

# **The Parish Council of St. Helen Without**

## **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at 7.00 p.m. on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2018 At Shippon Church Hall.**

**Present:** Cllrs. C. Parkin, (Chair), M Page, P. Painting, R. Bahu, C. Cox, A. Royle, D. Churchouse

**In attendance:** Cllr C. Webber, Cllr R Webber, Mr Derek Kelso, Mr Geoff Fitzgerald, Mr Mike Ricketts, Anna Clarke (Clerk).

### **1. Apologies for absence**

Cllr. V. Talbot

### **2. Matters raised by members of the public**

Mr Fitzgerald raised a concern that, under the Local Govt Act of 1972, all sub committees should be made Public and minutes published within 1 month of the meeting under the Transparency Code and that he did not find, in his opinion, the NP JMC, to be in line with this policy. Mr Fitzgerald went on to say that he thought the JMC had been operating illegally for 14 months. Cllr Parkin responded that she did not personally believe this to be true or that any actions ever taken were corrupt or for personal gain. Cllr Parkin noted that the JMC had offered Mr Fitzgerald a meeting during which this could be discussed but that Mr Fitzgerald had not yet responded. Mr Fitzgerald confirmed that he would be attending the meeting and questioned whether it would be a public meeting. Cllr Parkin confirmed that it could be.

Cllr Page commented that there had been a number of committees held over the years in the PC, which have not been held publicly. Cllr Page said that the JMC had been set up as a regulatory body to regulate the relationship between the 2 councils involved in the NP. As it has been thought to be a regulatory group, Cllr Page felt that it had not been considered that it needed to be Public. Cllr Page commented that it is Mr Fitzgerald's view that the JMC operates illegally.

Mr Fitzgerald said that he had warned about governance of the JMC in April 2017 and complained about the lack of transparency and had come back to the PC with the same concerns in March. Why then had no action been taken? Mr Fitzgerald then went on to state that, in his opinion, the culture was now seeping into the Parish Council. Cllr Parkin refuted this statement and pointed out the Parish Council had continued to operate in the same manner as it had under Mr Fitzgerald's Chairmanship, when e.g. Finance meetings were held in his house.

Cllr Parkin confirmed that Committees had now been set up to start at 7pm before the main PC meetings. Mr Fitzgerald said that he felt this was positive. Cllrs Parkin and Page stated that this discussion would be better continued with the JMC at the aforementioned meeting.

### **3. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017**

The minutes were agreed and signed by the Chair.

### **4. Matters Arising from the Minutes**

None

### **5. Report from Cllr Caroline Parkin, Chair St Helen Without Parish Council**

It has been a busy and challenging year for the Parish Council. 30 Planning applications, have been carefully considered by the PC, some of which have been contentious and have required a great deal of time and thought. Each one is looked at and discussed with site visits often made. Where necessary they are called in to our District Councillor, Catherine Webber, who takes them forward to the Planning Committee and we thank her for her diligence in this. Both Catherine and Richard Webber - who is our County Councillor - attend almost every meeting of the Parish Council and have always been willing to offer help and support to the Parish Council with the many and varied calls on their time, the latest being the Oxford/Cambridge expressway, that we have commented on.

The Neighbourhood Plan has quite rightly taken up a large amount of the Parish Council's time and resources. The Steering Group has done an exemplary Draft Plan and we now await the consultation process. The Parish Council would like to congratulate all members of the Steering Group who have been very well led by Carole Page, I am sure that none of them thought that this endeavour would take over their lives so completely.

LPP2 has had an enormous impact on our Parish; The proposed development of Dalton Barracks and the Airfield and the removal of Shippon from the Green Belt. Taking our lead from the strong representation of residents we will oppose this later in the year when we have the opportunity to do so with The Inspector of LPP2 and it remains to be seen how successful we are, hopefully the views of St Helen Without will be taken into account, and Shippon will remain in the Green Belt, no further land will be taken out and suitable Infrastructure will be in place prior to the commencement of any building on the airfield.

The Parish Newsletter has been published and contains more information on our Parish Council's work, We are in the process of having Speed Awareness signs made from drawings from pupils from the Manor Prep School. We have negotiated a grass cutting contract for the Parish and the village gates are to be re-painted and noticeboards replaced, throughout the Parish of St Helen Without.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking fellow members of the Parish Council, it has not been easy at times to keep everything going when we lost four Parish Councillors simultaneously and one who left a few months earlier. The remaining Councillors took it in their stride and have worked hard to learn new legislation, attend briefing meetings and generally take on more work than at any time in the history of the Parish Council, and all as Volunteers.

All of this work could not have been achieved without the unfailing support of our Vice Chairman Mike Page and a great deal of thanks must go to him from me personally.

Finally and most importantly our thanks and my very grateful thanks go to our Parish Clerk, Anna Clarke, we would be lost without her and we recognise that none of the aforementioned would happen without the enormous amount of work that is done behind the scenes.

## **6. Report RFO**

**The RFO distributed the following information to Cllrs:**

- Notes for Cllrs
- Budget and Expenditure Form
- Bank Reconciliation
- Outgoings – detailed list & Receipts
- Explanation of Reserves
- Asset Register
- Explanation of Variances (as requested by the Auditor)
- Risk Assessment

The year-end balance being carried forward is **£42,689.04**

Expenditure was **£17,297.33**

Receipts were **£20,531.34**, including a VAT refund of £3,384.88

### **Reserves**

The Parish Council finances are currently healthy. These funds are allocated to dedicated reserves agreed by the Parish Council.

### **External Audit**

As a smaller authority with Receipts and Spend of less than £25,000, the Accounts no longer have to be submitted to the External Auditor. The PC has to complete a certificate of exemption at the May meeting and this needs to be submitted to Moore Stephens by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2018. The return must, however, still be publicly displayed on the Council's website. The notice of public rights and publication of unaudited annual governance & accountability return will run from 4<sup>th</sup> June to 13<sup>th</sup> July.

The Statement of Accounts, Certificate of Exemption and Annual Governance Statement must be approved by the Parish Council at its Annual meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> May and signed by the Chair and RFO.

### **Internal Audit**

The Internal Auditor raised the issue that the Clerk's PAYE is not documented. The Clerk is under the threshold and was advised by HMRC not to document it. This was raised last year but not picked up by the external auditor.

7. There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.25 p.m.

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