

Minutes of the Longsdon Parish Meeting held on Thursday 16th. May 2024 in the Upstairs room of The Wheel Public House, Leek Road, Longsdon.

Present: Chair J. Sargeant. (Chair of the Parish Council).

In Attendance: Councillors J. Cox, S. Dickinson, C. Hogan, D. Hughes, R. Lovell & K. Shaw.

One Elector.

John Bourne, Clerk to the Council.

1. Apologies for Absence.

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Approval of Minutes of Last Parish Meeting.

The minutes of the last Parish meeting held on 18th. May 2023 had been circulated and it was now agreed that they be signed as a true and correct record.

3. Matters Arising.

The Chairman reported that this is the annual opportunity to say thank you for the good work put in by each of you Councillors. Giving up your time to attend meetings, being observant when travelling around the parish and considering where and how the Council can make improvements to benefit our parishioners is certainly commendable.

It has been pleasing to see a little good humour sneaking into meetings once again. While the topics of discussion are commonly of importance their debate doesn't always have to be depressingly dry to find the most appropriate resolution.

My particular thanks go to the officers of the Council, Vice Chair Richard Lovell, representatives to the Parish Assembly Councillors Keith Shaw and Simon Dickinson and, of course, the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer John Bourne who has kept the wheels turning for nearly 18 years,

Having District Councillor Jo Cox on board as Parish Councillor has added another dimension to the meetings. With her two hats she has been able to bring information to the table which would have potentially been unavailable and she has been able and willing to apply additional pressure to official bodies to respond to issues alongside that exerted by this Council.

As ever, the continuing sorry saga of the lamentable eyesore that is the New Inn shows no sign of being resolved in the near future after the SMDC Planning Committee failed to make a decision on the latest planning application. It seems astonishing that the decision was deferred giving the architects the opportunity to negotiate plan changes. This after an interim report of almost a year ago indicating likely refusal appears to have been completely ignored. It's hard to see who benefits from further procrastination. It's certainly not Longsdon.

4. To Receive a Report for the Year 2023 / 2024.

Councillor John Sargeant was again re-elected as Chairman with Councillor Richard Lovell re-elected as Vice Chairman at the Annual General Meeting of the Council. Councillors S. Dickinson and K. Shaw were elected as representatives on the Staffs. Moorlands Parish Assembly.

John Bourne, Clerk to the Council, was appointed as the Responsible Financial Officer.

Since the recent resignations the Electoral Office of S.M.D.C. had issued statutory notices and the Council had then advertised the vacancies on the Council on two occasions. Eventually, three applications were received and after a secret ballot was taken Jo Cox, Conor Hogan & David Hughes were duly co-opted. Jo Cox is already the elected District Councillor for the area.

All the Councillors, including those elected, had now signed the Declaration of Office.

Estimates for the coming financial year were prepared. Councillors agreed that the precept requirement would be £5,250.00, a slight increase on last year.

The annual accounts of the Council were audited again by the internal auditor. There were no adverse comments from her.

As the Council's turn-over was less than £25,000 it could be exempted from an external audit. This option was pursued, and the necessary forms were certified, signed and forwarded to the external auditor.

No requests for S 137 payments were received.

The Council's defibrillator machine had reportedly been used. As a result, new replacement pads and a new battery were purchased and fitted. The national Circuit was then updated.

The Council's insurance was again renewed with the Zurich insurance company with its quotation being only very slightly more than last year.

Due to the Data Protection Regulations the Council again registered with the Information Commissioner in the sum of £40 – 00.

The County Council had been contacted to ask for an adjustment to the white lines on the A53 Leek Road near to the pedestrian crossing but due to a staff absence no reply was received. After further contact no solution was forthcoming.

Enquiries were made about converting the crossing to a light controlled Pelican Crossing but a price quoted was very excessive. Further enquiries are being made with an option to perhaps append LED Lights to the current globes of the crossing.

The large Remembrance Day Poppies were again displayed around the village on signs, trees etc. and further new material was purchased for future years.

The village flower tubs were again planted twice for the summer and winter periods by the Council's lengthsman.

An oak Memorial Bench was purchased in memory of the late Councillor Richard Weston with the aid of a grant of £175.00 received from former District Councillor Hawkins' Community Fund. The new Bench with an inscription plaque had been sited at the junction of Denford Road and Micklea Lane.

A grant of £150.00 was also received from the current District Councillor Cox's Community Fund for the painting of the bus shelters.

Numerous planning applications were discussed with no major objections being forwarded. However continued efforts to clear up the old New Inn site came to nothing in spite of a major Planning Application on which any decision has been deferred.

The problem with a vehicle parked near to the pedestrian crossing causing visibility problems for vehicles emerging from Sutherland Road was referred to the Police. This problem was then resolved.

Other items passed on to other authorities were:

Overgrown hedges etc in School Lane, dangerous steps from Sutherland Road down to the top canal, grass verges overgrowing pavements etc etc.

5. Any Other Business.

There was no business under this item.