

St Michael Parish Council

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

held on Tuesday 16th May 2023

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

Present: Councillor D Meachin
Councillor E Rose
Councillor S Slaughter
Councillor R Woodward
J Reading, Parish Clerk
One local resident

At the District's recent parish council elections, the five candidates nominated in St Michael Parish were returned without needing to hold a poll on 4th May 2023. The Clerk received and witnessed Declarations of Acceptance of Office from those present at this Meeting.

36/2023 PETER LIMEBEAR, PREVIOUS PARISH COUNCILLOR AND CHAIRMAN

News of the death of Mr Peter Limebear, formerly a long-serving Member of the Parish Council, including many years as its Chairman, was received with great sadness, and Cllr Meachin paid tribute to Peter's contribution to local life. Cllrs Rolfe, Rose and Woodward would attend the funeral, along with the Clerk.

37/2023 TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE ENSUING COUNCIL YEAR AND RECEIVE A DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE

The first business being to elect a chairman of the Parish Council for the ensuing Council year, the Clerk called for any nominations for this office.

Cllr Rose proposed and Cllr Slaughter seconded the nomination of Cllr David Meachin, who signified his willingness to take the office of Chairman. The appointment was unanimously APPROVED. Cllr Meachin signed the Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

38/2023 CASUAL VACANCIES FOR MEMBERS OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

It was noted that two vacancies at St Michael resulted from the recent District parish council elections, now to be filled by co-option. The website continued to post a notice of the vacancies, and it was agreed to advertise further, by word of mouth, as well as by a poster display. If none of these brought candidates to the September meeting, further publicity would be considered.

39/2023 TO ELECT A VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE ENSUING COUNCIL YEAR AND RECEIVE A DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE

The new Chairman called for nominations for the office of Vice Chairman. Cllr Slaughter proposed and Cllr Woodward seconded the nomination of Cllr Elizabeth Rolfe, who was absent but she had previously affirmed that she would be willing to take on the role. The appointment was unanimously APPROVED. Cllr Rolfe's Declarations of Acceptance of Office, for both Councillor and Vice Chairman, would be obtained in due course.

40/2023 TO APPOINT ANY REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Rolfe had previously expressed a willingness to attend meetings of SADALC subject to other commitments. The Clerk confirmed that representatives to outside bodies could be appointed during the year as opportunities arose.

41/2023 TO CONSIDER THE PAYMENT OF ANY SUBSCRIPTIONS FALLING TO BE PAID ANNUALLY

The Parish Council APPROVED in principle the following payments arising annually:

- Subscription - Hertfordshire Association of Parish & Town Councils (May 2023)
- Public Liability etc. insurance premium (June 2023)
- Registration fee - Office of the Information Commissioner (March 2024)
- It was NOTED that the St Albans and District Association of Local Councils had not yet set a subscription for the current year.

42/2023 TO INSPECT ANY DEEDS AND TRUST INVESTMENTS IN THE CUSTODY OF THE COUNCIL AS REQUIRED

None.

43/2023 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

None.

44/2023 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Rolfe had asked for her apologies for absence to be given, and her reason was considered and unanimously approved.

45/2023 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 MARCH 2023

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 7 March 2023 were unanimously AGREED as a true record and were signed by the Chairman.

46/2023 SHAFFORD FIELDS PLANNING APPLICATION 5/2022/2479

The Parish Council had previously commented on this planning application, see Minute 12/2023 (January), and it was noted that it had been called-in to the Planning (Development Management) Committee meeting scheduled for Monday 22nd May.

This matter was discussed again at the prior request of a local resident who was present at the Meeting, and who had brought further information for consideration. The Parish Council AGREED to write to the members of the Planning Committee to reiterate the principle of consistency and enforcement of planning conditions, and to point out the presence of equestrian mirrors which, in the opinion of those present, added considerably to the potential for glare and light leakage. The Chairman and Clerk would liaise on the wording, to be sent by close of day on 19th May.

47/2023 ACCOUNTING PROCESSES FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2023

The year-end accounts had been circulated to Members in advance of this Meeting, and an opportunity to inspect the set of forms for the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2022/23 had been given at the Annual Parish Meeting.

The report of the Internal Auditor, Mr A Sage, was RECEIVED.

Cllr Rose proposed, seconded by Cllr Slaughter, agreed unanimously: it was RESOLVED:

- To approve the accounts pack for the year ending 31 March 2023 and to have its items signed by the Chairman and Clerk;
- To note that the Internal Auditor's report confirmed that the financial processes and controls had been in order throughout the year.

48/2023 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2023

The Annual Governance Statement was considered. Cllr Woodward proposed, seconded by Cllr Slaughter, agreed unanimously: it was RESOLVED to approve the statement and have it signed, having recorded an affirmative response to all sections.

49/2023 ANNUAL ACCOUNTING STATEMENT YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2023

The Annual Accounting Statement was considered; it was noted that the figures from the year-end accounts had been correctly entered. Cllr Woodward proposed, seconded by Cllr Slaughter, agreed unanimously: it was RESOLVED to approve the statement and have it signed.

50/2023 CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION FROM A LIMITED ASSURANCE REVIEW

It was noted that the gross income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2023 qualified the Parish Council for exemption from a limited assurance review under section 9 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015. Cllr Woodward proposed, seconded by Cllr Slaughter and agreed unanimously: it was RESOLVED to authorise the signing of an exemption certificate for the year, to be returned to the appointed External Auditor.

51/2023 PUBLIC RIGHTS PERIOD 2023

It was AGREED that the statutory annual period in which electors and interested persons may exercise rights to inspect the financial records would be set to run from Monday 12th June to Friday 21st July 2023 inclusive.

52/2023 PUBLICATION OF AGAR DOCUMENTS

It was AGREED that the annual accounts and all AGAR documents as approved above would be published on the Parish Council's website.

53/2023 CODE OF CONDUCT

The Clerk reported that St Albans District Council had adopted the national model code of conduct, in February 2023. It was proposed by Cllr Meachin and seconded by Cllr Woodward to follow suit, unanimously agreed. The replacement document had been delivered to all Members and would be updated on the website.

54/2023 CIVILITY AND RESPECT PLEDGE

It was proposed by Cllr Meachin, seconded by Cllr Woodward and agreed unanimously, RESOLVED to authorise the Clerk to sign St Michael Parish Council up to the Civility and Respect Pledge, in line with many other local councils across the country.

55/2023 MEMBERS' ALLOWANCE SCHEME

It was agreed to defer consideration of this item until Cllr Rolfe was next able to attend a Meeting.

56/2023 AMENDMENT TO THE CLERK'S TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

The suggested amendment, containing clarification of the reference to the national pay scale, hours of work and holiday pay, had been circulated prior to the Meeting. While agreeing in general principle, the Chairman asked for the matter to be deferred pending a more thorough examination of the Clerk's current terms and conditions of employment.

57/2023 LITTERING

It was agreed that the Clerk would contact the District Council's contractor to enquire about litter picking schemes and report back at the September Meeting.

58/2023 BUS SHELTERS REPORT

It had been three years since a report had last been commissioned and it was agreed unanimously that the Clerk would, at a commensurate cost, obtain an up-to-date opinion on the condition of the three bus shelters in the Parish Council's care, to be presented at the September Meeting.

59/2023 REVIEW OF INSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Clerk advised that the present arrangement was a tied five-year contract which expired in May 2024, and a review would be conducted for consideration at that time.

60/2023 CHEQUE PAYMENTS

Excepting cheque 000587 dated 3rd April, which had not been issued and was AGREED to be cancelled, the following schedule of payments was RECEIVED and APPROVED:

Date	Cheque	£	Payee	Covering
03-Apr-23	000585	337.83	HAPTC	Annual subscription
03-Apr-23	000586	50.20	R Woodward	Coronation planting display
03-Apr-23	000587	50.00	Townsend School	Sponsor prizes – offer not taken up
16-May-23	000588	194.54	J Reading	Q1 expenses
16-May-23	000589	588.58	J Reading	Q1 salary
16-May-23	000590	2,110.00	SADC	Return bank credit error
16-May-23	000591	295.06	BHIB	Insurance premium from 1 June 2023
16-May-23	000592	100.00	Mark Carter	Bus shelter maintenance (payment on account)

61/2023 PLANNING MATTERS

Details of the following planning applications and decisions dealt with by SADC since the previous Meeting were RECEIVED and NOTED without comment unless otherwise stated:

New – to 16 May 2023

[5/2023/0677](#) - Valid From 29/03/2023

Hawkswick House Harpenden Road St Albans Hertfordshire AL3 6JG

First floor rear extension and single storey glazed side and rear extensions. Conversion of existing garage to ancillary accommodation to include new openings and rooflights to inner slopes. Alterations and extension to existing single storey glazed link

[TP/2023/0118](#) - Valid From 13/03/2023

Land At Gorhambury House St Albans Hertfordshire AL3 6AHh

Various works in relation to tree safety ,refer to schedule of work for detailed specification. Operations include: Removal of major deadwood, removal to ground level an
27/04/2023 - Tree Works in Conservation Area – Deemed Consent

Decisions since last Meeting (to 16 May 2023)

[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

24/03/2023 - DC4 Refusal

Decisions since last Meeting (to 16 May 2023)

5/2022/1924 Valid From 01/08/2022

The Fruit Store Gorhambury St Albans AL3 6AL

Variation of Condition 5 (boiler details) to allow lawful commencement of the works to application 5/2019/1947 dated 15/10/2019 for Listed Building consent – Change of use of a curtilage listed building to provide a one bedroom dwelling

03/05/2023 - DC10 Listed Building Conditional Consent

Appeals – to 16 May 2023

5/2022/1517 NB, no longer in St Michael Parish - Land Between 84-108 Ragged Hall Lane Chiswell Green St Albans - Construction of seven detached dwellings with new access, boundary treatments and associated works

APPEALED 13/04/2023 - App/B1930/W/23/3320280 - Following 27/01/2023 -DC4 Refusal

62/2023 MEMBERS’ DISCUSSION TIME

Of particular note were reports of

- i. caravan(s) parked at a layby in Bedmond Lane;
- ii. an intruder at a private event at Childwick Green;
- iii. that intruder possibly having carried an offensive weapon, and also possibly having caused criminal damage to plants and children’s play equipment.

These and various updates and matters of interest were discussed informally, with the Clerk agreeing to undertake some extra research and report back over the summer.

63/2023 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

64/2023 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The suggested date of Tuesday 12th September 2023, at 6.30 p.m., was AGREED.

65/2023 CLOSURE

The Chairman thanked all for attending, and the Meeting closed at approx. 8.35 p.m.

Chairman Date