

## **SOBERTON PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting of Soberton Parish Council held Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023 at the Soberton Village Hall and commencing at 7.30pm

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

In attendance: B Gibbs, Clerk to the Parish Council.

District Cllrs Wallace and Lee, County Cllr Stallard.

Four members of the public.

### **1/24 TO ELECT THE CHAIRMAN**

The retiring Chairman sought nominations for the position of Chairman of the Parish Council.

Cllr Marland proposed Cllr Hyland with Cllr Salmon seconding this nomination.

Cllr Weston proposed Cllr Sherwill with Cllr Cole seconding this nomination.

**Resolved:** By a show of hands Cllr Hyland was elected Chairman of the Parish Council for the municipal year 2023-24

Having been duly elected Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr Hyland signed the acceptance of office declaration.

### **2/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

County Cllr Stallard sent her apologies for her late arrival.

### **3/24 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

No disclosures were made.

### **4/24 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

A parishioner spoke about the recent retirement of Cllr Vicki Weston from Winchester City Council (she remains a Parish Councillor). She asked if the Parish Council would consider presenting Cllr Weston with a gift in recognition of her service to the community whilst she served on the City Council.

The Clerk explained that it was not appropriate for the Parish Council to fund a gift for work undertaken on behalf of a separate authority. The Parishioner spoke about the significant contribution Cllr Weston had made over the years in supporting and representing the

community in City Council matters. The Parishioner also made the point that Cllr Weston had not been recognised for her service to the Parish Council after her twelve-year term as a councillor had ended some years previously. The Parishioner said that this oversight should be seen as being deliberate.

Cllr Hyland said that he had thanked Cllr Weston for her City Council work in a recent article in the village magazine. He was also more than happy to record his thanks to Cllr Weston during his Chairman's report later this evening.

## **5/24 CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS**

Cllr Hyland spoke about the Coronation Day event and expressed his disappointment that the weather was very unkind to everyone. He thanked everyone involved in organising the event but recognised that the very poor weather had impacted on the number of attendees.

Cllr Hyland expressed his thanks on the Parish Council's behalf to Cllr Weston for her many years of service at Winchester City Council on behalf of the people of Soberton parish.

Cllr Hyland concluded his report by saying that all parish councillors should work together to better represent the community over the next few years.

## **6/24 TO ELECT THE VICE-CHAIRMAN**

Cllr Hyland proposed Cllr Findlay with Cllr Henderson seconding this nomination.

**Resolved:** By a show of hands Cllr Findlay was elected Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council for the municipal year 2023-24

## **7/24 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 12<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2023**

The Clerk informed the meeting that he had received comments to the effect that the minutes of the 12<sup>th</sup> April meeting were incomplete. He indicated that he would undertake further work on these before presenting them for approval.

## **8/24 SOBERTON PARISH COUNCIL**

Cllr Sherwill led with this item. He spoke about the need (in his view) for the Full Council to meet more often. He said that it could be possible for the Full Council to meet on a monthly basis in order to receive reports from working parties. This would replace the current situation where he believed the two standing committees meet too infrequently.

He had presented a written report that had been circulated previously. The following comments were made.

The current schedule had only been in place for one year.

Too many meetings during the year could mean the loss of personnel due to being over-committed.

Standing committees enable items to be discussed in greater depth.

Full Council meetings could become over-burdened with many agenda items.

Working parties could meet via “Zoom” or discuss matters via email threads.

The current meeting schedule is in place until the end of the year.

The decision could be deferred until the next meeting of the Full Council.

This could be held in June as there will be a Full Council meeting required at that time to approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Return AGAR.

Cllr Sherwill said that he took everything on board and would present a further review to the next meeting.

It was agreed to refer this item to the next Full Council meeting that would now take place on the 20<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

## **9/24 FULL COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE STRUCTURE**

Following on from the previous agenda item it was agreed to re-confirm the members of the two Standing Committees, the Communications Group and the Planning Group until after the meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> June.

## **10/24 PARISH COUNCIL CO-OPTION**

Cllr Hyland welcomed the two candidates, Mr David Buttriss and Ms Anita Smith.

Ms Smith made a brief speech that criticised events that took place at the Parish Council meeting of the 12<sup>th</sup> April 2023. At its conclusion she said that she would be withdrawing from the co-option process.

Mr Buttriss introduced himself to the meeting. He said that he had been involved with parish council matters previously including at the recreation ground, speeding issues and planning issues. He said that he had project management skills and he regarded himself as a good communicator.

**Resolved:** By a show of hands, Mr David Buttriss was co-opted on to the Parish Council. He was asked to sign the Acceptance of Office form. Having signed the document, he took his place as a Parish Councillor. Following a point of order, Cllr Buttriss was appointed to the Policy committee as there was a vacancy within this committee.

## **11/24 PARISH COUNCIL INSURANCE SCHEDULE**

The Clerk informed the Council that the Insurance schedule is due for renewal on the 1<sup>st</sup> June. He said that this year was the last year of a three-year commitment. He concluded his report by saying he would be going out to the market over the next 12 months.

**Resolved:** To approve the expenditure of £1901.58 to cover the cost of the Parish Council's annual insurance policy.

## **12/24 PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

**SDNP/23/01336/FUL Land at Mill Lane Mill Lane Swanmore Hampshire: Change of use from agricultural to equestrian, proposed barn with stables, tack room, feed and hay store and outdoor Menage 30m x 60m and widening of existing access from Mill.**

Soberton Parish Council objects to this application. The Council notes that the Application is similar to an Application in 2021 but, although there have been some minor amendments, it does not overcome the fundamental concerns. These are as follows:

1. It is not in accordance with any aspect of SDNP Local Plan Policy SD24 on equestrian uses for the following reasons:

- (a) The scale of the proposal is significant in a quiet area of the parish alongside the Meon Valley Trail and near the River Meon.
- (b) The quality of the design is poor given the size of the stables, simple timber cladding and a corrugated roof. It does not reflect the nature of other buildings along Mill Lane.
- (c) No existing buildings are being reused.
- (d) The buildings and ménage are close to Mill Lane and the setting of the older buildings, and do not respect the proximity of the Meon Valley Trail.
- (e) There is very little infrastructure and Mill Lane itself is a narrow rural lane which is not suitable for the large feed and bedding transport that would be required.
- (f) There is minimal landscaping proposed.
- (g) The area already supports a number of independent equestrian facilities and therefore there will be a cumulative adverse impact on the surrounding biodiversity and River Meon.
- (h) Little information is provided on the land-based management. The Eco Services Actions report provides simple responses without any detail.

2. Reflecting the comments above, the development is a significant scale in a sensitive part of the Parish. The number of stables is excessive and the ménage constitutes a sizable area of alien development.

3. The stable building is near the Meon Valley Trail which is a major ecological and leisure facility for both local people and others in the region.

4. The provision of 8 stables and a ménage indicates that there could be significant equestrian use which would generate traffic movements on Mill Lane which is a quiet rural lane primarily serving the historic buildings along it.

5. No details are provided for the site access on Mill Lane which is a narrow and enclosed lane.

6. As noted above, there is minimal landscaping shown on the drawings and no assessment provided.

7. This area comes under the dark skies policy and therefore any lighting will be harmful.

In addition to the above objections the Council would highlight the following:

There are water mains easements across the Site. There is no indication of its location and the relevant water company should be consulted on the Application.

Given the size of the equestrian facilities and the sensitive ecosystem around the River Meon it is essential that a suitable horse waste management system is applied which is self-enforcing, as any enforcement is virtually impossible and unlikely to occur and only detailed 24/7 observations and monitoring by local people and other interested parties might result in any enforcement.

If SDNP are minded to approve the Application there should be a Condition requiring that any use of the Site, apart from essential horse maintenance, should not be permitted during the hours of darkness in order to avoid light pollution in this sensitive location.

In conclusion, the proposal is; contrary to SDNP equestrian policy, a significant size in a sensitive location and given these circumstances minimal details and assessments have been provided.

## **13/24 PARISH DESIGN STATEMENT**

Cllr Weston led on this item. She distributed a list of addresses in the parish so that councillors could distribute the toolkit to their neighbours and other people near where they lived.

Cllr Sherwill promoted a photographic competition in order to generate high-quality pictures of the village, its housing stock and countryside views.

## **14/24 SPEEDING ISSUES IN THE VILLAGE**

Cllr Sherwill led on this item. He highlighted that the Parish Council operated one Speed Indicator Device spread across three sites (Church Road, High Street and Station Road). He also said that there is money in the budget for a second device to be purchased. He also said that Hampshire County Council have agreed to site four more modern posts in Heath Road and Liberty Road.

He expressed disappointment that this project was taking so long to complete.

He then spoke about a new device called the Auto Speedwatch. This device acted in place of a Community Speedwatch team in that it recorded registration numbers of speeding vehicles. The cost of each unit cost £595 plus VAT. Each device would be sited permanently in one place. Being solar powered it will only function during daylight hours.

Cllr Sherwill said that there was scope to purchase one or two of these two devices in support of the SIDs so that more useable data was generated.

## **15/24 FINANCE**

Date	Supplier	Description	Amount
04/05/23	LMA Tree Surgery	Tree works	850.00

Total 850.00

The Clerk presented the completed Receipts and Payments for 2022-23. This was accepted by the Parish Council.

The Clerk then brought forward the delayed 2023-24 Budget for approval. The Clerk highlighted the fact that the majority of the Parish Council's budget was spent at the Recreation Ground. The Budget had been in review since the January 2023 meeting.

A discussion took place regarding the potential deficit in the budget and this information was noted.

	<b>Budget</b>	
	<b>2023-24</b>	
<b>PRECEPT</b>	<b>39347.00</b>	
<b>OTHER INCOME</b>		
Lengthsman	11000.00	
Interest	0.00	
Recreation Ground income	270.00	
Grants/Donations	0.00	
Expected VAT reclaim	2000.00	
	<b>13270.00</b>	
	<b>52617.00</b>	
<b>GENERAL ADMINISTRATION</b>		
Clerk's salary	10000.00	
IT Costs	200.00	
Stationary/Printing	50.00	
Postage	30.00	
Telephone (Inc Broadband)	30.00	
Fuel	120.00	
Insurance/Parish Council	331.00	
Audit fees	230.00	
Councillor training	100.00	
Councillors' expenses	60.00	
Elections	80.00	
Room hire	175.00	
Chairman's Fund	250.00	
Lengthsman Scheme	11000.00	
	<b>22656.00</b>	
<b>ASSET MAINTENANCE</b>		
Pavilion	1000.00	

Pavilion Electricity	1000.00	
Playground inspections	650.00	
Pitch Improvements	8000.00	
Recreation Ground Maintenance	12000.00	
New Playground equipment	1000.00	
Other Open Spaces	400.00	
Playground repairs	500.00	
Noticeboard repairs	100.00	
New Noticeboards	200.00	
Community Defibrillators	500.00	
	<b>25350.00</b>	
<b>FEES/GRANTS</b>		
Information Commission	40.00	
HALC	165.00	
Holy Trinity (Newtown PCC)	1500.00	
St Peter's (Soberton PCC)	1500.00	
Second SID	4000.00	
SID administration	2000.00	
ACSO Costs	2400.00	
Other LGA Grants	400.00	
Citizens Advice Winchester	300.00	
Payroll processing fees	110.00	
2023 Coronation	4000.00	
Section 137 Grants	0.00	
	<b>16415.00</b>	
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>64421.00</b>	
<b>UNPRECEPTED INCOME</b>	<b>13270.00</b>	
<b>PRECEPT REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>39347.00</b>	
	-	
<b>SURPLUS</b>	<b>11804.00</b>	
Soberton Band D Rate 2023-24 is £46.50		

## 16/24 STANDING ORDERS REVIEW

Cllr Weston led with this item. She highlighted the fact that a number of policies have not been reviewed since 2021 and that the Standing Orders require these to be looked at. She had reviewed the current document and had sent the draft for review by the Clerk.

Members were reluctant to review the document as a whole and many asked for the review to be broken down into smaller sections.

Cllr Weston said that this can be done but that the review should be completed before the end of 2023.

## 17/24 COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Cllr Hyland began the reports by welcoming Cllr Danny Lee to the meeting and congratulated him on his recent election win.

County Cllr Stallard commented that she had previously sent in a report for distribution. She was questioned about recent speeding issues and was thanked for her report on the County Council's response to the pothole crisis.

She also spoke about the "twenty's plenty" consultation. The County Council will look at requests for 20mph limits if these are supported by Parish Councils.

Cllr Hyland thanked Cllr Stallard for her recent Coronation Grant.

## **18/24 CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no other correspondence to receive.

## **19/24 EXEMPT BUSINESS**

To pass a resolution in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to exclude the public and press from the discussion of the following matters where publicity might be prejudicial to the special nature of the business.

These matters include a Code of Conduct complaint and a personnel matter.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.21pm