

TOSTOCK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on Monday, 22nd May 2023 at Tostock Village Hall beginning at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs Bauly, Blundell, Callow, Cobbold, Cross, Lebbon, Malcom, Storey

Attending: Mr Peter Dow
18 members of the public

MINUTES

- 23.05.01 **Resolved: That Cllr Storey be Chairman of Council for the coming year.**
1.1 The Meeting accepted the Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office
1.2 Cllr Storey thanked the outgoing Councillors, and in particular Cllrs. Mellen and Richardson, for having, effectively, ensured that business could continue in difficult circumstances. Graham MacDowell was also thanked for his not inconsiderable efforts to stay abreast of the accounts and for acting as RFO.
1.3 Cllr Storey expressed her personal approval of the fact that the Council had, once more, a proper democratic mandate.
- 23.05.02 **Resolved: That Mr Peter Dow be appointed as Clerk to this Meeting, to include the production of Draft minutes.**
- 23.05.03 **Noted:**
That all Members had properly signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
- 23.05.04 **Noted:**
An apology for absence was accepted from Cllr Kearsley.
- 23.05.05 **Noted:**
That when any Members' Declarations of Local Non-Pecuniary Interest and/or Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in subsequent agenda items were invited none were forthcoming and that Councillors were all aware of the need to register Interests with MSDC by 1st June.
- 23.05.06 **Resolved:**
That the following be appointed forthwith:
Cllr Malcom to serve as Council Vice chairman
Cllr Cross to serve as Council's Responsible Finance Officer
Cllr Blundell to represent Council on the Village Hall Committee
Cllrs Bauly and Cobbold to represent Council on the Tostock Poor's Charity
Cllr Cross to act as Village Footpath Officer
6.1 Cllr Kearsley is to be asked to contact the parishioner who has previously expressed willingness to serve as Village Tree Officer
- 23.05.07 **Noted:**
That Council has Standing Orders in place, as published on the website, and that the Chairman undertook to seek to organise a review and necessary updating as recommended by the Internal Auditor.

- 23.05.08 **Noted:**
That the Chairman undertook to ascertain from MSDC the Council's position regarding CIL holdings and to confirm that a flexible approach to the statutory deadlines remains in place. Further, that the updated information will be published on the Council's website and that a group training session will be arranged for Members in order to acquaint them with the relevant rules and regulations regarding CIL
- 23.05.09 **Resolved:**
That the Meeting receives the Internal Audit Report for the year to 31.03.2023 and takes note of the actions recommended.
- 23.05.10 **Noted:**
The following matters related to the Internal Audit Report and appropriate actions:
10.1 There is VAT income as yet to be claimed and this will be resolved
10.2 Standing Orders and Financial Regulations should be reviewed and the Review minuted. The Chairman undertook to ensure that this is scheduled for action.
10.3 There needs to be confirmation of Council's compliance with the Transparency Code and the Chairman undertook to ensure that this is scheduled for action.
10.4 A Risk Assessment review is due regarding Council's responsibilities and the Chairman undertook to ensure that this is scheduled for action.
10.5 Fidelity cover is not in place and the Chairman undertook to ensure that this is scheduled for action in light of the accepted bench mark of year-end Balance plus 50% of Precept as the insured sum.
10.6 That a Reserves Policy be adopted
- 23.05.11 **Resolved:**
That Dave Crimmin be re-engaged to act as Council's Internal Auditor for the 2023 / 2024 financial year.
- 23.05.12 **Noted:**
That the Chairman undertook to meet with Cllr Mellen to discuss the apparent impasse regarding regularising Bank signatories which has, effectively, put all payments on hold.
- 23.05.13 **Noted:**
An update on the Council's current financial position provided by Graham MacDowall who was thanked for bringing the Meeting's attention to the following points:
13.1 The £5k 'surplus' is the result of an effective closing-down of activity and subsequent expenditures following the need for the MSDC £7k loan towards avoiding insolvency during Council's recent difficulties.
13.2 The MSDC loan is £7k spread over 3 years at 1.79% with equal payments of £2,400 due annually in April.
13.3 Reserves net of CIL stand at some £7,500.00
13.4 The 2 accounts with NatWest Bank stand, jointly at £49,418.00
13.5 That the AGAR Returns need to be signed at the June meeting.
- 23.05.14 **Noted:**
That Cllr Cross, as RFO, will confirm the position with NatWest Bank regarding signatories and will follow up suggestions that Unity Trust Bank might be better suited to Council's needs.
- 23.05.15 **Resolved:**
That the Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd January, as tabled, be agreed as a true record.
15.1 The Clerk confirmed that it was accepted good practice for such minutes be restricted to a record of matters formally noted and decisions taken rather than of discussion points made or opinions voiced.

23.05.16

Noted

The following when Public comment or question on any matter of Council business was invited;

- 16.1 The Chairman agreed to include on the next Agenda the matter of the maintenance of the defibrillator;
- 16.2 The Chairman agreed to place on the agenda for the July meeting a chance for the Village hall Committee to make a presentation outlining their plans for refurbishment and to confirm the position re CIL funding.

23.05.17

Noted:

The following matters brought forward from previous meetings, or from Public input in the interim, for information, to be noted or for inclusion on a future agenda:

- 17.1 Mr Howells is to be approached towards providing an update to the next meeting re the Speed Indicator Devices and with reference to the possible addition of a data logger.
- 17.2 Confirmation of the position re the Road Tax for the tractor will be sought at the next meeting.
- 17.3 A watching brief is maintained regarding vehicular damage to The Green and the mater reviewed at the next meeting.
- 17.4 Cllr Malcolm suggested that costs be sought for regular tractor maintenance and Cllr Cross agree to bring figures to the next meeting.
- 17.5 Cllr Bauly suggested that all potholes should be reported via the SCC Highways Reporting Tool repeatedly by concerned individuals so as to keep pressure on the Authority to effect repairs.

23.05.18

Noted:

The following in general discussion regarding filling the vacancy for Parish Clerk:

- 18.1 Locum provision via SALC is limited and far from a preferred option
- 18.2 Advertising via SALC is free of charge
- 18.3 The Chairman is to discuss with SALC an appropriate pay rate with reference to the published NJC Scales
- 18.4 The Chairman undertook to sound-out existing postholders in local villages
- 18.5 It was accepted that there is reputational damage which should rapidly be remediated now that a solid democratic forum is established.

23.05.19

Noted:

That the date for the next meeting was scheduled for 12th June in the Village Hall beginning at 7.30pm and that subsequent meetings were scheduled for 24th July and 11th September.

23.05.20

Noted:

That the meeting closed at 8.45

Peter Dow
24.05.2023

