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|  | **Minutes of the Annual and May Parish Council meetings held on**  **Wednesday 8th May 2024 at 7.30pm at the Lodge at St Michael’s Church, Much Hoole.** |

**Present:** Cllrs K. Hayes (Chairman), N. Woodcock, R. Lea, E. Jackson, A. Taylor, T. Hewitt, E. Houghton, P. Cocker, Clerk Miss A Evans, Temporary Clerk Mr P Cafferkey.

One member of the public was in attendance.

**1. Welcome New Parish Clerk**

The meeting commenced with the introduction of Amy Evans as the new Parish Clerk and Financial Officer.

**2. Apologies for Absence**

No absences.

**ANNUAL MEETING**

**3. Election of Chairman**

**It was resolved** Cllr K. Hayes be appointed as the new Chairman for Much Hoole Parish council. This was proposed by Cllr E. Houghton and seconded by Cllr N. Woodcock and agreed unanimously. Cllr K. Hayes undertook the position as Chair from this point onwards.

**4. Election of Vice Chairman**

**It was resolved** Cllr A. Taylor be appointed as the new Vice Chairman for Much Hoole Parish Council. This was proposed by Cllr K Hayes and seconded by Cllr E. Houghton and agreed unanimously.

**5. Annual Review of Policies & Practices**

**It was resolved** to undertake an annual review of all policies and practices throughout the course of the forthcoming year. This was proposed by Cllr R. Lea, seconded by Cllr K. Hayes, and unanimously agreed.

**MAY COUNCIL MEETING**

**6. Declaration of Interests and Dispensations:**

Cllrs E. Houghton and A Taylor declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 12.

**7. Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting held on the 3rd April 2024 were agreed as a true and accurate record after a small amendment was noted on the minutes. The additional words “and appointed by the Parish Council to the Trustees of the Village Hall” were suggested by Cllr E Houghton and were added to the minutes and the extra words signed by the Chairman. Then, proposed by Cllr R Lea and seconded by Cllr K Hayes and agreed unanimously, the minutes were then signed by the Chairman.

**8. Matters Arising from those Minutes not covered elsewhere on this agenda**

**a)** The council noted that Cllr R. Lea had written letters to the unsuccessful applicants for the role of the new Clerk/Financial officer.

**b)** The Chairman Cllr K. Hayes signed both copies of the adopted contract of employment for the new Clerk/Financial Officer A. Evans.

**9. Public Time.** One member of the public was present to observe. No issues were raised.

**10. Correspondence from members of the public.** None.

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

* Cllr R. Lea visited Lancashire Police Headquarters’ Control Room and was impressed with what he saw and enjoyed the experience.
* Cllr E. Houghton reported that she had met with officers from South Ribble Borough Council (SRBC), Louise (Community Engagement Officer) and Paul (Parks Department), It was a positive meeting and SRBC were receptive to the Parish Council’s ideas. Discussion covered orchard care and public access needs, with concerns about flooding. Alternative planting sites were proposed, praising the councils garden maintenance. SRBC agreed the play area looked tired but that it was safe and is inspected annually. Improvements for the play area were discussed along with the successful community payback scheme, although hot drinks and access to water need to be available. The meeting concluded positively with future steps by Cllr E Houghton involving ongoing communication with Louise about Orchard access and potential community garden expansion.

**12.** **Village Hall.** Cllr A. Taylor provided the following report on the Village Hall, which was noted by the Council:

* Water tap and standpipe installed for the front garden.
* Grassed area improvements pending favourable weather conditions.
* Height limit signs installed on the restriction barriers.
* Continued strong usage with successful events like the coffee mornings, local lunches and organ concerts.
* Recent car boot and garage sale raised £500.
* Ongoing work on the MUGA with budget estimates sought around £450,000.
* Bowling green now operational.
* Financial situation remains stable.

**13. Off Road Cycle Track.**

**a)** It was noted that Village Lengthsman Harry Jackson has been asked to maintain the grassed area. The rota of inspectors are scheduled to go three times a week and will collect litter.

Cycle Track Lengthsman Chris Hewitt is to undertake additional work in May, including the installation of a concrete base for another picnic bench.

**b)** It was noted that no further action is required with the costs incurred by the Cycle Track Lengthsman C Hewitt as the completion of his work has already been approved

**c) It was resolved** that the Clerk would check if the quote by the supplier for the new bench was unchanged, and if so, the Clerk would order the bench as this had been agreed at a previous meeting. As the quote was obtained some time ago, it may now have increased in price; in which case further approval may be needed by the Council.

**14.** **Finance**

**a)** TheBank reconciliation was agreed to the bank statements and was signed by Cllr E. Houghton. Unity Trust Bank submission form granting the new Clerk/Financial Officer A. Evans access to banking signed by Chairman K. Hayes and Cllr N. Woodcock.

**b)** Cllr R. Lea circulated and presented the bank account summary, and it was agreed and noted by the Council that South Ribble Borough Council had paid the precept for 2024-25.

**c)** Cllr R. Lea presented the financial planning statement for year 2024-25 which was agreed and noted by the Council.

**d) It was resolved** thatthe April invoice from the Village Lengthsman for £351.30, Microsoft Office for the Clerk Laptop for £59.99 and Hall hire invoice from Hoole Village Memorial Hall for £40.00 be approved. All payments, proposed by Cllr E. Houghton, seconded by Chairman Cllr K. Hayes, and unanimously agreed.

**15. Insurance**. **It was resolved** that Clerk A. Evans is to compare quotes and propose to Chairman Cllr K. Hayes and Vice Chairman Cllr A. Taylor and inform all councillors by email of decision to seek authorisation from Council.

**16.** **Parish Clerk and Financial Officer**

**a) It was resolved** that the Clerk be approved to undertake the ILCA Training Course in the sum of £120+VAT, proposed by Cllr E. Houghton, seconded by K. Hayes, and unanimously agreed. **It was resolved** that Clerk A Evans will book Cllr E. Jackson onto LALC Clerk & Councillor training along with herself and this was unanimously agreed.

**b)** It was noted that Clerks’ plans are to focus on training as a priority.

**c)** It was noted that Clerk A Evans felt a one-year laptop service was unnecessary.

**d)** It was agreed that Cllr R. Lea will get in touch with the previous Clerk L White to discuss the whereabouts of the Chair’s Chain of Office.

**17. Footpaths & Gardens**

**a)** It was agreedthat Cllr P. Cocker will contact the Village Lengthsman to discuss maintenances of footpath 28 and for assistance in the installation of 6 Public Rights of Way signs.

**b)** Item **11 refers**

**18.** **Planning.** There were no planning applications to review from the previous four-week period.

**19. Additional items for the next agenda.** Pedestrian and cycle crossing(s) across the A59 to improve road safety.

**18. Date of next meeting.** The date of the next meeting will be held on Monday 10th June 2024 at 7.30pm at The Venue, Hoole Village Memorial Hall, Liverpool Old Road, Much Hoole, PR4 4QA. Cllrs E. Jackson and R Lea gave their apologies in advance.