

Minutes of a Meeting of Elkstone Parish Council

8.00 p.m., Wednesday 14th March 2012, in Elkstone Village Hall

Present: Mssrs Hobbs (Chair) Collins, Cooch and Muschamp; Mrs. Eyre (Clerk)
Apologies were received from Mr. Luck

1. Minutes of the previous Meeting (11th January 2012) were accepted and signed.

2. Matters arising - there were none.

3. Finance

3.1 Payments:

3.1.1 GAPTC annual subscription of £48.04 due 1st April

To renew membership: Proposed: Mr.Cooch; Seconded: Mr. Muschamp; carried nem con.

A cheque for £48.04 was written, signed, and will be sent at the end of the month.

3.1.2 Payment of Hall hire charges September 11 to March 12 - 3 bookings at £11.00

A cheque for £33.00 was written, signed, and will be hand delivered.

3.1.3 Payment of £12.00 = 50% of the 'Elkstonevillage.co.uk' domain name renewal.

To make payment: Proposed: Mr. Muschamp; Seconded: Mr.Collins; carried nem con.

A cheque for £12.00 was written, signed, and will be hand delivered.

3.1.4 Clerk's salary and expenses, September 2011 to March 2012.

Salary: Four hours per week at NMW of £6.08, for 25 weeks = £608.00, less PAYE at 20%

Expenses: - 20% of standing charge for phone/broadband £17.34 to end October 2011 and £15.36 to end Jan 2012; plus two second class stamps (£0.72) total £33.42

A cheque for £486.40 and another for £33.42 were written, signed and handed over.

A cheque payable to HMRC for £121.60, in respect of 20% PAYE deduction from Clerk's salary, was written, signed and will be sent.

3.1.5 Four letters from various organisations requesting donations were considered:

To make a S 137 donation of £35.00 to Cirencester Citizens' Advice Bureau:

Proposed Mr. Collins; Seconded Mr. Muschamp; carried nem.con

A cheque for £35.00 was written, signed, and will be sent.

3.2 R.F.O.'s Report on Year to Date Income & Expenditure against Budget was accepted with thanks.

4. Annual Reviews

4.1 Risk Assessment

The Risk Assessment document was given consideration.

4.1.1 Under Banking, the level of risk associated with banking with Lloyds was considered, but thought to be a Low risk, and no worse than any other bank which would operate a Parish Council's account. Similarly, the efficacy and value-for-money of holding reserves in a Lloyds deposit account was considered, with the same conclusion.

Additionally, Mr Cooch told the Meeting that it is unlikely that any bank which would operate a Parish Council's account currently offers a better interest rate.

4.1.2 Under Assets - the need to add all salt+ grit bins was noted

4.1.3 Under E-records - 'back-up disks made' to be deleted, and 'backed up on memory stick' to be added.

4.1.4 A new item to be added, to note that Level of Reserves is considered annually in January when the precept is decided.

That the Risk Assessment document, with the above amendments, remains accurate and acceptable:

Proposed: Mr. Hobbs; Seconded: Mr.Collins; carried nem con.

4.2 Insurance Cover

4.2.1 The cover has been changed to insurance brokers Came & Co and insurers Aviva. This gives better all-round cover, though the excess on damage to property is higher.

4.2.2 Following a query as to how the Snow Plough Operators are covered, Clerk has checked

and has been told by Mrs. Watkins of Gloucestershire Highways that the Operator needs his own insurance to allow him onto the public highway. GH check that this is in place each year before permitting the operator to work on the network on GH's behalf.

Should the snow plough be involved in a road traffic accident during the winter operations then his insurance would cover any claim that arose. If however damage was caused to the highway itself, for example a kerb was knocked out, GH would bear the cost of replacement. The Parish is not involved in the insurance cover.

That the insurance cover remains adequate and appropriate:

Proposed: Mr. Hobbs; Seconded: Mr. Collins; carried nem con.

4.3 Internal Controls – These have not changed during the year. Two signatures are required on every cheque, and payments are only made by cheque. No orders can be placed or payments made without the agreement of a quorate Parish Council meeting, and all such decisions are Minuted.

That the internal controls remain adequate and appropriate:

Proposed: Mr. Hobbs; Seconded: Mr. Collins; carried nem con.

4.4 Internal Audit – The Council is fortunate to have a better-than-necessary qualified Internal Auditor. The Council responds to any points he raises, for example, at the last internal audit, he queried the consideration given to the Level of Reserves, and the new requirement by HMRC for all Council employees to be placed on PAYE. These two points have been addressed.

That the internal audit measures remain adequate and appropriate:

Proposed: Mr. Hobbs; Seconded: Mr. Collins; carried nem con.

5. Planning Applications

5.1 Proposed extensions Westwood House - new details have been submitted

Noted that CDC Planning Officer has confirmed that the earlier changes to the curtilage had been dealt with appropriately. The new drawings do not indicate an answer to Councillors' query about the trees. Clerk to check with CDC planners.

5.2 Proposed new build, Cockleford Trout Farm - CDC has turned down application.

5.3 Proposed new 4 bay car port and store, Oldbury Farm – Councillors had no objection (other than wishing it were possible for CDC to impose a S 106 condition to resurface the lane!) – noted CDC have permitted.

6. PCSO Vehicle

The scheme for contributions towards funding of this vehicle by concerned Parishes seems to be going ahead. (item 8 of 11.01.12 refers). Further information received indicates that a generous donation has been negotiated by Mr Cairns, and Pebley Beach have undertaken to supply a vehicle. All Parishes within the area will continue to receive PCSO cover, regardless of whether or not they are contributing to the funding. Mr. Luck has expressed concern that the recently-supplied figures do not appear to add up, and there are other still unanswered questions, such as, what happens to the vehicle at the end of the three year period specified for contributions? Mr. Collins told the Meeting he believes that, at the end of the lease period, the old vehicle will be returned and offset against a new one. Will Parishes be locked into the shared funding requirement for ever? It was thought that the Constabulary has expressed a commitment to continue to deploy PCSOs.

7. Community Speedwatch

7.1 Information received from Mr. Fogden, Neighbourhood Watch Officer, on 12th instant, confirms that the local scheme is to be known simply as Community Speedwatch, or if preferred, Elkstone Community Speedwatch.

7.2 Insurance cover for CSW volunteers has been investigated by Mr Cooch and Mr. Fogden. Mr. Fogden wants the cover for the volunteers to be added to EPC insurance.

Information from EPC Insurance brokers (Came and Company) to Mr. Cooch is that volunteers could be covered by the existing EPC Insurance:

“... providing the volunteers are working under the control of the Parish Council in connection with the Community Speed Watch duties and not acting independently they will be covered under both the

Employers' and Public Liability Insurance sections of the policy. If aged between 16 and 80 they are also covered under the Personal Accident Insurance section for the benefits shown on the policy schedule.

The Parish Council must ensure they work in a safe environment and have access to suitable personal protective equipment/clothing. A risk assessment should be carried out in writing and kept on the Parish Council files."

Mr Fogden has checked with the Insurers, and on 12th instant, sent the following expansion:

I asked for clarification of the term 'under the control of the parish council' and they said that, basically, provided that the volunteers came from within the parish and were acting with the Parish Council's knowledge, that they had been trained in the use of the monitoring equipment and had received appropriate training on their own safety at the roadside, they would be covered by the council's policy. These last two criteria will, of course, be met by the Constabulary.

All the Company would require is a letter from the parish council, stating that it was now participating in the CSW initiative, using local volunteers. They do not need a list of names of volunteers.

And on 13th instant, he added the following:

Yes, I'm happy to confirm that the Constabulary will be providing the necessary PPE and will be training the volunteers to have due regard to their own personal safety whilst undertaking their monitoring activities at the roadside. A written risk assessment will be provided to the parish council. No costs will fall upon the parish council for this work.

Mr. Cooch stated that cover could not start until the CSW Risk Assessment document had been received, all volunteers had been trained, and a letter from EPC so informing the Insurers had been sent. It was noted that any new volunteers joining the scheme would need to be trained before they could participate in the initiative.

To inform Mr Fogden of EPC's willingness to proceed on this basis:

Proposed: Mr. Collins; Seconded: Mr. Muschamp; carried nem con.

8. Consideration of a need to review efficacy of traffic calming measures,

Manor Cross and Westerleigh Crossroads

This was mentioned as an issue at the last Neighbourhood Co-ordination Group Meeting. The response from Mrs. Watkins of Glos. Highways referred to the new scheme rolled out under GCC's "Big Society" banner, called "Highways - your way" through which GH will consider implementing small scale improvements/measures on a match-funded basis with the Parish or Community.

This item was discussed at length. From the floor, Mrs. Davies offered to do research and act as go-between. Mr. Hobbs thanked her for offering, but said that it was for the Parish Council to take the lead on any action or initiatives.

Although a number of possible options were mentioned, it is not clear at this stage how great is the concern of parishioners, or what more or else could be done. Mr. Hobbs pointed out that the Parish Council could not afford to match-fund.

Mrs. Davies undertook to ask those parishioners who had raised the issue with her to bring their concerns directly to the Council's notice.

Clerk to make a submission to the Newsletter, and to ask Mrs Watkins, or her successor

Mr. Macaulay-Lowe, to suggest what other measures might be implemented here.

Mrs. Davies also mentioned the possibility of borrowing a "Smiley Sid" and indicated that the Parish Council's permission for this would be required.

Councillors had no objection to this loan.

9. Correspondence from the Parish

Proposed Diamond Jubilee Tea, 4th June

In the absence of the now-disbanded Events Committee, some Parishioners are proposing to hold a Diamond Jubilee Big Tea, with games, etc., open to all parishioners.

They would like the event to be contributions-based rather than entry-charged, and ask if the EPC would consider funding the Hall hire, bunting, cake and liquid toast to HM.

It was noted that another, though much larger, PC has pledged £200.00 for a comparable event. Councillors were of the opinion that this would be an event for the benefit and enjoyment of all parishioners, as well as marking an extremely significant anniversary.

To make a S 137 donation of up to £100.00 to cover the costs of the items indicated above:

Proposed: Mr. Cooch; Seconded: Mr. Hobbs; carried nem. con.

10. Other correspondence - was put into circulation

11. Meetings

PCSOs Neighbourhood Co-ordination Group, 21st Feb, 7.30 - Mr. Muschamp spoke briefly to this item, the Minutes of which have been received and circulated.

12. A.O.B. - there was none

Date of next Meeting - Wednesday 18th April, 7.30 pm followed by the Annual Parish Open Meeting at 8.00pm

There being no other business, the Meeting closed at 9.20 pm.