

ALSTONEFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of a meeting of Alstonefield Parish Council was held on Thursday 11th July 2024 at 7.00 pm in Alstonefield Village Hall.

Present: Chair: R Hignett, Vice Chair: G Campbell (GC), A Hayes (AH), M Newman (MN), R Longdon (RL), C McIlroy (CM), S Jeffery (SJ) and the Clerk, M Jinks together with the District Councillor, Edwin Wain. There were also five members of the public present.

24.07.1 Apologies: None

24.07.2 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.

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

None declared.

24.07.4 Clerk's Report and matters arising

The Clerk reported back on the action that he had taken following the previous meeting. RH confirmed that any necessary action following the recent RoSPA report were in hand. AH advised that he had not yet ascertained whether the dilapidated bench in the Homestead Garden was a memorial type.

24.07.5 Items to/from the District Councillor

Edwin Wain expressed his frustration with the District Council who, in recent months, appeared to have "gone to sleep". Successive meetings had been cancelled as, apparently, there was "nothing to discuss"!

24.07.6 Planning matters, decision notices and appeals

Application NP/SM/0424/0346 at Paddock House, Back of Ecton was discussed – there were no objections.

The Clerk had been advised that application NP/SM/1123/1405 at Hope Farm had been refused.

There were no appeals.

24.07.7 Financial matters - items of expenditure and income

Car park monies had kindly been collected by AH in the sum of £98.43. Other receipts were £120 for the car boot sale on 30th June and a nominal donation of £10 from SPAB (see 24.7.13 below).

The following payments were approved:

Gordon Campbell; reimbursement of Wordfence licence	£96.67, no VAT
Herbivore; mowing of playing field	£500.00, no VAT
Martin Jinks; quarterly net salary	£695.44, no VAT
HM Revenue & Customs: PAYE	£171.40, no VAT
Geosphere: Parish Online software	£38.40, incl £6.40 VAT
Colin Lovatt: lengthsman's duties & expenses	£1,103.03, no VAT

After taking into account the above transactions, the Council had balances of £2,033 in the current account and £19,305 in the deposit account (*including interest of £23.74 for May*).

24.07.8 Lengthsman's contract

RH circulated a revised, standard contract that had had the inconsistencies removed; it was agreed that this be adopted and issued to the current Alstonefield lengthsman at the conclusion of his existing one.

24.07.9 Watts Russell folk festival – effect on playing fields car park

SJ had advised that this event had resulted in overnight parking in the playing field car park, camping in the field itself and general mess in the car park. Consideration is to be given to advising the organisers of the event and, if it recurs in future, possibly closing the barriers.

24.07.10 Items for Community Magazine

None to note

24.07.11 Community Interest Group (“CIG”) for The George

CM gave a summary of action taken so far. The community were pursuing the idea of purchasing The George and need a CIG to be advised to the vendors. The community are arranging for a Community Benefit Society (“CBS”) to be incorporated which will become the CIG with a view to purchasing the property. Until the CBS is in existence, the Parish Council had been asked to act as the CIG in the interim – there is no intention for the PC to purchase the property or to be financially exposed in any way (though the CBS may ask for financial assistance in the future). The Councillors had previously, informally agreed to support such an action and this was now formally ratified.

24.07.12 Highways Issues

Nothing new to note

24.07.13 Correspondence

The use of the playing field for parking by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings had previously, informally been agreed, and this was now formally ratified.

The organiser of the car boot sales had pointed out part of the Northwestern wall of the playing field was in disrepair. AH agreed to try and contact the owner.

Notices had been published announcing the erection of multiple communication masts within the Boundary. The general feeling was these are ugly, not necessary and definitely not wanted. GC advised of the lengths he had undertaken to track down the contractor/installing company – Connect Fibre. He had received communication from SMDC (*not our problem*) and PDNP (*it is permitted development*). Again, it appears the Council’s hands are tied. A representative from Connect Fibre has agreed to attend the next PC meeting and GC will write to Karen Bradley MP for support and advice.

The Clerk had received a detailed letter and a couple of e-mails from parishioners expressing dissatisfaction with the recent Lost In The Hills music and arts festival. These concerns centred around inadequate parking and highway nuisance, excessive noise and partying after the official end times. The correspondents’ general consensus was to support such an event, but they felt it had outgrown its current location.

It was not thought that there was a breach of licencing laws and the road closure had been officially applied for. The Parish Council was therefore limited as to what action, if any, it could take. The largest concern appeared to be the illegal parking and traffic congestion (with Hopedale residents particularly inconvenienced). The Clerk was instructed to seek advice from Mark Deaville, the County Councillor in charge of highways.

24.07.14 Any other business

AH advised that there was evidence of knotweed on the land at Greenhills; Herbivore (who mow the playing field) have confirmed they have the necessary qualifications and licences and will treat it.

AH pointed out that there were trees (mainly Beech) overhanging the highway on the National Trust land on The Pinch and Lode Lane; the Clerk was asked to report this to his contact there.

Date of next meeting

Wednesday, 21st August 2024 in the Village Hall.

The meeting was declared closed at 7:59pm

These Minutes remain draft until ratified at the next meeting.