

ALSTONEFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of a meeting of Alstonefield Parish Council was held on Thursday 30th May 2024 at 7.15 pm (following the Annual Community Meeting) in Alstonefield Village Hall.

Present: Chair: R Hignett, Vice Chair: G Campbell (GC), A Hayes (AH), M Newman (MN), R Longdon (RL) and the Clerk, M Jinks. There was also one member of the public present.

24.05.1 Apologies: C McIlroy (CM), S Jeffery (SJ) and the District Councillor, Edwin Wain.

24.05.2 Election of Officers

RH agreed to stand again as Chair and GC agreed to stand again as Vice Chair; both were re-elected unopposed. All Councillors were reminded to check their Register of Interests was up to date.

24.05.3 Minutes of the previous meeting

The draft minutes of the previous meeting had been published and forwarded to members of the Council in advance of the meeting. These were confirmed as a true record of proceedings and signed by RH.

24.05.4 Declarations of personal and prejudicial interest of councillors related to published agenda

None declared.

24.05.5 Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported back on the action that he had taken following the previous meeting.

He also reminded the Councillors of their responsibilities during Purdah (the pre-election period).

The Clerk also updated the meeting re CM's efforts for the cap to the water pump; AH agreed to ask Andy Griffin if he may be able to assist.

24.05.6 Items to/from the District Councillor

Nothing to report

24.05.7 Year end accounting and compliance statements

- a) The Clerk advised that the Internal Audit Report had been received and was signed as unqualified. It was unanimously agreed to re-appoint Mrs Kim Squires as the Internal Auditor for the 2024-25 year.
- b) The Certificate of Exemption was read, agreed and signed by the Chair
- c) The Annual Governance Statement was read, agreed and signed by the Chair
- d) The Clerk presented the Accounting Statement; this was accepted and signed by the Chair
- e) The Confirmation regarding the exercise of public rights was read and agreed.
- f) The Standing Orders had previously been circulated to the Councillors for their review; these were unanimously adopted.
- g) The Financial Regulations had also been circulated to the Councillors for their review; these were unanimously adopted.

24.05.8 Planning matters, decision notices and appeals

It was noted that Application NP/SM/0424/0387 for retrospective planning permission at Hope Mount Farm, had been withdrawn.

The Clerk had not been advised of any decisions.

There were no appeals.

24.05.9 Financial matters - items of expenditure and income

Car park monies had kindly been collected by AH in the sum of £138.57. Other receipts were a £75 donation from the Leaden Boot for use of the playing field and £120 for the car boot sale on 27th May.

The following payments were approved:

Playsafety Ltd; RoSPA inspection and report	£98.40, incl £16.40 VAT
Herbivore; mowing of playing field	£300.00, no VAT
Peak Park Parishes Forum; annual subscription	£12.00, no VAT
Staffs. Parish Council Assoc.: annual subscription	£107.00, VAT exempt
Kim Squires; Internal audit and travel expenses	£178.00, no VAT
Clear Councils: annual insurance premium	£448.63, VAT exempt

Having clarified it with the brokers, the Clerk confirmed that the insurance policy covered liability for work done by employees, Councillors, and other volunteers. Paid contractors must have their public liability policy. After taking into account the above transactions, the Council had balances of £4,051 in the current account and £19,281 in the deposit account (*including interest of £25.24 for April*).

24.05.10 Playing field maintenance

It had been agreed that Duncan Scroggs (t/a Herbivore) would continue to mow the playing field on a weekly basis during the growing season. He had not had any contact from the cricket club about additional cuts for them. AH would remind him about the wedding booking (*5 days from Thursday 6th June*). AH would also dismantle the goal posts for the wedding. The RoSPA report had been received; the Chair would liaise with the lengthsman about necessary rectification work. It was noted there were no “red” items requiring immediate attention.

24.05.11 Lengthsman’s contract

GC had spotted a number of inconsistencies in the existing contract (*conflicts of “discretion” and “as directed”*). He would re-draft with the Chair’s assistance.

24.05.12 Items for Community Magazine

None to note

24.05.13 “Lost In The Hills” festival at The Watts Russell

This item was tabled by SJ; the Clerk had also received a couple of e-mails from local residents. In SJ’s absence, it was agreed to postpone discussions until a later date (*also noting it was an annual event and would not recur this year*).

24.05.14 Highways Issues

The Chair advised of the poor standard of work done at Lode bridge; he would report this to DCC. The Clerk was instructed to report the potholes on the road outside the playing field car park to SCC.

24.05.15 Correspondence

A member of the public had reported concerns about the use of a drone at the playing field. It was noted that this appears to have been a “one-off”. Any concerns should be reported to the police as a civil matter. The National Trust advised about a memorial bench in Milldale; there were no objections, if they maintained it. The cricket club requested a carnival game on the playing field – there were no objections. The Wakes committee requested use of the playing field for children’s games – there were no objections.

24.05.16 Any other business

GC advised that the website software needs upgrading at an indicative cost of £100 per annum; agreed to proceed. AH advised the bench in Homestead garden was in need of repair (*or disposal*); agreed to see if it was a memorial one and then proceed accordingly.

Date of next meeting

Thursday, 11th July 2024 in the Village Hall.

The meeting was declared closed at 8:17pm

These Minutes remain draft until ratified at the next meeting.