

## SPURSTOW PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting held at 8.20pm on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2019

[www.spurstow-pc.gov.uk](http://www.spurstow-pc.gov.uk) clerk@spurstow-pc.gov.uk

### Peckforton & Beeston Village Room

**Present:** Sean Augustin ((SA) Chair), Louise Hare (LH), Reynold Finney (RF), Chris Warriner (CW), Stuart Lea (SL), Jonathan Middlemiss (JM), Katherine Hutchinson (KH), Chris Jones (CJ)

**In Attendance:** David Cox (DC) as outgoing member of SPC.

#### 1. Apologies received:

Apologies for absence were received from Barry Bell and Cllr Stan Davies.

#### 2. Declaration of Interests & Councillors Code of Conduct:

SA reported that he is progressing his application for planning permission to extend his house and will remove himself from any decision-making once the planning application is submitted for review.

It was noted that despite KH taking over as Chair at the earlier AGM for handover purposes it was useful for SA to remain in the position of Chair for this meeting. This was agreed by KH and SA and unanimously approved by Council members.

#### 3. Matters Arising & approval of previous minutes

Minutes from 28<sup>th</sup> November 2018 were approved. All Councillors agreed that these are a true record.

#### Action Points still to be completed from the last meeting include

- SA to repaint the legs of the noticeboard.
- LH and KH to continue to work with Barclays to co-ordinate online banking authorization card and device.
- Neighbourhood Plan – it was agreed that the Council would need to complete a further scoping exercise to see if this was relevant of a parish the size of Spurstow.

#### 4. Open Forum:

There were no members of public in attendance at this meeting.

#### 5. Welcome to new Chair and new Parish Councillors.

SA welcomed KH into her new role as Chair for the coming year and CJ into his new PC role. The Council also wished to take this opportunity to thank SA and BB for their contributions as Chair and Vice Chair and to DC from his long service on the Council.

## 6. Thoughts on new issues for SPC to act on – KH

KH reported to the meeting that she intends to lead the Council with a more hands-off approach reacting to items that arise rather than actively instigating new projects, but was keen to ask the Councillors to consider any potential projects that they might want to champion in the future.

- Options for the completion of a neighbourhood plan were discussed DC to seek further information from connection and report back to the Council.

**Action: Cllrs to reflect on any potential projects for the parish and report back at the next meeting.**

## 7. Planning Applications

LH reported that a planning application for the Old Barns had initially been refused but has now been granted on appeal, despite this due to a change of circumstances the development may not go ahead. The other planning applications that had been received in between meeting have been reviewed by Councillors but not deemed necessary for a council response.

## 8. Clerk's Report – Clerks Contracted Hours and Pay Scale

SA reported that the Council needed to review the Clerk's contractual hours and pay scale given a recent change in funding. Initially, the contract was set up to pay the Clerk for 1 hour of time at a rate of £9.71 for Clerk work with a further hour at £15 to update and manage the website but retained a caveat that with would need to be subject to a review if transparency funding ceased. Transparency funding has now ceased.

SA proposed that instead of the Clerk receive a drop in pay that the Council should consider that they increase her weekly hours to 3 instead of the initial 2 based on the understanding that her role has now developed since she took over the post and her time commitments are now greater than the time available, in particular around audit time the additional paperwork required.

The Council discussed the different options and proposed the following action points.

**Action: LH to complete a log of her actual hours.**

**Action: To further review this at the next meeting based on the time recording with the potential to back date the pay.**

**Action: To log separate hours for RFO work.**

**Action: To contact CHALC re new payscales for Clerks and email to KH**

## 9. Update on Alternative Ways to Manage Speed Group. Silhouettes, Bin Stickers, SID loan

SA reported that he is continuing to work with the nursery to progress the silhouette designs for Peckforton Hall Lane. The bin stickers have now been purchased, leaflets and labels created and are now ready for distribution. SA and BB have agreed to distribute the stickers to the relevant household on bin days.

SPC are keen to continue borrowing the SID device from Burland and agreed to JM purchasing two brackets to enable easier siting of the device. The approximate cost of the brackets is £10 each.

**Action: JM to purchase brackets for SID.**

LH reported the new police dashcam initiative that encourages drivers to report speeding and bad driving.

**Action: To add this initiative to the parish website.**

## **10. Operation Shield**

SA reported that we now have 20 people signed up to receive a KIT from Operation Shield. We are currently awaiting dates and times for us to arrange a meeting for the distribution of the kits via an evening meeting in early June. SA proposed that the remaining KITS be retained for 6 months and then if they received no further interest from the parish we should look at selling them on to neighbouring parishes.

**Action: LH to co-ordinate with the police for a suitable date for distribution of the packs.**

## **11. Highways Issues**

SA reported that SL has now completed the verge clearance on the A49 close the junction of PHL. LH has reported the need for weed spraying on PHL and the A49.

JM reported that the parish has been successful in being allocated funding from Cheshire East's Area Highways Group to make changes in our road layout and signage. He is now waiting to be assigned an engineer to visit the parish to discuss our specific needs. KH agreed to attend this meeting and asked for RM to keep her informed.

## **12. Horse Beware Signs**

JM reported that he has been in contact with the Council re this signage. Based on the advice he was given there were 3 options to progress.

Option1 - To ask SD to raise this at our the Area Highways meeting and request funding.

Option 2 - Offer to pay for the sign and ask Cheshire East for a quote (timescale 6 months)

Option 3 – To commission our own sign and post at a cost of £65 for the sign and £45 for the post.

After some discussion the council concluded that the best option for progression of this sign would be to commission our own sign but look to attach them to existing 40 mph entry signs with information board ie for 2 miles. It was not deemed appropriate just outside commercial properties.

**Action: JM to purchase 2 signs and brackets to be fixed onto existing repeater signs and to inform Cheshire East to ensure we are clear of our position around who holds the duty of care around this signage.**

### **13. Lighting in Southcroft Update**

The lighting is now completed, the only problem that we are aware of is that the light on the A49 is not perfectly aligned and focused. To remedy we would need to adjust the angle of the light to floodlight more of the road. We have discussed this with the contractors but don't feel that at this stage is worth the addition £1000 in extra costs required as there have been no complaints to date.

We are currently awaiting the invoice for this work.

### **14. Review of Website Hosts**

LH produced a paper that has been circulated ahead of the meeting regarding her challenges with the existing hosts and the high ongoing cost of the site.

Cllrs reviewed the paper and based on the potential benefits, value for money, transition costs and year on year life cost savings agreed to commission Mark Ireland-Jones and agreed to him to take over hosting the website once the contract ends with In touch in February 2020.

**Action: JM to pass on Mark Ireland -Jones contact details to LH and LH to work with MIJ to start building scoping out the transition.**

### **15. Storage of Historic Ledgers and Other Archive Items**

RF agreed to take over the storage of old SPC's archived reports from DC now that he has resigned from the council.

### **16. Adoption of new Financial Regulations**

PC's reviewed the new financial regulations and approved them as guiding documents to manage our financial checks controls when handling invoices and payments.

### **17. a) Review of Annual Accounts**

The Council reviewed the annual accounts and approve them as a true and accurate record of Parish Council Activity.

LH as RFO circulated the annual accounts book and financial regulations to all councilors that were present. It was agreed that financial matters had been managed in accordance with the financial regulation, and therefore Graham Melia acting as our internal accounts auditor signed off page 4 of our Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

It was agreed by the unanimously agreed Council to apply for an exemption certificate from the need for external auditing.

LH also highlighted that during this audit our reserves were considered as too high. This was however justified due to the funds being committed to specific projects. We will need to keep a watch on this in future years and set our precept accordingly.

We also discussed the need to review our existing asset register for the coming year due to the purchase of new lighting for the parish.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Graham Melia for acting as the internal auditor for the parish accounts.

**Action: The Clerk to scan and return the form to the auditors, draft the accounts poster for the notice board and upload the accounts document to the parish website.**

**b) Payment of Accounts**

LH explained that so far this year we have had a spending of £1, 218.33 which includes purchase of Operation Shield Kits and Bin Stickers. Our current balance stands at £8,733.21.

**Payments to be made at this meeting are**

**Zurich Insurance £315. 01**

**Parish Clerk Wages £583.82**

**Parish Clerk Expenses £15.77**

**After these payments the remaining balance will be £7,598.78**

These payments were approved and cheques signed accordingly.

**18. Completions of Election Expenses Forms and New Declaration of Interest Forms**

LH explained that all Councillors were required to complete election expenses form and New Declaration of Interest Forms in accordance with Cheshire East's New Code of Conduct.

**Action: LH to return all completed forms to Cheshire East's elections office.**

**19. Any other business/items for the next meetings Agenda**

KH requested to attend PC Chair training. The council unanimously approved this request.

**Action: LH to circulate date of training to KH and book a place for her to attend.**

**PAYE completion**

SA asked CJ if he would be willing to take over the role of handling Payroll for the Clerk. CJ accepted and the council (less JM who had had to leave the meeting early) were in favor of this request.

**Action: DC to process today's payment and arrange handover training with CJ.**

**Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

The meeting closed at 22.10.

**Signed.....Chair**

.....Date

Action List

Agenda item	Action	Person Responsible for Actioning
3	<p><b>Action Points still to be completed from the last meeting include</b></p> <p><b>SA to repaint the legs of the noticeboard.</b></p> <p><b>LH and KH to continue to work with Barclays to co-ordinate online banking authorization card and device.</b></p> <p><b>Neighbourhood Plan – it was agreed that the Council would need to complete a further scoping exercise to see if this was relevant of a parish the size of Spurstow.</b></p>	<p>SA</p> <p>LH/KH</p> <p>All</p>
6	<p><b>Cllrs to reflect on any potential projects for the parish and report back at the next meeting.</b></p>	<p>All</p>
8	<p><b>To complete a log of her actual hours.</b></p> <p><b>To further review this at the next meeting based on the time recording with the potential to back date the pay.</b></p> <p><b>To log separate hours for RFO work.</b></p> <p><b>To contact CHALC re new payscales for Clerks and email to KH</b></p>	<p>LH</p>
9	<p><b>JM to purchase brackets for SID.</b></p>	<p>JM</p>
10	<p><b>LH to co-ordinate with the police for a suitable date for distribution of the packs.</b></p>	<p>LH</p>
12	<p><b>JM to purchase 2 horse beware signs and brackets to be fixed onto entry 40mph signs and to inform Cheshire East to ensure we are clear of our position around who holds the duty of care around this signage.</b></p>	<p>JM</p>
14	<p><b>JM to pass on Mark Ireland -Jones contact details to LH and LH to work with MIJ to start scoping out the transition of the website.</b></p>	<p>JM/LH</p>
17	<p><b>The Clerk to scan and return the form to the auditors, draft the accounts poster for the notice board and upload the accounts document to the parish website.</b></p>	<p>LH</p>
18	<p><b>LH to return all completed forms to Cheshire East’s elections office.</b></p>	<p>LH</p>
19	<p><b>LH to circulate date of training to KH and book a place for her to attend.</b></p>	<p>LH</p>

19	<b>DC to process today's PAYE payment and arrange handover training with CJ.</b>	DC /CJ
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