**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MEETING OF SHILLINGSTONE PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT**

**7.00 PM ON THURSDAY 7th JULY 2022 AT THE CHURCH CENTRE SHILLINGSTONE**

**PRESENT:** Councillors I Suter (IS) (Chairman), L Gasson (LG), R Harwood (RH), K Ridout (KR), R White (RW) Unitary Councillor P Batstone (PB), Footpaths Officer G Rains and the Clerk D Green. In addition, there were two members of the public present.

**935. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllrs McNamara & Acton.

**936. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION**

None.

**937. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The minutes of the meetings held on 9th and 14th June 2022 were approved.

**938. MATTERS ARISING**

The Chairman briefly noted the outcome of the extraordinary meeting held on 14/06/2022 to discuss the proposed development involving Squirrels Leap and land at the Old Ox. The unanimous objection of the Parish Council to this proposal has been accompanied by at least 57 others from local residents. The Council thanked Cllr Suter and planning consultant Jo Witherden for all their hard work in preparing the PC’s objection, and thanked Cllr McNamara for chairing so effectively the best attended PC meeting in anyone’s living memory.

The Chairman had subsequently raised the issue of the decision to fell 3 earmarked trees without any evidence of a review with Dorset Council; a rather unsatisfactory response has been received supporting the decisions of the Tree Officer in relation to the sycamore and two ash trees. The Chairman has subsequently requested a review of these decisions by the Senior Tree Officer .

The application and its potential impact on the Old Ox has prompted consideration of whether an application should be made to have the Old Ox registered as an ‘Asset of Community Value’ (ACV), as noted below.

**939. PUBLIC SESSION**

A resident asked the Chairman to explain what were the next steps following the Squirrels Leap/Old Ox decision. The Chairman explained that the Council has unanimously voted against the proposal, following the views of 99% of those present at the Extraordinary meeting, and this was further to a leafleting campaign which had been carefully worded and which contained no bias. The application has not been withdrawn and will be considered by the Planning committee should the case officer recommend approval in the face of overwhelming local opposition.

PB asked whether ash die back was serious issue in relation to the planning application. The Chairman noted that the ash trees concerned were showing no signs of ash-die back; the applicants tree advisor had merely stated that they ‘could’ develop the condition, and the large ash tree in the garden of the Old Ox had not been mentioned at all. RH noted that there is no national programme to fell ash trees and it is expected that most diseased trees die within 5 years, having shown signs of dead branches and withering – they are only felled when a danger is evident.

**940. UNITARY COUNCILLOR REPORT**

**Closure of Okeford Fitzpaine school:**

PB noted thatit was a matter of concern that there had been no formal consultation between Dorset Council and Okeford Fitzpaine or Shillingstone Parish Councils, or herself, regarding the ‘temporary’ closure of the Okeford Fitzpaine school and move of pupils to Shillingstone School.

There was some discussion  concerning the suitability of the facilities being provided to accommodate the children from OF, and the question arose as to whether any additional classrooms would be provided in the longer term. There was also a concern raised regarding the continuity of welfare services for pupils. The ownership of the Okeford Fitzpaine school site was queried and the question was asked that if this is sold, who would benefit from the sale and whether there were any plans to re-build a school in the village.

**Bee-keepers/Lavender Farm:**

LG advised that both projects are still waiting for their leases for the Holloway Lane site; PB agreed to take up this issue.

**941. FOOTPATHS**

All welcomed Graham Rains to the meeting and sent regards to his wife. GR had not received any reports of local issues, although It was mentioned that there had been issues raised on social media of overgrown paths; GR explained that the Rangers were very short staffed at present and could not be expected to do everything, although hogweed and brambles were a problem. The Clerk had received a complaint regarding the poor condition of the fingerposts on the Trailway, notably the post by the Recreation Ground; GR has raised this with the Rangers but no action had been taken to date.

**942. COUNCILOR REPORTS**

**Church Roof –** the architect had inspected the roof earlier in the week. The battens are clearly rotten and a large number of new tiles are required, and these are £ 5.50 each. The total project cost will be around £ 100,000, and local fund raising will need to provide around £ 40,000 to match any grant funding from the Historic Churches Fund. Realistically no work will commence until 2023.

It has been decided to advertise for a part-time vicar who will split their time between the benefice and the diocese, spending some 17.5 hours in each (LG)

**Sports Festival** – will take place on 7th August and any assistance to move tables is welcome (KR)

**Shillingstone Youth Club** – a Festival & Food event is scheduled for 28th July (IS)

**Recreation Ground (Pavilion**)– there have been ongoing complaints from the Tennis Club concerning the state of facilities; the Clerk had asked the Cricket Club to remove surplus items from the lockers and tidy up; the Cricket Club had co-operated with this request. The Clerk report that the facilities were now in good order and if there are further complaints from the Tennis Club these should be taken up directly with the Cricket Club. This decision had the **unanimous** backing of the Council (RW & the Clerk)

**Allotments** – a complaint had been received concerning an uncultivated allotment. The Clerk had given the allotment holder two weeks to resolve; this has been re-inspected by both RH & the Clerk and is now of a satisfactory standard. RH noted that maintenance of an allotment can be difficult with time pressures and a balanced approach should be taken.

**Roads** – the Community Highways Officer (CHO) has left his post and had provided a final report:

1. **Little Lane Crossing** – there were no further updates, it is in the pipeline for a decision. A question was raised regarding the children from Okeford Fitzpaine now travelling to Shillingstone School and whether this would impact on the crossing decision.
2. **School signage** – the CHO had advised that no additional signage beyond that already in place would be provided.

**943. PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

**i) New Applications to consider:**

1. **P/PABA/2022/03555 Enford Farm, Durweston, DT11 0QW** - Erect replacement barn

Necessary agricultural building, no objections.

1. **P/FUL/2022/0263 Stour House Blandford Road Shillingstone Dorset DT11 0SF -** Change of use of retail space to residential (use class C3).

Reversion to former status application by new property owners, no objections

1. **P/HOU/2022/04055 Duncliffe Poplar Hill, Shillingstone, DT11 0SE** - Increase dormers at rear of property to create more floor space.

It was noted that the dormers may overlook neighbouring properties, IS will make neighbour enquiries.

1. **P/HOU/2022/04120 Hillcrest Knapps, Shillingstone, DT11 0RA** - Erection of Garage and Workshop.

Replacement of unattractive carport, no neighbouring properties except the school, no objections.

1. **Asset of Community Value Application**

The Chairman explained that, following the Squirrels Leap and Old Ox planning application, it was evident that the Council should consider requesting registration of the Old Ox as an Asset of Community Value (ACV). The Chairman explained that this was not an anti-development measure but was intended to protect the Ox from planning applications which could impact on the viability of an important village amenity. It was noted that the Ox had been and continued to be used for many local events, and was the only remaining public house remaining in the village. The Council **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** that an application should be made as soon as possible.

**944. FINANCES:**

**i) Retrospective Payments approval:** the following payments were **APPROVED:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Payee Name** | **Reference** | **Total** | **Reason** |
| 06/06/2022 | J P Consultants | BACS | £ 100.00 | 2021-2022 Internal audit |
| 06/06/2022 | John Paul | BACS | £ 35.86 | Cork tiles for noticeboard |
| 06/06/2022 | North Dorset Joinery | BACS | £ 70.04 | Repairs to noticeboard |
| 06/06/2022 | Shillingstone Cricket Club | STD ORD | £ 416.66 | Mowing |
| 13/06/2022 | David Green | BACS | £ 32.55 | May 2022 expenses |
| 20/06/2022 | Wessex Ground Services Ltd | BACS | £ 146.37 | Weed control play areas |
| 22/06/2022 | Richard Watts | BACS | £ 85.00 | Hedge & tree work @Rec |
| 28/06/2022 | David Green | STD ORD | £ 648.31 | June 2022 pay |

**ii) New payments approval**

Clerk’s expenses £ 51.45

**iii) Reserves allocations**

It was agreed the following additional reserves allocations would be made for future years:

**Neighbourhood Plan - £ 1,000 per annum**

**War Memorial - £ 250 per annum**

**Tree work - £ 250 per annum**

The Clerk explained:

* The importance of the Neighbourhood Plan could not be understated, particularly in the light of recent events. Work on a new plan will have to commence before the end of the decade and there is no guarantee that there will be any public funding available.
* The War Memorial requires cleaning/restoration work every 7-10 years and it would be sensible to earmark funds for this purpose.
* The Tree survey takes place every 3 years and it would be sensible to set funds aside for this unknown expense.

**945. PLAY AREAS, RECREATION GROUND AND PROPERTY CHECK**

The Clerk reported that the padlock & chain for the main gate had been stolen again. It was agreed that the new padlock would have a changed combination. There was some discussion concerning alternative solutions to the present combination lock though no decision was made.

**946. CORRESPONDENCE**

The Clerk confirmed that the following correspondence had been circulated:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **DATE** | **FROM** | **DESCRIPTION** |
| 17/06/2022 | Jo O'Connell | Lavender Farm Open day 25/6 – LG attended |
| 20/06/2022 | Dorset CAN | Energy Security in Dorset event 14th July |
| 21/06/2022 | DAPTC | Single Star award to Shillingstone PC for Training participation |
| 25/06/2022 | What’s Happening in Stur | July newsletter – to be added to website |
| 04/07/2022 | Dorset C Electric Vehicles | Re assistance with charging club constitution – note below |

The Chairman confirmed that Emily Suter has agreed to take on responsibility for Climate Change issues as a non-councillor.

It was agreed that the suggestion from Dorset Council regarding the formation of charging club for electric vehicles was an interesting idea and the Council would certainly contribute to this process; however, the Clerk had requested that further information is provided in relation to possible sites for charging points, particularly for on street parking.

**947. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA**

Nothing specific at this stage.

**948. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be on **Thursday 1st September 2022 at 7:00 pm**, at the Church Centre. There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20.35.