Parish Council for the rest of the meeting.

## **79/24 Chairman's comments**

The Chairman made the following comments.

The Parish Council has provided some financial support for the Soberton Climate Café. The group were also holding a meeting this evening to garner further support.

The Sobernewts team (Soberton and Newtown Conservation Group) has applied for a grant to cover their public liability insurance schedule. This can be considered during the finance agenda item.

Several councillors had attended the recent Remembrance Services in Soberton. The Parish Council provided a grant towards the costs of two wreaths to be laid at different memorials in the Village.

## **80/24 Minutes of the ordinary meetings held on the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023 and 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023.**

Cllr Sherwill spoke about a couple of items in the October minutes concerning the Highways agenda item. These referred to the purchase of an additional Speed Indicator Device (there should be further consideration by the Full Council before any SID is purchased) and the recent additional street furniture at Liberty Road also mentioned pavements where none exist.

The Clerk corrected the minutes by hand.

**Resolved:** to approve the minutes of the ordinary meetings held on the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023 and the 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

## **81/24 Reports from County and District Councillors**

Cllr Hyland said that written reports from District Cllrs Wallace & Lee and County Cllr Stallard had been previously circulated.

Cllr Lee spoke briefly about The Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF). He said that the latest round of the REPF was finally published on the Winchester City Council website last week.

Initial proposals should bear in mind:

- These grants are for capital expenditure only such as construction and equipment.
- Planning consents need to be in place.
- be eligible for reimbursement, expenditure must be made after the funding agreement is signed.
- All expenditure must be complete and the project fully delivered by 31 March 2025
- Businesses must match any grant with an identical sum from other sources.
- Businesses must check that the receipt of funding will not cause them to exceed the limit of £315,000 in subsidies that is permitted over a two-year period.
- The absolute deadline for applications is 5<sup>th</sup> January 2024 but we are strongly encouraging earlier submission as the fund is competitive.

Cllr Lee also spoke about the recent appointment of the new Deputy Chief Constable of Hampshire Constabulary. DCC Sam De Reya took up her appointment in August. He also spoke about the project to replace traditional phone landlines with Voice over Internet Phones (VOIP). This initiative was receiving some negative feedback locally. He concluded his report by saying that Southern Water will be investing £7.8 billion in its infrastructure over the next five years.

Cllr Wallace spoke about the ongoing situation at Long Road specifically with regard to the enforcement issues. Members of the public also engaged with Cllr Wallace in the meeting with their concerns regarding the anti-social behaviour.

County Cllr Stallard said that she was glad to be able to attend meetings once again after a little local difficulties recently. She spoke about the County Council having been awarded £132 million for long term highway improvements. Sadly, this figure will only be received over a period of 10 years. Cllr Stallard also reported that the County Council's current funding gap is about £130 Million and this figure will have to be closed over the next year by significant cutbacks in non-essential services if there is no central government funding.

## **82/24      Standing Orders review**

The Clerk had circulated a further copy of the draft Standing Orders. Cllr Hyland said he would like this item resolved this evening and it was agreed to work through the document page by page so that general agreement could be reached.

The following Standing Orders were discussed and agreed.

1 r (iv). It was agreed to allow deferral of a motion at a meeting in order to allow further opportunities to discuss options.

1 t. councillors would be restricted to speaking for no more than five minutes in support of a motion.

3 c. Three clear days' notice for meetings was established as being at end of business on the Wednesday before a meeting takes place on the following Tuesday.

3 e, f, g & i. It was agreed to allow plenty of discretion when managing the contributions of the public during the public session.

3 x. it was agreed that meetings should not exceed two hours unless this standing order is suspended by using standing order 26 a.

4 d (v). Was noted as there are currently no committees in place.

7 a. It was agreed that a previous resolution can only be called in by the majority of councillors.

15 b (ii). It was agreed that a councillor motion could be withdrawn up to one day before the next council meeting takes place.

18 a (v). it was agreed to set the figure of £10,000 for the setting of contracts that are exempt from special tendering requirements.

21 a. It was agreed that the parish council may appoint a data protection officer.

23. It was recognised that the standing order had been over edited and a line needed to be reinstated to show that the full council must approve the signing of any deed or other legal document.

It was agreed that where the dispatch of a letter is mentioned in any of the standing orders that this should also refer to emails.

**Resolved:** to approve the 2023 Standing Orders.

Cllr Weston received a vote of thanks for her work in reviewing the document.

## **83/24 Common land in the parish of Soberton**

Cllr Weston introduced a proposal that she had put forward for consideration. She has been concerned for some time that the Parish Council may have some responsibilities and liabilities concerning the four parcels of common land in the Parish. These are as follows.

The Pond at Dradfield Lane / South End.

The Chapel Road pond.

Hoe Gate Common.

The Chalk Pit at Chalk Hill.

**Resolved:** To request that the Clerk writes to Hampshire County Council asking the authority to clarify its responsibilities for the management of the common land in the Parish. The letter should also request clarification of the scope of Soberton Parish Council's responsibilities in this regard. The specific question of public liability should be raised as a priority.

The Clerk is to copy all Parish Councillors in any response that he receives.

## **84/24 Finance**

a) Orders for payment.

Date	Supplier	Description	Amount
02/10/23	BDO LLP	External Audit 2022-23	378.00
02/10/23	HMRC	PAYE/NIC Months 5-6	152.60
02/10/23	RBL Poppy Appeal	Droxford Branch Wreaths	50.00
16/10/23	B.V.Gibbs	Google Mail Aug 23	66.00
16/10/23	B.V.Gibbs	Google Mail Sept 23	66.00
16/10/23	Swanmore PC	ACSO Sept 23	222.16
25/10/23	D Cleeve	Expenses Key Pavilion	25.00
25/10/23	Starboard Systems	Scribe Accounts 2023-24	417.60
25/10/23	RP Commercial Services	Lengthsman 1st Visit 23	1500.00
26/10/23	HMRC	PAYE/NIC Month 7	76.51
31/10/23	B.V.Gibbs	Salary October 23	767.30
31/10/23	SSE PLC	Pavilion Electricity	110.57
13/11/23	S Marland	Expenses Square Space	134.40
13/11/23	S White	Expenses Climate Café	39.00
13/11/23	Rookesbury Hall	Sept 2023 Meeting	13.75
21/11/23	Soberton AFTLP	Annual Rent 2023-24	100.00
21/11/23	Sobernewts	Annual Insurance Fee	155.20
24/11/23	Rookesbury Hall	Nov 23 Meeting	12.75
24/11/23	Swanmore PC	ACVSO Oct 23	287.50
24/11/23	Vita-Play Ltd	3rd Qtr. 2023 Inspection	67.80
30/11/23	B.V.Gibbs	Salary Nov 23	767.30
		Total amount	5409.44

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

b) Grant applications for 2023-24.

Grant applications had been received from Winchester District Citizens Advice( £250.00), Hampshire and Isle of Wight Victim Support (£50.00) and the Holy Trinity Church in Newtown (£1,500.00) A grant application form was expected from St Peter’s Church soon (£1,500.00).

**Resolved:** to approve and pay these grant applications including the one from St Peter’s Church when it arrives.

c) To note a report from the external auditor on the conclusion of 2022-23 audit

The Clerk reported that the external audit had now been completed. BDO LLP was appointed as the new external auditor from this April and had now reviewed our documents and had provided a report. The Clerk pointed out that the Annual Governance and Accountability return had included a report about the lack of a completed Financial Risk Assessment for the year in question.

**Resolved:** To note the external auditor’s final report.

The Clerk said that he would be bringing a draft Financial Risk Assessment to the Parish Council for approval at a meeting before the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

d) Budget / Precept 2024-25

The Clerk said that Winchester City Council had not been able to provide a Tax Base for 2024-25. As a result, he could not provide a report on any proposed precept calculation. This item was therefore held over until the December meeting.

### **85/24      To receive any reports from the following working groups.**

a)      Lengthsman.

The Lengthsman had visited on Monday and had completed the tasks on the worksheet supplied. Cllr Salmon said that a good deal of the work involved cutting back footpaths emerging from Heath Road. Cllr Sherwill commented that there continued to be issues with a significant amount of road signage. He said that if the Lengthsman was unable to attend to these then pressure should be put upon Hampshire County Council.

b)      Planning.

23/02229/HOU Dradfield Cottage Dradfield Lane Soberton Southampton Hampshire SO32 3QD: Erection of a timber-framed granny annexe for ancillary residential use associated with the dwelling.

Soberton Parish Council is happy for this application to be dealt with under officer delegated powers.

Cllr Weston said that she wished to stand down from the planning group due to her concerns regarding the way planning matters are currently managed by the Parish Council.

c)      Asset management.

Cllr Cleeve spoke about the recent FA Football Foundation report concerning the football pitch at the Recreation Ground. The report outlines how the foundation can help to improve the condition of the playing area. Other councillors commented that there could be an application made to the Rural England Prosperity Fund

### **86/24      Village charities in Soberton**

The Clerk said that he had now signed off the client care letter with Surrey Hills Solicitors and that he would report to the next meeting of the Parish Council with any progress in the task of registering the recreation ground with the land registry.

Cllr Cole left the meeting on the completion of this item.

### **87/24      The Soberton Parish Design Statement**

Cllr Sherwill spoke about the first draft of the PDS. He showed fellow councillors this draft on his PC. The document currently has 24 sheets of paper with about 14 pages of text with the rest being images and schematics.

He commented on the following topics.

The document should be concise and should be published as a PDF.

It should be attractive and entertaining document.

It should appeal to planning officer.

The document shows parish boundaries, settlements and other mapping.

Photographs of the various building methods are shown.

Cllr Hyland said the next steps were to consult with Winchester City Council and the SDNPA so that the document can be incorporated into their local plans.

## **88/24          Highways issues in Soberton**

Cllr Sherwill spoke about the auto speed watch project run by Swanmore Parish Council. He said that data was being collected by the devices and that the data was then being passed to Hampshire Constabulary. However, he expressed his extreme disappointment that the Police were currently unable to allocate any resources to this project.

## **89/24          Date of the next meeting**

- Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023 – Full Council meeting

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.43pm