

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING ON 9 JANUARY AT 7.00 PM

HELD AT VICARAGE COTTAGES BARN, COLN ST ALDWYNS

Present: David Hicks-Beach, John Reeves, Will Perkins, Helen Forbes, Anthony Van Oss, Steve Fletcher (treasurer), David Fowles (district councillor) and parish clerk Clare Brignall.

MINUTES

1. There were no apologies
2. There were no declarations of interest
3. The Council approved and signed the minutes of the last meeting, held on 3 October 2023.
4. The Council heard the report from the District Councillor who had spoken with the interim head of planning, David Morren, about the cladding on the chimney of the New Inn. They are looking at new solutions. There are problems with the weight that the roof can/cannot hold. The original planning officer has now left. CDC are looking at the continued future of Publica – providing back office function for 3 councils. A budget review going to full council will look at increases in charges to council tax, green bins and parking fees. There is going to be a boundary review of the wards in the council. The County Councillor was not present.
5. The Council approved the documents that have been adapted for this year: Standing Orders, and Financial Regulations. The Risk Assessment is outstanding and Council has agreed not going to have a Grants Policy. HF is going to look at the biodiversity policy.
6. The Council considered the budget vs spend for the period of September to December. DHB thanked Steve for his work as treasurer. Most of the changes were in the grass cutting. After 7 years of no invoices, we received an invoice of £2424, which has been paid. The reserve was £2800, so we have a surplus. We need an invoice from the church for the churchyard mowing, which will be about £250. Insurance needs to be paid in February. £316.01 was paid for the coronation celebrations. We paid £181 for the village meeting. £60 for subscriptions. We have a budget of £1500 for the playground. The inspection was £324 and there is work needed for £3565 fix the zip wire, the badminton hoop, a new table. We have a budget of £416 for inspection, and a budget of £1500 for maintenance. The new website comes under village enhancements. We will send a cheque of £150 to CAB. We have an allowance of £350 for elections, which we will need to review. Three cheques approved, 596, 597 and 598. Zip wire expenditure and table and hoop approved and the extra money for these will come from the playground reserves.
7. The Council is happy with the bank reconciliation for the period of 3 October to 31 December.
8. The Council has approved the internal checks for the period of October to December.
9. The Council was informed about progress on tree planting on the Aldsworth Road. The trees are ordered. The Parish council is to pay for the one tree that has been damaged, and the other five people are to pay a donation of £55 each to Coln Parish Council.
10. The Council discussed progress on speed watch. Council has received a record of the way that the speeding has been going down. Council discussed the ongoing costs of speed watch, which are considered in the budget and the amount to be set for the precept. Council feels that for the moment one speed watch camera is sufficient, along with Smiley Sid, who is now shared with Hatherop.
11. The Council agreed to continue to hold elections in Quenington Village Hall until Coln Mill is ready.

12. The Council confirmed the date for the litter pick on 16 March.
13. The Council reviewed planning applications and there are no concerns apart from the problems with the chimney at the New Inn, which is discussed above, item 4. David Fowles is going to speak with the planning officer about a chimney that has appeared without planning permission at Salt Way Cottage, in their conservatory.
14. The Council discussed signage about hedgehogs and came to the conclusion that there is no need for further signage but that a member of each of the parish councils, Quenington, Hatherop and Coln, should be asked to meet to discuss a wildlife corridor and the biodiversity policy.
15. The Council agreed the precept for 2024/25. Steve went through the budget. The biggest changes come from money for the speed watch. The reserve will have gone down by the end of the year. We are putting through around £300 per annum for elections in 2027. Unknown is exactly how much the church mowing will come to. The replacement of the playground should mean putting aside £4000 per year over ten years, which would increase the budget for the precept by £2500, aside from small changes. This would need a raise to the precept of 28%. If we used some of the reserves for the renewal of the playground we could potentially get it down to a £1500. Alternatively, if the largest item failed in the first year, how much would you need to have in reserves to pay for that? Council agreed a 7% increase to the precept, on the assumption that we could use reserves to replace the largest item if it were to fail in the next year. The treasurer will send out the figures for everyone to agree the details.
16. The Council confirmed 19 March for the next meeting and to set the date of 15 May for the AGM, to start at 6.00 pm, with the village meeting at 7.00.