

St Michael Parish Council

Minutes of the **Meeting of St Michael Parish Council**

held on Tuesday 10th January 2023

at the School Room, rear of St Mary's Church, Childwick Green, St Albans

Present: Councillor D Meachin
Councillor E Rolfe
Councillor E Rose
Councillor R Woodward
Councillor S Slaughter
J Reading Parish Clerk

01/2023 OPENING OF MEETING

The Chairman welcomed all to the Meeting.

02/2023 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Clerk passed on a message from Cllr Lopes-Dias containing her apologies for absence from the Meeting, and her explanation, which were discussed. After a call from the Chairman for a show of hands, it was unanimously agreed that the absence would not be approved by the Parish Council. The Clerk was asked to write to Cllr Lopes-Dias with the rationale.

03/2023 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

None proffered.

04/2023 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 SEPTEMBER 2022

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 6 September 2022 were unanimously AGREED as a true record and were signed by the Chairman.

05/2023 RESIDENTS' FORUM

No members of the public were present and no issues had been raised with the Clerk prior to the Meeting.

06/2023 CASUAL VACANCY FOR A PARISH COUNCILLOR

It was noted that in view of the parish council elections scheduled for May 2023, no further attempt would now be made to fill the ongoing casual vacancy.

07/2023 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW 2022

The outcome of SADC's 2022 Review had been published in December. A formal Order to effect SADC's decision was expected soon, which will move, as anticipated, the boundary currently splitting Ragged Hall Lane, so that all properties on the northern side of the road, up to the eastern boundary of Park Wood, will be reallocated to St Stephen Parish Council. The remainder of St Michael Parish would be split into North and South Wards.

The Parish Council's suggestion, made in the second round of consultation with SADC, that the number of Parish Councillors at St Michael might be reduced from seven to six had not been implemented. The Order, when made, will require four Parish Councillors for St Michael South, and three Parish Councillors for St Michael North.

08/2023 ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2023

The Clerk had attended a training session on arrangements for the next local election process.

As part of the Elections Act 2022, the UK Government has introduced a requirement for voters to show photo ID when voting at a polling station at most elections, with effect from those taking place in the St Albans District on 4th May 2023. To vote in person, voters must be on the electoral register and bring a suitable form of photo ID to their polling station.

The Ragged Hall Lane electors awaiting transfer to St Stephen Parish Council will be informed by SADC of new polling station addresses when individual poll cards are posted in April.

Along with any new candidates who may come forward, current parish councillors may offer themselves for election during the nomination period, which extends from Monday 20th March up to 4.00 pm on 4th April 2023. The split between St Michael North and South (ref 07/2023) will require each of the candidates to seek election in one or other of the two newly created wards.

The Clerk will distribute more information before the next Meeting.

09/2023 POLICY FOR GRANTS AND DONATIONS

Following the last Meeting (57/2022) Members reviewed the latest draft for this policy. The format and style were considered to be much improved, although there were a small number of further suggested amendments. The Clerk would circulate the final draft for approval at the March Meeting.

10/2023 THE CLERK'S SALARY REVIEW

It was noted that in November 2022 the National Association of Local Councils had published details of the national pay award, to be backdated to 1 April 2022. It was agreed that the Clerk's pay from that date would be adjusted in accordance with the award, and the new rates would continue to apply until such time as the 1 April 2023 pay award was settled later in the year.

It was unanimously AGREED that the Clerk's pay point detailed in the contract of employment remained appropriate and no change to it had been suggested.

A payment was approved for a number of extra hours the Clerk had worked above the number contracted in the period up to 31 December 2022.

11/2023 FINANCE MATTERS

- i. a schedule of cheque payments was RECEIVED and APPROVED.

Date	Cheque	£	Payee	Covering
15/11/22	000576	96.00	R Woodward	Planting scheme
15/11/22	000577	30.00	HAPTC	Clerk election training
15/11/22	000578	40.00	M Carter	Bus shelter maintenance
10/1/23	000579	718.01	J Reading	Salary Q3 ending 31 December 2022
10/1/23	000580	479.34	J Reading	Q3 Expenses to 10 January
10/1/23	000581	280.00	S I Richardson	2021 bus shelter maintenance

- ii. The Clerk would submit a bank reconciliation to the Chairman in due course; bank statements had been delayed in recent postal industrial action.
- iii. A table showing projected expenditure to 31 March 2023 alongside estimated figures for 2023/24 had been circulated before the Meeting and was considered, with the Clerk providing narrative as required.
- iv. The estimated income and expenditure under all headings for the year commencing 1 April 2023, referred to in iii. above and as attached to these Minutes, was APPROVED.

Discussion followed concerning the reduction of approximately 20% in Council Tax Base resulting from the Community Governance Review, and its effect on the households remaining in St Michael parish.

Proposed by Cllr Meachin and seconded by Cllr Woodward, it was RESOLVED that:

- a) the Clerk be instructed to submit a Precept request to SADC in the sum of £4225.00, which was a reduction of £1000.00 from 2022/23.
- b) the difference between the Precept request and the estimated expenditure for 2023/24 would be met from the Parish Council's reserve funds.
- v. The re-appointment of Mr Alex Sage as the Internal Auditor for the purpose of the Annual Governance and Accountability Review due at 31 March 2023 was APPROVED unanimously, having been proposed by Cllr Woodward and seconded by Cllr Rose.

12/2023 PLANNING MATTERS

Details of the following planning applications and decisions dealt with by SADC since the previous Meeting were RECEIVED. NB, applications recorded in past Minutes which were still awaiting a decision at this Meeting date have been excluded below.

The Parish Council wished to comment on one recent application as follows:

5/2022/2479, Valid From 09/11/2022
Shafford Fields Redbourn Road St Albans. Installation of six time-restricted manege lights (retrospective) The Parish Council expressed grave concern that the application was not only retrospective but sought to acquire permission for development and activities expressly refused in prior application consents. The Parish Council supported refusal of this application and concurred with the various objections already published. The Clerk was asked to write to SADC convey these comments to SADC.

The remainder of the applications and decisions were NOTED without comment:

SADC Reference	New applications
5/2022/3002 Valid From 21/12/2022	Pre Mill House Redbourn Road St Albans AL3 6JZ Discharge of condition 3 (submission of further details – plastering) of Listed Building consent 5/2022/2136 dated 17/11/2022 – Partial repair and replacement of existing lath and plaster ceiling within dining room area
5/2022/2947 Valid From 15/12/2022	Ladygrove Childwickbury St Albans Hertfordshire AL3 6JY Construction of summer house and grounds equipment store following demolition of existing stables
TP/2022/0639 Valid From 08/11/2022	St Marys Church Childwick Green Childwickbury St Albans AL3 6JJ Purple Beech in the Church frontage – clear roof by 4m, raise crown periphery to 4m
5/2022/2464 Valid From 17/10/2022	2 Beesonend Cottages Beesonend Lane Harpenden AL5 2AA Part two storey part single storey rear and side extensions. Demolition of existing garage and conversion of existing outbuilding into habitable room
5/2022/2209 Valid From 10/10/2022	Land Adj 1 Pimlico Bedmond Road Pimlico Hemel Hempstead Outline application (access and layout sought) – Construction of detached two storey, three bedroom dwelling including new access to Bedmond Road

SADC Reference	Application	Decision and date
TP/2022/0587 Valid From 08/11/2022	Townsend C Of E School Sparrowswick Ride St Albans AL3 6DR Boundary trees within woodland W1 bordering Harpenden Road: Very low crowns Lift to 5m & clear lamp columns Ash x 2 Very tall, large crowns for area – Reduce in height by 4-5m all round. Beech x 2 Dead top in 1, both in decline – Reduce by 50% in height	22/12/2022 Treeworks approval
5/2022/2136 Valid From 06/09/2022	The Prae Wood Arms Garden House Lane St Albans AL3 6PY Listed Building consent – Partial repair and replacement of existing lath and plaster ceiling within dining room area	17/11/2022 DC10 Listed Building Conditional Consent
TP/2022/0423 Valid From 31/08/2022	6 Childwick Green Childwickbury St Albans AL3 6JJ T1 Fell Walnut Tree.	13/10/2022 Tree Works in Conservation Area – Deemed Consent
TP/2022/0402 Valid From 18/08/2022	6 Shafford Cottages Redbourn Road St Albans AL3 6LB At rear on right to reduce Cherry tree as previously To reduce second Cherry on right as previously Acacia at end to reduce by approx 1m more than previously Birch to top by approx 3-4ft below cables and shape crown Cotoneaster to trim to approx 10ft	29/09/2022 Tree Works in Conservation Area – Deemed Consent
5/2022/1259 Valid From 17/08/2022	Shafford Farmhouse Redbourn Road St Albans AL3 6LB Listed Building consent – Replacement windows and doors	14/12/2022 Listed Building Refusal
5/2022/1894 Valid From 15/08/2022	64 Ragged Hall Lane Chiswell Green St Albans AL2 3LD Raising of ridge, hip to gable roof extension and associated roof and chimney alterations with rear dormer window to facilitate loft conversion, roof extension to gable front, rooflights and rear juliette balconies	09/11/2022 DC3 Conditional Permission
5/2022/1733 Valid From 11/07/2022	2 Beech Tree Cottages Hemel Hempstead Road Leverstock Green Hemel Hempstead HP3 8LA Single storey rear and first floor rear extensions, loft conversion to habitable accommodation and alterations to openings (resubmission following refusal of 5/2022/0642)	09/09/2022 DC3 Conditional Permission
5/2022/0881 Valid From 11/05/2022	Gorhambury House Gorhambury St Albans AL3 6AH Variation of Condition 2 (approved plans) to allow external alterations including to lower ground floor opening and relocation of CCTV and various internal alterations including alterations to layout, staircases, doors and fireplaces of planning permission	14/10/2022 Withdrawn
5/2022/1214 Valid From 10/05/2022	Gorhambury House Gorhambury St Albans AL3 6AH Variation of Condition 2 (approved plans) for various internal alterations including alterations to layout, staircases, doors and fireplaces of listed building consent 5/2020/0450 dated 28/02/2020 for Conversion to three dwellings, conservation and restor	21/11/2022 DC10 Listed Building Conditional Consent

13/2022 ST ALBANS & DISTRICT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (SADALC)

The Minutes of the SADALC meetings held on 3rd October 2022 and 9th January 2023 were summarised by the Clerk, who had attended the most recent meeting by videolink. She reported briefly on some minor points of local interest. It was NOTED that St Michael Parish Council was due to host the next SADALC meeting in the evening of 3rd April 2023, and the Clerk hoped that some Members would be able to attend.

14/2023 CORONATION OF KING CHARLES III

It was NOTED that the coronation would take place on Saturday 6 May, and that the following Monday, 8th May, had been declared a national bank holiday by HM Government. The Chairman invited Members to consider any appropriate ways in which the event may be marked, for consideration at the next Meeting.

15/2023 MEMBERS' DISCUSSION TIME

Various updates and matters of interest were discussed, with the Clerk noting that:

- i. Cllr Slaughter reported that new "No HGVs" signage had recently been installed at junctions into Potters Crouch; Members were very pleased that the Parish Council's campaign for improved highway information had been successful.
- ii. Cllr Meachin mentioned that a rough sleeper was back at the Childwickbury bus shelter after an absence of many months. While he seems not to cause any harm or offence, attempts had been made last year to send assistance to him via StreetLink, a national homeless charity; the outcome was unknown. The Clerk would contact other support networks for advice.
- iii. Further to Minute 54/2022 regarding the alleged misconduct of a St Michael Parish Councillor, the Clerk reported that the Monitoring Officer at SADC had advised that his findings were nearing completion. He had said that he would soon pass on a decision to that councillor and to the two complainants.
- iv. The Clerk confirmed that further to Minute 58/2022, bare-rooted trees had recently been delivered to Townsend School, and the caretaker there would be arranging for planting materials to be purchased and invoiced to St Michael Parish Council.

16/2023 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

17/2023 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

A date for the next Meeting had been suggested as Tuesday 7th March 2023, subject to confirmation. All Members were asked to check this date in order that the hall booking may be confirmed promptly.

The first meeting to be held after the local parish council election in 2023 was now limited to 16th May alone.

18/2023 CLOSURE

The Meeting closed at 8.30 pm and the Chairman thanked all for attending.

Chairman Date