

LONGHOPE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 18th September 2023 at 7.00pm at The Latchen Rooms, Longhope

Present:

Parish Councillors: Jackie Barker (Chairman), David East, Vicky Brobyn

Also present: District Councillor Dave Tradgett
April Seabrook (Clerk)
29 members of the public

1. Apologies for absence

District Councillor John Francis and County Councillor Philip Robinson

2. Members of the public issues (15 minutes Standing Orders suspended)

The Chairman informed Council that due to the actions of the last Clerk/Councillor the Parish bank account has been frozen, and this and other issues have been past to the appropriate authorities. This now means the Council are unable to access any of their funds.

Tracey Cruickshank a Parish Councillor from Mitcheldean, informed Council that she was organising a D-Day 80th Anniversary Event on Sunday 9th June at Dene Magna School. She is hoping that all the local parishes will get involved in this event, both financially and with volunteers to assist with the planning, and on the day. She has organised many entertainments including a big band, military enactment groups focusing on WW2 and many other activities. She asked the Council if they would be prepared to make a donation to the event and was informed that this would be considered at the October Parish Council Meeting.

A resident asked, via a letter, read out by Cllr East, who would be responsible for the green spaces on the proposed social housing site on Church Road. A member of Longhope CLT, who was present at the meeting, informed her that the Housing Association would be responsible for the green spaces, and that the Housing Association were also going to supply 25 fruit trees to be planted behind the Latchen Rooms, which once planted would become the responsibility of the Parish Council.

3. County & District Councillor Reports

Cllr Tradgett informed Council that progress was being made on the Local Plan. The District Council were looking at building another 7700 houses, however the Government have now reduced this number to 6000. The majority of the new houses that need to be built will be located where there is a large population and good resources e.g., Mitcheldean.

He also stated that the priorities of the District Council during this administration were nature and the climate emergency, finances, economy and thriving communities.

4. Declarations of Interests

None

5. Requests for Dispensations

None

6. Minutes of the Meetings held on 17th July, 7th August and 5th September 2023

It was resolved to accept the minutes of the meetings which were held on 17th July, 7th August and 5th September, as an accurate record of the meetings, and were signed by the Chairman.

7. Planning matters

a) P0445/23/FUL – Land Parcel to North East, Blakemore Park, Little London, Longhope – Erection of footpath access Trackways. (resubmission)

Decision: No objections

8. New Bank Account

Council agreed that due to the Council's current bank accounts being blocked, the Council had no choice but to open a new bank account. **Action: Cllr Barker & Clerk**

9. Signatories for New Bank Account

Council agreed that Cllrs Jackie Barker, Dave East, Vicky Brobyn and the Locum Clerk, April Seabrook would be signatories on the new bank account. **Action: Cllr Barker & Clerk**

10. Resignation of Councillors

Council noted the resignation of Cllrs Lee Haines, Gary Nicholas, Anthony Moverley and Richard Gough, and the Clerk informed the Council that the District Council had been informed and Casual Notices had been issued for the four vacancies.

11. Red Dog Bins

Council agreed that it would like to return to red dog waste bins, which would be emptied by a contractor, rather than Parish Councillors having to empty waste/dog waste bins themselves. The cost of the bins and contract to empty them will be looked in to further and will be actioned when the new bank account has been opened. **Action: Cllr East**

12. Permanent Parish Clerk

Council agreed to advertise for a permanent Parish Clerk. **Action: Clerk**

13. Rose Barton Event

Cllr East informed Council that until the bank accounts were unblocked, a Rose Barton event could not take place.

14. Bus Shelter on A40

Council agreed that they would look into funding for a new bus shelter to be erected on the A40. **Action: Cllr Barker**

15. Petty Cash

Council agreed to reinstate petty cash once the new bank account had been opened. **Action: Clerk**

16. Conclusion of External Audit

Council noted the conclusion of the External Audit which included the following comments:

- We would like to draw your attention to a change within the Practitioners' Guide 2023 which is mandatory for the 2023/24 period. Paragraph 1.26 relates to requirements in relation to Assertion 3 and states '*Email management – every authority should have an email account that belongs to the council and to which the council have access – this ideally would be a .gov.uk or .org.uk address or could be an address linked to the council website.*' In order to answer yes to Assertion 3 in the 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement the local authority should ensure it has an email address that complies with this requirement and if it does not already it should do so urgently.
- The smaller authority has disclosed that it made proper provision during the year 2022/23 for the exercise of public rights by answering 'Yes' to section 1 Assertion 4. However, as was reported last year, we are aware that it failed to do this as the public rights period commenced prior to the signing of the AGAR and therefore should have answered 'No' to this Assertion. It has also disclosed that it took appropriate action on all matters raised in the reports from internal and external audit, by answering 'Yes' to Section 1, Assertion 7, which, on the basis of the above, is not correct.

17. Council Email Addresses

Council agreed, as stated in their External Audit report, to change the Clerk and Councillors' email addresses to ones attached to the Parish Council website. **Action: Clerk**

18. Councillor Reports

None

19. Clerk's Report

None

20. Accounts/Finance

No Accounts information was available due to the bank accounts being blocked and therefore no payments or receipts could be made at this time

21. SEPARATE BUSINESS

Pursuant to 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it is resolved that, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave the meeting during the consideration of:

- a) Council agreed that the Locum Clerk would work 8 hours per week on SCP level 25.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.10pm

SIGNED:

DATE: