ALMELEY PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council
Held on Wednesday 1st March 2023
at Almeley Village Hall at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: Michael Handley (Chair), Andy Cross, Rose Proctor, Colin Powell, Martin Skyrme and Jon Argent

In attendance: Emma Thomas – Clerk
Ward Councillor Graham Jones

Public: 4

1. **To receive apologies for absence**
None

2. **To receive declarations of interest and written requests for dispensation**
Cllr Mike Handley DECLARED a DPI against item 7 and signed the Register of Interest book
Cllr Martin Skyrme DECLARED a NPI against item 7 and Signed the Register of Interest book

3. **To approve the minutes of the previous meetings – 11th and 30th January 2023**
Both sets of minutes were APPROVED and duly signed by the Chair.

4. **Open session**
   4.1 To receive a report on Herefordshire Council matters from Ward Cllr Graham Jones
   Ward Cllr Jones' report included the following items:
   - Children's Services Report has now been published. There will be a further review in six months time.
   - Council Tax will rise by 4.99% for the year 2023-24
   - Holiday and second homes will now be charged council tax at 100%

   As this will be his last meeting, Ward Cllr Jones was thanked for his support during his time in office.

   4.2 To receive views of local residents on parish matters
   The following item was RAISED:
   - The IPU hearing did go ahead on the 28th February but no conclusion was reached.

5. **Finance**
   5.1 To note the March bank balance and finance report and sign both. – Appendix 1
   The clerk REPORTED that there will be an under-spend by the end of March. The report was APPROVED and signed as evidence of budget monitoring and bank reconciliation.
   Queries were RAISED by a parishioner about various financial aspects. The clerk clarified these points. She AGREED that the reserves policy could do with re-wording.
   5.2 To note the following invoices paid under clerk's delegated authority
   5.2.1 Clerk's February salary
   NOTED
   5.3 To consider the following outstanding invoices for payment:
   5.3.1 Clerk's March salary
   5.3.2 Clerk's March expenses - £170.90 (Previously circulated)
   5.3.3 Almeley Village Hall – 30th January 2023 meeting £20.00
   5.3.4 HALC 2023-24 Subscription £597.56
   5.3.5 Smith Of Derby – Church Clock Service - £322.80
   5.3.6 Eyelid Productions Ltd – Web and email migration £150
   The above invoices were APPROVED for payment by BACS
   5.4 To consider reimbursing for the replacement defibrillator battery £366.00
   It was RESOLVED to reimburse this payment and to add a budget heading for "Defibrillator Costs" to the 2023-24 budget, with a sum of £150 attached to accumulate in an allocated pot if not used. It was requested that a further sum is set aside for defibrillator training. The clerk will make the changes and bring the updated budget back to the Council at the May meeting.
   5.5 To consider an update on changing the website to a .gov web address with Cllrs using .gov email addresses
   The clerk REPORTED that the website has now been changed to www.almeleyparishcouncil.gov.uk. Emails will be changed following the May elections.

5.6 To consider the finance working group's recommendations for parish donations for the year 2023-24

It was RESOLVED to approve the recommendations that the Almeley Green Group receive £1,150 and Almeley Village Hall receive £230 for a DVD player. The remaining sum will be re-advertised for applications in September.

6. Planning

6.1 To note applications determined by Herefordshire Council

None

6.2 To consider the Terms of Reference of the Planning Working Group

The Terms of Reference were APPROVED – Appendix 2

6.3 To consider the updated "Planning between Meetings" Policy

It was RESOLVED to adopt the updated "Planning between Meetings" Policy – Appendix 3

6.4 To consider the following planning applications for determination by Herefordshire Council

6.4.1 **224309 - Woonton Farm, Woonton, Herefordshire,**

Application for variation of condition 2 of planning permission 203683 (Proposed erection of 5 dwellings and Associated garaging and parking). - Plot 1 - garage enclosed to provide secure storage. Plot 2 - garage enclosed to provide secure storage. Plot 4/5 - external joining gable between 4/5 amended to timber cladding to allow suitable construction detailing, end gable of garage amended from stone to timber cladding The Planning Working Group summarised their thoughts on the application. It was RESOLVED to support the application

6.4.2 **224306 - Land at Spring Grove Farm, Wootton Lane, Herefordshire, HR3 6PX**

Application for approval of reserved matters following outline approval 221906 (Outline application with all matters save access reserved for the erection of 3 dwellinghouses with garages and access off private road).

The Planning Working Group summarised their thoughts on the application. It was RESOLVED to support the application.

Cllr Mike Handley left the meeting. It was AGREED that Cllr Jon Argent would Chair the meeting in his absence.

7. Commons

7.1 To consider an update on obtaining ownership of commons from Herefordshire Council

7.1.1 **To confirm that the PC wish to acquire the freehold interest in the Commons subject to all existing rights, easements, wayleaves, licences, liabilities etc, that they fully accept and understand the requirements of statute relating to Common Land**

It was RESOLVED that the PC wish to do the above. It was RESOLVED that the PC should join the Open Spaces Society at an annual cost of £45 in order to be able to obtain advice if need be.

7.1.2 **To consider setting up a Commons Management Group to formulate a management plan for dealing with the above matters.**

It was RESOLVED that a Management Group should be set up, involving all interested parties. It was RESOLVED that the clerk should contact all groups and the item be deferred for finalising at the May meeting.

7.1.3 **To consider whether the PC also wish the Village Hall to be transferred with the Commons – at present subject to a lease to the Parish Council until 2027.**

It was RESOLVED that the clerk should decline this offer at the present time, but ask that HC give more details on the particulars of the lease and the condition of the building for future discussion.

Cllr Mike Handley rejoined the meeting and resumed as Chair.

8. Parish Maintenance

8.1 To consider any lengthsman or footpath jobs that need undertaking.

It was NOTED that the footpath signs at Nieuport House/Questmoor and below Tan House Cottage are missing. The clerk will log these.

8.2 To receive a report from the Parish Footpaths Officer

None received

8.3 To consider signing the Lengthsman Grant Contract for 2022-23

It was NOTED that in order to access the 2022-23 grant money works would have to be carried out between now and the 31st March. It was RESOLVED to sign the contract and submit any invoices that come in during this period.

9. Highways and Footpaths

9.1 To consider any highways issue that needs reporting

It was REPORTED that Woonton Spring is still inoperable. The clerk will chase up Balfour Beatty and forward correspondence to Ward Cllr Jones for following up on too. It was AGREED to add this as an agenda item at the May meeting for a resolution.

9.2 To consider an update siting a SID at Bells Orchard

The clerk has been chasing a response from Balfour Beatty and Herefordshire Council Traffic Management team to no avail. Ward Cllr Graham Jones AGREED to follow this up.

9.3 To consider an update on the installation of a directional sign for properties in Westview.
The clerk REPORTED that she had received a quote for £495 for 3 signs. It was AGREED that this sum was unaffordable and that this would be taken no further.

10. Environment

10.1 To note the update from the Almeley Green Group – Appendix 4
NOTED

10.2 To consider the Terms of Reference for the Green Working Group – Appendix 7
The Terms of Reference were APPROVED

10.3 To receive an update from the Green Working Group – including the meeting notes from the 6th and 15th February 2023 – Appendices 5 & 6
The update was RECEIVED. It was AGREED that a budget line of £1408 should be added to the 2023-24 budget to meet the agreed Climate and Ecological Emergency Declaration and subsequent action plan – as detailed in the AGG Funding application under APC Related Activities. In the first instance this figure will be taken from reserves.

11. Correspondence

- Concerns raised re highway safety on the A480 – *NOTED – the clerk has discussed this with Herefordshire Council and the parishioner.*
- Issues have also been raised about flooding on the Hopleys Green Road. – *NOTED - The clerk has raised this with Balfour Beatty*

12. To consider the time and date of the Annual Parish Meeting and details thereof.
It was AGREED that the APM should take place before the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council on 17th May at 6pm. It was AGREED that Parish Groups should be invited to set up information stands detailing their activities if they wished to.

13. To consider agenda items for next meeting – no discussion
None

14. To note date of next scheduled meeting – 17th May 2023 at Almeley Village Hall
NOTED

A resolution was passed to exclude the press and public from the following confidential item

The public left the meeting

15. To consider the tenders received for the mowing and lengthsman contracts for 2023-24
The clerk REPORTED that two tenders had been received for each contract. It was RESOLVED to appoint DC Gardening Services as Mowing and Lengthsman contractor for 2023-24.

The meeting closed at 21.10

Signed: [redacted] Dated: 17/5/23