

BISHOP'S ITCHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting 3 June 2024

Present:

Cllr Kettle (Chairman) Cllr Dugmore Cllr Horsman Cllr Howatson Cllr Lamont
Cllr Tagg-Wilkinson Cllr Thomas Cllr Tressler

In Attendance:

Karen Stevens - Clerk to the Council
Val Powell – Cemetery Manager
Cllr Gist – District Councillor

Public:

8

24/95 Apologies:

Cllr Ogden due to work commitments
Cllr Colton due to illness

The apologies from Cllr's Ogden and Colton were accepted.

24/96 Declarations of Interest:

None

24/97 Dispensations:

None

24/98 Minutes:

- i. Following a discussion regarding the recoding of portfolio holders, it was **RESOLVED**, that the minutes of the annual parish council meeting held on 13 May 2024 be accepted as a true and complete record of the meeting.
- ii. It was **RESOLVED**, that with the minutes of the ordinary parish council meeting held 13 May 2024 be accepted as a true and complete record of the meeting.

24/99 Public Forum:

Judith Chrisitan-Carter advised she was in attendance in case there are any questions in respect of item 8 of the agenda.
Karin Young spoke to say "that Cliff and she would like to address the council regarding the recent actions taken at the cemetery, particularly relating to their son's headstone. Whilst they fully appreciate the need for health and safety, in their opinion, the actions taken were maladministered, excessive and insensitive. We have been told by the parish council that work according to Ministry of Justice guidelines but there are numerous ways in which we feel they have gone against the guidelines and have not acted in the best interests of the community. On Tuesday 14 May, with no prior notice to the public, the parish council undertook an inspection of the headstones at the cemetery and deemed it necessary to lay

approximately 40 of them down saying they were not stable. Many people we have spoken to since have referred to the cemetery as looking like it had been vandalised. The Ministry of Justice says, and I quote “only when the memorial poses a significant risk such as imminent collapse in a way that could lead to serious injury does immediate action need to be taken to control the risk. Those carrying out testing should adopt a risk based and proportionate approach to managing memorials. From the information we have read and been told, the laying down of a memorial stone should be the last resort. On Friday 17 May, I called into the cemetery purely by chance and found at least six members of the parish council along with the cemetery manager planning to carry out further work to the headstones. Once again there was no prior notice given to the owners of those memorials and I was told by Cllr Kettle that following information they had received from the ICCM, the parish council had been advised to temporarily stake and bind the affected stones. Does this mean that the previous laying down of 40 headstones was inappropriate. Again, the Ministry of Justice states “good communication of the inspection and assessment process and the results of this is crucial to obtaining support from the local community. On both the 14th and 17th May, the public were not informed prior to work being carried out despite the potential to use the parish council website, social media platforms and three village noticeboards. It has been extremely disappointing to find that the extra-ordinary meeting which was planned to discuss the memorial stones had been postponed and now cancelled and we believe that such a meeting should still take place, chaired by Cllr Kettle as putting it on the agenda for tonight does not afford it the time that it deserves. As the parish council will be aware, just under two weeks ago, Cliff and I emailed an informal complaint about these procedures and we are disappointed that, as yet, we have not received the answers to any of our questions or requests for information. We would respectfully request an open and honest reply by the end of the week”.

Ms J Freeman, a new resident to the village and friend of Mr and Mrs Young then spoke to say she thinks it is the most appalling situation and she wondered who will give them an explanation as to what’s happening, what is going to happen, why it has been allowed to happen as she is unaware of the procedure here.

Cllr Kettle advised that we have received a lengthy email from Mr and Mrs Young with many questions, that has been forwarded to the Warwickshire and Worcestershire Association of Local Councils. Given the very detailed nature of your questions, we were strongly advised that we should postpone the meeting and that is what we did until we are in a position to give a full answer to the questions you have raised hence you have not had a response. The parish council has not sat back and ignored it. The letter went off to them within 24 hours of you sending it to council.

The Chairman proposed that item 9 of the agenda, “cemetery” be moved further up the meeting so as it be dealt with next. This was seconded and agreed

24/100 Cemetery:

It was **RESOLVED** to invite WALC, which is independent of the parish council, to carry out a review of what went on 14th May. Proposed Cllr Kettle, seconded Cllr Tagg-Wilkinson, all in favour.

24/101 Planning Matters:

- i. **24/01024/VARY**
Bishops Cross Car Sales, Gaydon Road, Bishops Itchington - Variation of Conditions 2, 6 and 12 of planning permission 22/01671/FUL (date of

decision: 18/07/2023) to allow for amendments to materials and openings, alterations to the approved car park layout and remove the restriction on 12m vehicles delivering to the site. Original description of development: Demolition of car showroom and adjacent bungalow and erection of convenience store with additional retail unit.
'Objection'

It was **RESOLVED** to sustain the objection as written and enhance it with we are not convinced that vehicles will arrive separately, there is a history of vehicles parking on the road in other villages, ensure the delivery window in absolute terms is maintained, third party contractors' delivery times .
Proposed Cllr Dugmore, seconded Cllr Tagg-Wilkinson, all in favour

ii. 24/00745/FUL

Spring Paddocks, Gaydon Road, Bishop's Itchington, CV47 2QX – Demolish existing timber block and construction of a hay/straw storage barn and garaging for a horse box. Construction of a single storey grooms dwelling within the footprint of existing stable block.

The question was raised as to what evidence do Stratford District Council get to support the agricultural justification?

It was **RESOLVED** to submit a response of 'No Reps' but to comment that a condition should be attached that the so the property is only used in connection with the keeping of horses and cannot be leased/let as an independent property i.e. conform with AS10. Proposed Cllr Dugmore, seconded Cllr Tagg-Wilkinson, all in favour.

24/102 County and District Liaison:

Stratford District Council (SDC) – A report had been circulated prior to the meeting and Cllr Gist went through the report verbally and answered questions. The topics covered included:

- General Election and the pre-election period,
- Annual Meetings,
- Cllr Rock has stepped down from the role of deputy leader,
- Stratford-on-Avon District Council Climate Change Fund,
- Livestock Worrying,

Warwickshire County Council (WCC) – Cllr Kettle had circulated his report prior to the meeting and then went through the report verbally. The topics covered included:

- Harbury Crossroads,
- HS2,
- Antisocial Behaviour and neighbour disputes,
- Ufton Waste Tip and Green Waste IVC Facility – planning extension,
- High Speed Broadband,
- WCC Councillors Discretionary Fund.

24/103 Pavilion:

The Chairman thanked BISA for their paper.

- If the parish council are happy with the proposal, BISA will use the Carnival and social media as an opportunity to seek out interested individuals who will then be invited to an initial meeting,

- Community Benefit Society may be a way forward,
- Support for community centre room rental – approximately one meeting per month,
- Unable to say at this stage whether the plans previously submitted will be of any use,

It was **RESOLVED** to support the New Pavilion proposal from BISA. Proposed Cllr Tagg-Wilkinson, seconded Cllr Howatson, all in favour

24/104 Cemetery and Churchyard Working Group/policies and Governance Group:

- i. It was **RESOLVED** that with regards to the Cemetery and Churchyard Working Group, consideration needs to be given to whatever WALC might come back with and therefore the item should be re-addressed at that stage. Proposed Cllr Tagg-Wilkinson, seconded Cllr Lamont, all in favour.
- ii. Policies and Governance Group. It was agreed that the Clerk will circulate a list of the policies/review dates and it can then be discussed at the meeting on 1 July 2024.

24/105 Bishop’s Itchington Parish Council Biodiversity Policy:

It was **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the Biodiversity Policy as proposed. Proposed Cllr Tagg-Wilkinson, seconded Cllr Tressler, all in favour.

24/106 Social Media Policy:

This was adopted 20 October 2022.

- It was suggested that this needs regular reviews as social media moves so fast
- 4b says always disclose your identity and affiliation to the Parish Council. Facebook does this for you when you post on the parish council Facebook page,
- This is the standard WALC social media policy. Clerk to check if there is an updated version better reflecting the times we are in,
- Does not mention WhatsApp and it was suggested that Myspace should come out and LinkedIn included,
- Suggested that there should only be one social media platform that the clerk should keep control of,
- Got to be transparent,
- It was stated that it was known exactly when this item was raised, by whom and what happened immediately before it. The policy has not been queried since its creation (approximately 10 years ago) and this version is almost two years old. With the sudden interest and timing of the request, someone is trying to make a point. The issue relates to the posting of an informative message on the council’s Facebook page. This was to let people know all but three headstones had been temporarily fixed back in place. Two versions of the message existed, they had been circulated, tweaked and added to then nothing happened for 43 hours. Generally, the responsibility for posting messages has been left with the clerk but it is usually delegated, or the clerk

is assisted by those identified as part of the previous social media working group, now social media portfolio holders agreed at the last meeting but challenged at the start of this meeting. Those people are tasked with ensuring the content complies with the policy. As per the policy, paragraph 4a communications are to be direct, informative, brief and transparent. The Clerk and I were in the office and both concluded that version posted on line was a better fit to the policy especially in regards to being brief. It used clearer language, shorter sentences and removed unnecessary information. Our role is to inform clearly and not to bamboozle or show off with big words. The policy is the test for whether it is fit for purpose not how many emails you can garner from your colleagues to support it. This council has struggled for some time in engaging with the community, it seems pompous and detached. If we continue to use language that reinforces that or attack anyone who tries to address it, that struggle will continue.

It was proposed that we defer the discussion/decision to a later date giving the clerk the opportunity to advise as to whether there is a more comprehensive, more detailed, updated version. Proposed Cllr Kettle, seconded Cllr Howatson. An amended proposal was put forward By Cllr Dugmore to formalize that we take the opportunity, given what has been voiced, to modify and deviate if necessary from any standard policy

It was **RESOLVED** to defer this item to the next meeting to see if there is a better iteration available. Proposed Cllr Kettle, seconded Cllr Howatson, majority in favor.

Cllr Tagg-Wilkinson left the meeting.

24/107 Review of Standing Orders:

It was **RESOLVED** that, all the amendments are accepted on block subject to chair/vice-chair being used to replace chairperson/vice chairperson to chair/vice chair. Proposed by Cllr Kettle, seconded Cllr Dugmore, all in favor.

24/108 Finance:

1. To receive monthly financial report for May 2024:
Due to bank statements for May not having been released yet, this item was deferred until 1 July 2024
2. To receive bank reconciliation report for May 2024:
Due to bank statements for May not having been received yet, this item was deferred until 1 July 2024
3. To approve accounts for payment 3 June 2024:
It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Accounts Payable 3 June 2024 (Appendix A). Cllrs Dugmore and Thomas agreed to authorise the payments.
4. To advise councillors of the amendment to the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24
It was noted that two boxes had not been ticked and this has now been rectified, signed and dated.

5. To approve the regular monthly payments for the current financial year (2024/25) as per 5.6 of Financial Regulations.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the regular monthly payments (listed below) for the current financial year (2023/2024) as per 5.6 Financial Regulations 2019 for England (proposed Cllr Thomas, seconded Cllr Howatson, all in favour

- a. Salaries for J Kirton, V Powell and K Stevens
- b. PAYE and NI
- c. Warwickshire CC Pensions Fund
- d. Thomas Fox Landscaping – Grounds Maintenance
- e. Biffa – Trade Waste
- f. Edge – Finance and Email Support
- g. Claranet – Corporate Domain Registration
- h. Light Media – Website Hosting
- i. Purewater Window Cleaning – Bus shelter cleaning
- j. Water Plus – Pavilion Water

6. To approve and adopt the new Financial Regulations
It was **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the new Financial Regulations. Proposed by Cllr Dugmore, seconded Cllr Thomas, all in favour.

7. To carry out the annual review of the Financial Risk Management Assessment
It was **RESOLVED** that following the review of the financial risk management assessment, to adopt it for 2024/25. Proposed by Cllr Thomas, seconded Cllr Lamont, all in favour.

8. To carry out the annual review of the Assets Register
It was noted that there is now an additional waste bin on Station Road
It was **RESOLVED** that, with the addition of the new bin on Station Road, that the asset register was correct. Proposed Cllr Lamont, seconded Cllr Dugmore, all in favour.

9. To carry out the annual review of Statement of Internal Control and Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Control
Following review, it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Statement of Internal Control and Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Control. Proposed Cllr Tressler, seconded Cllr Dugmore, all in favour.

24/109 Environment and Properties:

- i. Playing Field – The idea of installing a metal shelter was discussed. There is merit to installing a shelter but the location and size would need to be looked at. Approximate costs are in the region of £15,000. Would meet a demand but currently there is no budget. Might be able to be incorporated into the pavilion plans.
- ii. Yellow Land between Warwickshire Wildlife Trust Land – Disabled Access: It has been confirmed that there is a standard accessible lock (Radar Key) going into the Yellow Land. New path that runs through from Bishop's Hill is accessible but has barriers on it to restrict cyclists/motorbikes hence mobility scooters are unable to access the path. Item to be deferred until the meeting on 1 July 2024

- iii. Cricket Wicket: Met with representatives from Warwickshire Cricket Club. A natural grass pitch was not recommended. Our pitch is positioned East/West but they said ideally it should be North/South. Therefore currently looking if a North/South pitch could be accommodated and it so a totally new pitch would be required.

24/110 Reports and Questions:

- Tree Felling by Folletts – proposal from Harbury Estate/Folletts to demolish a number of trees adjacent to the pub and replant trees in a field off Ladbrook Road (greenwashing). Why not replant the area where they are taking out trees with new trees (smaller indigenous trees). Removes productivity of the field.
- Works Lane – A road closure sign is to be erected due to the landslide. There is concern that is it is closed for an extended period, then one of the properties will not be able to get oil deliveries for heating.
- Referral to WALC. The Clerk to contact WALC to find out timescales

24/111 Exclusion of Public and Press under Section 100A of Local Government Act 1972:

1. Quotes for Cricket Wicket:

Due to a fundamental change in potential direction, It was agreed to defer this item.

Cllr Tagg-Wilkinson rejoined the meeting (21:45)

2. Quotes to undertake work to the cemetery headstones/memorials

Additional quotes/information to be obtained before a decision is made

24/112 Date of Next Meeting

The next ordinary meeting of the parish council will take place on Monday 1 July 2024 at 7.30pm at the Community Centre.

Meeting closed at 22:22

Signed.....Chairman Date.....