

The Parish Council of St. Helen Without

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 22nd May 2023 at 7.00 p.m. At Shippon Church Hall

Present: Cllrs. M. Page (in the Chair), C. Parkin, R. Bahu, M. Littleboy, D. Churchouse, N. Benchiba-Savenius

In attendance: Cllr. R. Clegg, Anna Clarke (Clerk)

1. Apologies for Absence

None

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd May 2022

The Minutes were reviewed, adopted and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

None

4. Report from Cllr Mike Page, Chair of the Parish Council

SAINT HELEN WITHOUT PARISH COUNCIL CHAIR'S REPORT 2022/23

This year has witnessed the bittersweet contrast of the celebration of the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II and the sadness of her subsequent passing. The majority of us will have known no other Monarch than her and I believe that, setting aside differing views of the monarchy, she was almost universally respected. This seemed to be reflected in the level of support for the celebration of her Platinum jubilee locally. As I reported last year we were fortunate in securing a National Lottery Jubilee Grant of £10,000 which, supplemented by funds from our own reserves, has paid for additional playground equipment in Sandleigh Road Recreation Ground and the planting of semi mature trees as part of the 'Queen's Canopy' in Sandleigh Road Recreation Ground, Dry Sandford Primary School, St. Mary Magdalene Church, Stowford House and Long Tow. I wish to record my thanks to Cllr David Churchouse for leading the effort to secure the National Lottery Grant and arranging procurement of the trees for the Canopy as well as Cllrs Richard Bahu and Monica Littleboy for their work in relation to the Sandleigh Road Recreation Ground.

In summary, I believe that St Helen Without Parish Council and the community it serves should be proud of the fact that

- we brought together the various elements of our community - village residents, the Army families, Stowford House and those from across the parish and living nearby.
- we (thanks to the efforts of the Army) provided a spectacular beacon as part of the chain lit nationally to mark the occasion
- we embraced those less fortunate and challenged members of our community (including people from the Ukraine being hosted in our area).
- we supported the Church in providing a very friendly and inclusive Jubilee service enjoyed by a substantial congregation
- we emphasised the role of the Prince of Wales public house as a community hub and
- we showed that as a relatively small parish, together with our community, we can punch above our weight.

For all the above we must thank the efforts of the Jubilee Committee, chaired by David Churchouse, the Friends of Shippon and the Parochial Church Council. I would like to record my thanks to Lt Col Georgina Wincott, Dalton Barracks Base Commander, for her enthusiastic support in securing Army funding and resources in support of these events.

The passing of Queen Elizabeth II was marked by the provision of a book of condolence at St. Mary Magdalene Church which, together with a photographic record of the Parish at the time, will be preserved in the Oxfordshire Local Records Archive.

Meanwhile we continue to address the key issues concerning our parishioners. Our 'mobile' speed camera is now in operation and we remain a member of the Community Speedwatch Team – however, the number of people willing to complain about speeding vehicles is not matched by the number willing

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to volunteer to operate the speed detection equipment. If no volunteers are forthcoming, we will have to leave the scheme.

We have 'signed up' to the 20 mph speed limit in residential areas being promoted by Oxfordshire County Council and this is scheduled for implementation in our parish in 2024. We remain committed to addressing the issues of peak time traffic congestion in Barrow Road and the surrounding area.

Whilst things may have been quiet of late on plans to build on the airfield we are gearing ourselves up to the challenges this will pose. Whilst the political debate rages at a national level on housing provision we will discharge our responsibility to identify and champion local needs and concerns. Our Neighbourhood Plan, the adoption of which has secured in excess of £16,000 additional income for the Council over the last three years, now needs updating and I am being ably supported in this by Cllr Caroline Parkin whose unsurpassed knowledge of parish affairs (as our longest serving Councillor and past Chair) is invaluable.

Sadly, this year, Vicky Talbot, a long standing Councillor of this Parish, stood down. Her advocacy on behalf of the residents of Barrow Road, Gozzards Ford and Dry Sandford will be sorely missed. On a personal note, whilst fully understanding her desire to focus her efforts on other aspects of her contribution to the public good, I would like to thank her for her forthright, challenging approach and above all her unstinting support.

We are fortunate that we have been joined by Dr Najat Benchiba - Savenius, representing Dry Sandford. Najat has a wealth of experience which will benefit our community. Sadly we lost the services of Cllr. Hamasq Ayub who has now moved out of the area.

If you care about where you live and would like to play a part in shaping its future the please consider joining us as a Councillor – our ability to continue 'punching above our weight' needs people like you!

Michael Page QPM
Chair

5. Financial Report by the Clerk

Current Funds

Opening Balance April 2022: £56,850

Total Receipts: £36,762

Total: **£93,612**

Expenditure to March 31st 2023: £36,739

Reserves as of 31.3.23: **£56,873**

(Of which, £11,711.58 is CIL, which must be spent on infrastructure)

Monies due after March 31st for information:

VAT due in April 2023: £3202.61

CIL due April 2023: £4023.95

Total: **£64,099**

Expenditure 2022/23

This is higher than usual due to purchase of the new playground equipment, refurbishment of the village gates, Clerk's back payments and Jubilee celebrations, although some of these were offset by the £10,000 Lottery Funding secured by Cllr Churchouse.

Receipts 2022/23

This figure is higher than usual due to the £6035.92 CIL money received and £10,000 Lottery Funding. The Lottery funding contributed towards the costs of the Jubilee celebrations and new Playground equipment at Sandleigh Road Recreation Ground. No CIL money from this or the previous Financial Year has yet been spent. The table below details the time constraints for CIL spending.

Please note town and parishes have five years from receipt of the above CIL monies in which to spend it. If you do not spend the CIL funds, once transferred to you, then in accordance with the Legislation these could be returned to the district council. CIL (Regulation 59C) requires town/parish councils to spend these funds on: • the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure, or • anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area.

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Date	Name	Details	Receipt	Expenditure	Total	To Be Spent By:
30.4.21	Vale of White Horse DC	CIL	£5,675.66			Apr-26
27.4.22	Vale of White Horse DC	CIL	£2,011.97			Apr-27
26.10.22	Vale of White Horse DC	CIL	£4,023.95			Apr-27
30.4.23	Vale of White Horse DC	CIL	£4,023.95			April-28
TOTALS			£11,711.58		£11,711.58	

Documents Noted / to be Approved at Full Council:

- Internal Audit Report
- Annual Governance Statement
- Accounting Statement
- Explanation of Reserves
- Risk Assessment
- Asset Register
- Budget / Actual Expenditure for info.

Assets Register

Additions in 2022-23:

Defibrillator & Lockable Cabinet

Playhouse, Swing

Risk Assessment

The defibrillator has been added, item 1(e).

At the advice of the Auditor, Trees, which the Council is responsible for, have been added to the risk assessment. Trees in the recreation ground should be formally inspected every 3 years or so and those adjacent to the highway, every 2 years (b & f).

Insurance

The PC is currently in the middle of a 3 year contract. The renewal cost will be £1017.22, increasing from £995.61 in 2022/23 and will need to be agreed at the meeting on 22nd May, in line with ongoing assessment of risk. I will send the email with all the documents, for anyone who wishes to see them.

Reserves

Some of the Reserves figures have been reduced following advice from the Auditor that there should be general reserves to match the Precept figure, as opposed to previous advice that the general reserves should not be more than 50% of Precept. The auditor suggested looking at this at the next budget, but I have amended the current reserves for agreement / adjustment, to give an idea of how this would look.

Period for the Exercise of Public Rights

This will begin on 5th June 2023 for a period of 30 consecutive working days.

External Audit

This needs to be submitted to Moore Stephens by 30th June.

Clerk, May 2023

6. Public Participation

None present

7. A.O.B.

None

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 7.20 p.m

Signed.....Date.....

Minutes & Agendas can be found on our website at: <https://sthelenwithout-pc.co.uk/>