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|  | **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on****Monday 4th March 2024 at 7.30pm. The meeting was held in the Venue, Liverpool Road, Much Hoole.** |

**Present:** Cllrs K. Hayes (Acting Chair), E. Jackson, A. Taylor, T. Hewitt, E. Houghton Temporary Clerk Mr P Cafferkey.

 Three members of the public were in attendance.

**1. Apologies for Absence**

 Cllrs N. Woodcock (Chairman), R. Lea and P. Cocker.

**2. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**

Cllrs A. Taylor and E Houghton (non-pecuniary) re Village Hall items 7a and 7b.

**3. Minutes of the Last Meeting**

**It was resolved** that the draft minutes of the meeting held on the 5th February 2024 were approved. This was proposed by Cllr A. Taylor, seconded by Cllr K. Hayes and agreed unanimously. Acting Chairman Cllr K. Hayes signed the minutes.

**4. Public Time**

Mr H. Davidson of Hoole Village Memorial Hall outlined the extent of the proposed work for which a grant application to the parish council had been made by the village hall (item 7b refers). Demand for use of the community village hall has exceeded expectations and consequently there is a need for more car parking for which he hoped the parish council could help fund – see also item 7b.

**5. Correspondence from Members of the Public**

 None received.

**6. Reports from other meetings and information on future events.**

Cllr A. Taylor reported that a community bus from South Ribble Borough Council (SRBC) had visited Much Hoole Village Hall, providing advice to members of the community. Cllr A. Taylor commented that the staff were very helpful and friendly. Consequently, it was agreed the Acting Clerk would write a letter of thanks to SRBC.

**7. Village Hall**

**a. Due Diligence Report.** Cllr A Taylor (also a member of the Much Hoole Village Hall Cttee) presented a due diligence report regarding the village hall. Bookings continue to be high and the village hall is used almost every day of the year. A roof over the bin area has now been installed and the management group is progressing the planning application for the multi-use games area. The report was noted by the council.

**b.** **Proposal to approve grant application from Hoole Village Memorial Hall for £8,500 to convert the grass verge on the left of the road down to the back of the site, to hard standing.** Cllrs A. Taylor and E. Houghton left the meeting for this item. Following Mr H. Davidson’s verbal presentation regarding the grant application at item 4 **it was resolved** that a grant in the sum of £8,500 be awarded to Hoole Village Memorial Hall. Proposed Cllr K. Hayes, seconded by Cllr T. Hewitt, and agreed unanimously. The only provision was that the award of the grant was subject to there being sufficient parish council funds. Although it was considered unlikely that there would not be sufficient funds, the Acting Clerk advised that it was prudent to make this provision given that access to the bank account is in the process of being arranged following the resignation of the previous clerk.

**8. Off Road Cycle Track**

**a. It was resolved** that Mr C Hewitt undertake the required repair work to the Cycle Track. Proposed by Cllr A. Taylor, seconded by Cllr E Houghton, agreed unanimously.

**b.** No further estimates at this stage.

**9. Finance
 a.** Item “a” of the agenda was blank.

**b.** It was agreed that the Acting Clerk (Mr P Cafferkey) would look into progressing the setting up of Councillors who can authorise payments at the bank to also be able to initiate such payments.

**10. Grant Applications**. Other than the grant application from Hoole Village Memorial Hall (items 4 and 7b refer), there were no other applications.

**11.** **Parish Clerk & Financial Officer**

 **a. Contract of Employment. It was resolved** that the revised contract of employment for the Clerk/Financial Officer, as previously circulated to all councillors, be adopted. Proposed Cllr E. Houghton, seconded Cllr K. Hayes, and agreed unanimously.

 **b. Interviews & Appointment of Parish Clerk / Financial Officer.** It was reported that two candidates had been interviewed on the 15th Feb 2024 and it was intended that two other candidates would be interviewed week commencing 11th March 2024, after which it was hoped an appointment could be made.

 **c.** **Appoint a Parish Councillor as Manager for the Clerk / Financial Officer.** This item was deferred.

**12. Lengthsman.** Councillor E. Jackson left the room for this item. It was agreed that Cllr A. Taylor would undertake a risk assessment of the duties relating to the role of Lengthsman. The proposed new Lengthsman has now been able to obtain public liability insurance in relation to the duties of Lengthsman at an additional cost of £167 to his “normal” public liability insurance cost – email previously circulated to all Councillors. **It was resolved** that the council would fund this additional cost of £167.00. Proposed Cllr E. Houghton, seconded Cllr K. Hayes, and agreed unanimously.

**13.** **Review and Adoption of Policies – Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.** No further requests from Councillors had been received with regard to the previously amended Standing Orders and Financial Regulations that had been circulated to all Councillors in advance of this meeting. **It was resolved,** therefore, that the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations be adopted. Proposed Cllr E. Houghton, seconded Cllr A. Taylor, and agreed unanimously.

**14. Footpaths and Gardens.**
**a.** An update on the maintenance of public footpaths was deferred as the Councillor responsible for this matter was not present.

**b.** Cllr A. Taylor was able to report that six footpath finger posts had been received free of charge from Lancashire County Council, and that these would be erected when the weather was drier.
**c**. With regard to progress on discussions with South Ribble Borough Council (SRBC) concerning Trafalgar Garden, Cllr K. Hayes agreed to write to SRBC requesting a meeting.

**15.** **Planning.** There were no planning applications to review.

**16. List of Events and Signage Costing.** Cllr T. Hewitt agreed to obtain quotes for signage for those events previously agreed by the Council.

**17.** **Items for Next Agenda.** It was reported that the children’s play area on the recreation park was looking “tired” and in need of cleaning. As the park and children’s play area is owned by SRBC it was agreed that this matter could be raised at the proposed meeting with SRBC – item 14c refers.

**18. Date of next meeting.** The date of the next meeting will be held on Wednesday 3rd April 2024 at 7.30pm. The venue will be The Lodge, St Michael and All Angels Church, Hoole, Liverpool Od Road, PR4 5JQ