

ALVERDISCOTT AND HUNTSHAW PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY 9TH MARCH 2022

Present: Graham White, Peter Ley, Donald Easterbrook, Jean Huxtable, Bernard Hardwicke
County Councillor Linda Hellyer, District Councillor Rosemary Lock
5 members of the public
Minutes taken by Liz White – volunteer

Graham welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised them that the Parish clerk had resigned.

1.Election of Chairman

Graham White: proposed by Jean Huxtable, seconded by Don Easterbrook. All in favour

2.Election of Vice Chairman

Bernard Hardwicke: proposed by Peter Ley, Seconded by Don Easterbrook. All in favour.

3.Approval of the minutes of meetings 10th November 2021 and 9th February 2022.

One councillor said he had not seen the minutes of the November meeting so Mr White read through them. Minutes of both meetings were approved.

4.Matters Arising

The meeting planned for 12th January was inquorate.

A question about cheques was raised by a member of the public. Mr White advised that this would be addressed later in the meeting.

Drains at Guscott are now sorted, still a problem at Huntshaw Cross

5. To consider nominations for new Parish Councillors

No nominations received.

6. Laptop and Website

.Quotes provided for the upgrade of the existing laptop and purchase of a new one had been received but no progress to implement.

Website – information on the current position was provided. The Parish Clerk needs to be able to update information. Domain name needs to be transferred. Mr White will meet with Tony Goldstone and Simon Jessop to identify what is required and progress.

7. Report from County Councillor – Linda Hellyer

Copy filed with these minutes. Summary:

- Devon CC has set its budget for 22/23. Reduced sums available for Councillor's Locality Grants. Any requests need to be submitted in May.
- Procedure for reporting routine community matters e.g., drains, potholes outlined
- Items that need to be reported to police outlined

Council Hellyer also reported that a speed limit sign will be placed at Alverdiscott for short periods of time.

Questioned if Eddie Staines is still the Parish Snow Warden, if not another needs to be appointed. This will be checked.

8. Report from District Councillor Rosemary Lock

There is a small amount of money available to be allocated to Parish Councils.

There were no planning issues for Councillor Lock to report on.

Councillor Lock reminded the meeting that if a councillor does not attend a meeting for 6 months he ceases to be a councillor. Eddie Staines had therefore been removed as a councillor.

A discussion followed about the required frequency of meetings and number of attendees required for a quorum. Mr White will confirm with TDC and standing orders.

9 Planning Applications

Information on two local planning applications had been retrieved from TDC website. However, there is no information from TDC being sent to the Parish Clerk's email address. TDC to be contacted to ensure this is in place.

A discussion followed on the procedure for reviewing applications and, how this would be dealt with when timescales for comment do not fit in with Council meetings. It was agreed that a procedure needs to be put in place to deal with all planning applications.

10. Public Session

(a) Councillor Hellyer asked when will the Council start to advertise for a Parish Clerk

Response – as soon as possible

(b) Mr Goldstone presented 3 documents (emailed on 9th March to Parish Councillors) requesting information under Freedom of Act 2000. Copies of his documents are filed with these minutes. The information requested relates to the following:

- Arrangements for safeguarding public money and resources, in particular in relation to the signing of cheques.
- Attendance of Mr Hardwicke at Parish Council meetings between January 2021 and February 2022.
- Annual Governance and Accountability returns 2020/2021

Mr Goldstone wished it to be recorded that following verbal abuse at a meeting Mr Staines was requested to come to a meeting to apologies but so far he has not done this.

Mr White responded that as he had only recently joined the Parish Council he was not aware of procedures that had been in place but he will investigate Mr Goldstone's queries.

(c) Does the Parish Council have insurance to cover any financial impact arising from procedural irregularities?

Response – there is an insurance policy in place, Mr White will investigate exactly what is covered.

11. Finances

Parish Council Bank Account

Mr White reported that, following investigations with Lloyds bank, it was revealed that the bank does not apparently have any signatories for the Parish Council account. This had arisen from the account originally being with the TSB. Bank advised opening a new account and the monies will then be transferred to the new account.

Members of the public asked if there was evidence of change of signatories and suggested the bank should be asked who originally opened the account.

Member of the public asked if there is a risk the money will not be transferred to the new account.

Mr White is progressing the account and will report back to the next meeting.

Following a question from a member of the public, councillors confirmed the practice had been to sign blank cheques.

In the absence of a Parish Clerk, it was recommended by Councillor Lock, that a Responsible Financial Officer should be appointed. Mr White was proposed by Mr Hardwicke and seconded by Mr Easterbrook. All in agreement.

Accounts to pay

Public were assured that the insurance had been paid from a Parish Councillors personal bank account. This had been cleared with TDC.

There were no other accounts to be paid but Mr White reported that he had set up and activated a PAYE system using HMRC's software for the Parish Clerk to be paid in the future.

Money Received

No monies had been received since the last meeting

12. Accounts Audit

Agreed James Hellyer will be approached re audit of 2021/22 accounts

Councillor Lock will forward contact details of the external auditors to Mr White.

13. Any other Business

Standing Orders – Mr Hardwicke had started to revise these but had been offline for 6 weeks and also away from home so had not made a lot of progress. It was proposed by Mr White, following discussions with TDC, that the Parish Council adopt the National Association of Local Council Model Standing Orders. A few minor changes will be required. This was accepted but Councillor Lock offered to supply standing orders from other local Parish Councils.

14. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 11th May at Huntshaw Hall. 7pm Parish Meeting followed by Parish Council AGM

The meeting closed at 9.20pm