01/24

ALMELEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council

Held on Wednesday 8th May 2024

At Almeley Village Hall at 7:00pm

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

In attendance: Mandy Howard – Clerk

Ward Councillor Robert Highfield

Public: 2

1. **To elect the Chairman of the Council and to receive signature on Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.**
   It was RESOLVED that Cllr Jon Argent would be Chair for the coming year.

2. **To elect the Vice-Chairman of the Council**
   It was RESOLVED that Cllr Andy Cross would be Vice-Chair for the coming year.

3. **To receive apologies for absence**
   Cllr Vanessa Faulkner

4. **To receive declarations of interest and written requests for dispensation**
   None

5. **To remind councillors to update their Register of Interests Form with Herefordshire Council if necessary**
   Cllrs were REMINDED to update their Register of Interests Form

6. **To approve the minutes of the previous meeting – 13th March 2023**
   Minutes were APPROVED and duly signed by Chair

7. **Open Session**

   7.1 **To receive a report on Herefordshire Council matters from Ward Cllr Robert Highfield**

   Cllr Highfield's report included the following items:

   - Update on funds available for road repairs, with £20m allocated to Herefordshire County Council. A new road improvement program will be instigated, working alongside Balfour Beatty who has 2 years left on their contract.
   - The Director of Children's Services has left their position, with an interim Director commencing in June. It has been highlighted that issues are not being dealt with quickly enough.
   - The Ward Councillor guaranteed that the road from Almeley to Kinnersley would be repaired and completed this summer.

7.2 **To receive views of local residents on parish matters**

It was raised by one member of the public that last year, the hedges were cut just once, which in turn, caused visibility problems. The Chair reassured the public that the hedges would be cut twice this year, with one cut being imminent and the other to take place in September.

8. **To note the attendance record at meetings of councillors during 2023-24**

NOTED

9. **To confirm Working Group memberships and Cllr responsibilities**

The following Cllrs were CONFIRMED as taking the following responsibilities for the coming year:

9.1 **Environment Working Group** – Rose Proctor; Vanessa Faulkner; Colin Powell (Jon Argent as reserve)

9.2 **Finance Working Group** – Jon Argent; Colin Powell; Vanessa Faulkner; Michael Handley

9.3 **Planning Working Group** – Martin Skyrme; Rose Proctor; Andy Cross (Vanessa Faulkner and Michael Handley as reserves)

9.4 **Lengthsman Coordinator** – Andy Cross and Martin Skyrme

9.5 **NDP Review Group** - Rose Proctor; Vanessa Faulkner; Jon Argent; Andy Cross; Michael Handley; Frank McNally; Rob Rimmer and Matthew Hosanee

9.6 **Community Plan Working Group** – Vanessa Faulkner; Jon Argent; Rose Proctor and Martin Skyrme

10. **To review Almeley Parish Council Policies and (re)adopt**

10.1 **Standing Orders** – Appendix 1 – Approved

10.2 **Code of Conduct** - Appendix 2 – Approved

10.3 **Financial Regulations** – Appendix 3 – Approved

10.4 **Risk Schedule Assessment and Finance Controls** – Appendix 4 – Approved

10.5 **Risk Management Policy** – Appendix 5 – Approved

10.6 **Asset Register** – Appendix 6 – It was RESOLVED to remove items from the register and circulate to Cllrs for approval

10.7 **Reserves Policy** – Appendix 7 – Approved

10.8 **To remind councillors of the self-disqualification law**

The Cllrs were REMINDED of the need to attend at least one meeting every six months in order to remain as a Cllr

11. **Finance**

11.1 **To note the End of Year bank balance finance report and sign** – Appendix 8

The reports were signed by Chair and Cllr Proctor

11.2 **To consider the internal audit report 2023 – 24** – Appendix 9

The internal audit report was considered and approved. There were no matters rising within.

11.3 **To consider and approve the Annual Governance Statement** – Appendix 10

The Annual Governance Statements were CONSIDERED and APPROVED and SIGNED by the Chair.

11.4 **To consider and approve the Annual Return Accounting Statements** – Appendix 11

The Accounting Statements were CONSIDERED and APPROVED and SIGNED by the Chair and the Clerk.

11.5 **To consider eligibility for audit exemption and sign the certificate**

It was RESOLVED that the Council is eligible to be exempt from an external audit. The Chair and Responsible Financial Officer signed the Certificate of Exemption.

11.6 **To consider dates for the public to exercise their rights**

It was AGREED that the date of announcement would be 1st June 2024, with rights to inspection of the AGAR commencing on Monday 3rd June and ending on Friday 12th July 2024.

11.8 **To review the parish council insurance policy and approve renewal - £661.08**

The Council Insurance Policy was AGREED to still be adequate for the needs of the Council. It was RESOLVED to pay the invoice by BACS.

11.9 **To consider the clerks delegated authority to make payments between meetings as necessary**

It was NOTED that the clerk has delegated authority to make payments between meetings up to the sum of £750.00

11.10 **To note the following payments made between meetings under Clerks Delegated Authority**

11.10.1 Clerk's April Salary

11.10.2 Steve Davies – War Memorial Specialist

11.11 **To consider the following invoices for payment**

11.11.1 Almeley Village Hall - £60.00

11.11.2 Autela Payroll Services - £78.33

11.11.3 HALC – Audit Training - £30.00

11.11.4 DC Gardening Services - £543.60

11.11.5 DC Gardening Services - £672.00

The above invoices were APPROVED for payment by BACS

12. Planning

12.1 **To consider the following planning applications for determination by Herefordshire Council**

12.1.1 **240970 – The Willows, Almeley, Herefordshire, HR3 6LH**

Proposed new detached garage forward of the dwelling's principal elevation

It was RESOLVED to support this application

12.1.2 **240493 – Spring Cottage, Woonton, HR3 6QL**

Proposed first floor extension to north end of building to form enlarged second bedroom with new front facing pitched roof dormer

It was RESOLVED to support this application but with the following comment: Hedge at property requires cutting back

13.

14. Planning Maintenance

13.1.1 **To consider any lengthsman or footpath jobs that need undertaking, including regular tasks as suggested**

It was RESOLVED that as Lengthsman Coordinator, Cllr Andy Cross have delegated authority to instruct the lengthsman to complete other tasks as and when required

13.1.2 **To receive a report from the Parish Footpaths Officer**

It was NOTED that the FPO, Laurie Barnett, should be invited to either attend the council meetings or provide a report on the status of footpaths

13.1.3 **To consider speeding issues in Almeley**

The following issues were RAISED for reporting:

Tractors speeding through village. Cllr Andy Cross has contacted Local Community Police Officer, but has not yet received a response. This will be followed up by the Clerk who will also contact the police.

15. Highways

14.1 **To consider any highways issues that need reporting**

The clerk will request feedback on issues already reported and will report any future issues.

16. Commons/Cricket Club Proposal

15.1 **To consider Almeley Cricket Club proposal to lease common land**

The following items were RAISED for questioning:

Does the Cricket Club have any rights to the common land?

If another party buy the commons, what could they do with the land?

If the Parish Council goes ahead with the purchase of the common, will the ownership of the village hall be part of the purchase or will it remain as property of Herefordshire Council?

The clerk will seek answers to the questions raised and report back at the next meeting.

17. **War Memorial**

16.1 **To receive an update and consider action on the War Memorial refurbishment**

The Clerk REPORTED that Steve Davies, is due to commence work on the 19th of May 2024

18. Environment

17.1 To receive an update from the Environmental Working Group and consider action

Meeting notes, kindly send by Mike Hodge were read out

It was NOTED that the EWG have requested the sum of £210.00 + VAT in order to have access to records. It was RESOLVED to withhold this payment until further information is received from EWG.

19.

20. **Community Group Updates**

It was NOTED that the Almeley Green Group would provide a report at the Annual Meeting of the Parish on the 16th of May 2024.

21. **Correspondence**
    None
22. **To raise agenda items for next meeting – no discussion**
    AA Sign
    Commons

23. **To note date of next scheduled meeting – Wednesday 3rd July 2024 at 7:00pm at Almeley Village Hall**
    NOTED

The meeting closed at 20:50

Signed: Jonathan D. Argyle Dated: 11/9/24