

St Helens Parish Council

Minutes of the parish council meeting held on Monday 9th February 2015 at 7pm in St Helens Sports Pavilion.

In attendance:

Chair: Mrs Parker

Councillors: Cllr Bacon, Mr Campbell, Mr Earnshaw, Miss Ryan and Mr Thomson.

Clerk: Mrs Dyer

8 members of the public.

16/2015 Apologies for absence – The Chair reported that she had received notice from Mrs Russell of her resignation.

17/2015 Declaration of Interests

Mr Thomson declared an interest if item 7 Finances as he is due a refund for items he bought on behalf of the council.

18/2015 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 12th January 2015.

Mr Thomson proposed that the minutes be signed as true and correct.

2nd Miss Ryan

RESOLVED – Minutes signed as true and correct.

19/2015 Public Forum.

Mr Williams asked whether members of the public could only ask questions related to the agenda? The Clerk replied that points raised should relate to agenda items as per the parish council's standing orders. However, it is at the discretion of the Chair. Mrs Parker said that she would prefer that members of the public asked questions about items on the agenda as there were other avenues for raising queries with the council.

Mr Anderson asked why the parish council had not done anything about the Petty family's request for a memorial bench on the cricket green.

The Clerk replied that both she and Mr Earnshaw had been in contact with the IW Council who manage the Green, to discuss the proposal. The parish council do not manage the green therefore cannot give permission for the installation of a bench. The IW Council are refusing permission for the installation of any additional benches at the present time.

Mr Squibb said that he was disappointed that the points he had put in writing to the planning committee had not been raised during the planning meeting.

The Clerk confirmed that the correspondence had been given to the Councillors. Mr Earnshaw said that any member of the public can make their own representations to the IW Council planning committee if they had concerns about the proposals.

Mr Anderson asked whether discussions regarding the precept would be opened to the public?

Mrs Parker replied that they would not and the correct time to raise a point was during the public forum.

Mr Anderson then said that he hoped the parish council would not be paying to maintain the grass on the village green.

20/2015 To discuss and receive updates regarding the public toilet provision in St Helens.

Mrs Parker reported that she had spoken to the owners of the Vine Inn about being part of the community toilet scheme and although they had considered it, they have decided not to offer their toilet facilities for public use.

Mr Campbell reported that he had spoken to the Sports Association and that they were not happy to offer their toilets for use to the public as they had concerns that the toilets being open would affect the security of the building and that the pavilion facilities should be available for sportsmen and women using the pavilion.

Miss Ryan suggested that the Post Office be asked if they could offer their facilities. Mr Campbell agreed to ask and report back to council.

21/2015 To receive an update on the discretionary service cuts and discuss their possible impact within St Helens.

The Clerk reported that she had received communication from the IW Council reporting that the grass cutting service on the Green would be reduced to 3 cuts per annum from April 2015, down from the 20 cuts currently being provided.

She reported that the IW Council had offered the parish council the opportunity to buy into their grounds maintenance contract to maintain the existing level of service. The cost for this would be approx £4265.

Mr Thomson asked who decided 3 cuts a year was sufficient and what happens to money raised by hiring out the Green?

The Clerk replied that the IW Council have decided on 3 cuts per annum and will continue to collect the money.

Miss Ryan expressed concern that 3 cuts per annum would not be enough.

Mr Campbell expressed concern that the football and cricket clubs would be affected.

Mr Earnshaw suggested that the parish council look into alternative grass cutting provision. He suggested inviting quotes and purchasing their own mower.

Mrs Parker expressed concern that 3 cuts a year wouldn't be sufficient and would restrict access to the green and affect the Village Fayre and Carnival.

Mr Thomson said that the parish council should write to the council and insist that the parish council won't cut the grass. He was also appalled at the length of time it had taken the IW Council to provide the information. The Clerk said that she had written to the IW Council in September saying that the parish council would not buy into their contract and pay for grass cutting.

Mrs Parker proposed that the parish council explore all options and specifically the following:

Obtain estimates for employing their own grass cutting contractor.

Investigate prices for purchasing a mower.

2nd Mr Bacon

RESOLVED – to research other grass cutting options and report back to council.

22/2015 Financial report – To receive report and approve any payments due.

The Clerk reported that no bank reconciliation had been undertaken as the bank statements had not yet arrived in the post.

Payments Due

Mr I Thomson	£30.90	Refund for plants and compost.
Island Roads	£162.00	Bin emptying.
Mr M Rivers	£50	Removal and disposal of village Christmas trees.
Lisa Dyer	£41.38	Refund for printer ink.

Mr Campbell proposed all payments be approved as per report.

2nd Mr Bacon

RESOLVED – all payments approved as per report.

23/2015 To discuss and agree a budget for the parish council for 2015/16 and the level of the precept request for 2015/16.

Two budget options were handed to Councillor's for consideration, one with a larger contingency fund of £5000.

Mrs Parker explained that she thought the budget should be viewed in the long term as there are many factors to take into account.

Councillors would need to consider that LCTS funding is not guaranteed in future years, possible precept capping, uncertainty over services offered by the Isle of Wight Council and the cost implications of implementing the parish plan which is not yet finalised. She stated that she believed that the parish council should hope for the best but plan for the worst to enable the council to deliver the parish plan and therefore she thought a budget with a larger contingency should be favoured.

Mr Thomson was unhappy with the level of contingency in the proposed budget B as there were no firm plans for the money.

Cllr Bacon supported the adoption of a budget with a large contingency as he believed the parish council had to plan for the worst case scenario as massive funding cuts were looming at the IW Council which would have an adverse effect on the services received locally.

The Clerk recommended the budget with the larger contingency be adopted as she had concerns that the parish council would not be able to deliver what is required to implement the forthcoming parish plan. As the plan is yet to be finalised it is difficult to know exactly what costs there will be. It was already clear that there is good local support to get the youth club up and running again, this is likely to require some funding from the parish council.

The larger budget would result in a 18.1% rise in the precept to £28500 per annum.

This would cost the average band D tax payer £7.99 extra per annum.

Mrs Parker proposed that budget B be adopted and that a precept request of £28500 be submitted to the Isle of Wight Council net of the LCTS grant.

2nd Mr Bacon

RESOLVED – precept request of £28500 and budget approved.

24/2015 Clerk's report.

The Clerk reported:

IWALC UPDATE

- IWALC are offering training courses for new Councillors. The Councillor Skills Training Course.

Four training sessions on the 4, 11, 18 and 25 March between 6.00 p.m. and 9.00 p.m. at the Riverside Centre, Newport.

Free to IWALC members but if Councillors are booked on the course and fail to attend there will be a charge of £25 per session.

- IWALC – Spring seminar – Taking the Island Forward. Monday 16th March. Cost £25 per delegate.

Planning

- That she had printed out a Plain English Guide to the planning system and has given a copy to Mr Earnshaw in the first instance. If members of the planning committee would like to read it please arrange with Mr Earnshaw.

Co-option.

- She has received 3 applications.
- Closing date 15th February 2015.

She also reported that the IW Council's Environment Officers now have a much reduced role and no longer deal with fly-tipping. Roadside tipping should be reported to Island Roads and all other fly tipping reported to Environmental Health.

25/2015 Councillor's report and items to be included in future agenda.

Mr Campbell reported that ditch on Broomlands Path was filled with undergrowth and was leaving the path waterlogged. Clerk to report to IW Council.

Mr Bacon reported a large rut on the football green. Clerk to report to the IW Council.

Mr Bacon also expressed concern that the public could not comment on agenda items. He would like them to be able to comment on matters of importance. Mr Thomson agreed. Mrs Parker replied that questions or points could be raised in the public forum.

Mr Earnshaw asked if there was any news on the missing signs for Downsvie Road. Clerk to contact Island Roads to obtain an update.

Mrs Parker reported large ruts on the green at the top of Downsvie Road. Clerk to report to IW Council.

Mrs Parker said that she had received a request from a local couple to hold a vow renewal on the Old Church Green. Clerk to put on the next agenda.

Miss Ryan reported that Leigh Jackman, the organiser of the Village of Angels Christmas art exhibition, had moved from the village. She was taking over organising it from Mrs Jackman. She would like to discuss what charities should benefit from future years with the parish council. Clerk to put on forthcoming agenda.

Mr Thomson asked Councillors if they would consider repainting the benches in the village. Clerk to put on the next agenda.

Mr Thomson asked whether the parish council would fund a tidy up of the area at the top of Duver Road, it is in need of weeding and the gravel paths need replenishment. The Clerk will look into whether this is possible and put on a future agenda.

Meeting closed 8.37pm