

	<h1 style="margin: 0;">MINUTES</h1> <p style="margin: 0;">of the</p> <h2 style="margin: 0;">SUNNINGWELL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING</h2> <p style="margin: 0;">held on</p> <h3 style="margin: 0;">Thursday 27 April 2023</h3> <p style="margin: 0;">In Sunningwell Village Hall</p>
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Present:

Councillors

Colin Weyer, Chairman,
Mike Wykes, Paul Darby, and James Greenman.

In attendance:

Brian Rixon – Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
2 Parishioners

35/23 Questions and comments from visiting councillors and members of the public

There were no questions asked or comments made.

36/23 Apologies for absence.

County Councillor Bob Johnston
District Councillor Emily Smith
District Councillor Debby Hallett
Parish Councillors Paul Wooldridge, Gina Bale and John Simms

37/23 Declarations of members' interests in respect of any item.

No declaration was made.

38/23 To approve the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 30 March 2023.

The Council unanimously RESOLVED that the minutes from the council meeting on 30th March be accepted as a true record and be signed by the Chairman.

39/23 Planning applications

The following planning applications were considered: -

Reference	Location	Proposal	Parish Council response
P23/V0799/LB	The Coach House, The Old Rectory Sunningwell	Conversion of 4 bed dwelling into four 2 bed flats/maisonettes	No objection or comment.
P23/V0380/LDP	Garden House, Lincombe Lane, Boars Hill	Demolish summer house and replace with new summer house.	No objection or comment.

40/23 Recent high-water levels.

Cllr James Greenman reminded the Council that the Parish does not have a direct responsibility for ditches, but outlined the previous work done by the parish council in working with the District Council and local landowners to clear the ditches from Boars Hill through Bayworth into Sunningwell. The County Council also responded by clearing gullies under the roadways. Three dams have been built over several years and were recently inspected by the District Council's Principal Engineer. A landowner also had planning application granted for a holding pond to be built on farmland to the east above Bayworth.

41/23

Potholes on the parish roads.

Cllr Paul Wooldridge asked for this agenda item and specifically cited the poor condition of the road into Boars Hill from Bayworth. Fix My Street is the most efficient way to report pothole problems and all parishioners are encouraged to use it.

Cllr Paul Darby said he has regularly used the service and had good responses, though lately it seems harder to get action, presumably because of the high volume of reports.

The Parish Council responded to a District Council initiative to appoint volunteers in villages to inspect potholes and report those of concern. Sunningwell put forward two candidates, but the proposed training was not forthcoming.

42/23

Internal Auditor's Report

The council acknowledged receipt of the Internal Audit Report following the year end audit. The report had been sent to all councillors to inform them of the internal audit work carried out during, and at the end of, the financial year to 31st March 2023.

It was agreed that the seven-page report will be sent to the External Auditors and displayed on the Sunningwell Parish Council website. **ACTION Clerk**

The report summary says "In general I believe that the council has competent arrangements in place to satisfy itself that its systems of internal financial control are transparent and effective. There are approval and authorisation controls to minimise risk. The audit and management trail for financial transactions is good".

The council discussed the auditor's recommendations that follow: -

Training. The clerk and councillors should be encouraged to take up training offered by the local County Association (OALC) and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC). A regular agenda item for training should be introduced. **ACTION The new council**

Membership. It was recommended that the Council be a member of OALC and SLCC.

ACTION This was actioned in 2022.

Budget setting. More significance should be made of the budget and precept setting. For clarity, the budget should be considered and minuted. Then the amount of the precept should be discussed and separately minuted. **ACTION The new council**

Banking. The clerk and responsible financial officer should continue to be the administrator on the bank accounts and the council should have at least three Councillors authorisers/signatories. The clerk should prepare the payments and two councillors should authorise the payments having seen and checked the appropriate paperwork. **ACTION The current system is as advised, with the addition that all councillors are given sight of the paperwork and asked to approve each payment.**

Internal Financial Control Responsibility. The council should appoint a Councillor Responsible for Internal Financial Control to periodically identify several payments from the bank statement and then follow them back through the minutes checking the agreeing and placing of the order to undertake the work, and then the process of paying. Minute references agreeing to placing orders should also be recorded in the Monthly Financial Report. **ACTION The new council. The outgoing council discussed this and resolved that the current system has worked very well with all councillors approving all orders, invoices, and payment.**

Long Term Agreements. During the audit it was noted that several invoices did not have formal minute references because they were described as “long term agreements” which have been in place for many years. The recommendation is to review and minute these at least every three years. Additionally annual subscriptions should be agreed at the first meeting of each financial year.

ACTION The long-term agreements with approved contractors are already on this agenda under minute 48/23.

Assets. The Parish Council Assets should be inspected for risk and their condition minuted at least annually. This is a project for the entire council. **ACTION** The new council. Cllr James Greenman offered to facilitate a hand over to the new council by checking each asset, including those in the village hall storage garage. He will update the clerk so that the Fixed Asset Register can be confirmed. The required parish council reporting of fixed assets is to have a chronological list of assets and their cost. This means, for example, that the four old notice boards will still be shown on the list even though they were replaced by four new notice boards which are also on the asset list. The oversight to add a note indicating the removal of old notice boards will be addressed. **ACTION** Cllr James Greenman

43&44/23 Annual Governance and Accountability Report (AGAR)

The AGAR is a six-page return that is completed and delivered to the External Auditors after the year end.

Firstly, the Accounting Statements on page five are completed by the Responsible Financial Officer and sent to the Internal Auditor who then completes and signs the Annual Internal Report on page three.

At this Council meeting the councillors considered and answered the eight questions on the Annual Governance Statement on page four. These questions relate to the effective financial management during the year and the preparation of the accounting statements shown on page five. Pages four and five were then signed by the Chairman.

The Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer will then send the whole AGAR to the External Auditor and enclose:

- A bank reconciliation as at 31st March 2023
- An explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
- Notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
- Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

ACTION Clerk

45/23 Monthly Financial report:

The April financial statement was presented, discussed, and approved.

RECEIPTS		
Precept	For the first half of the financial year	12,500.00
VAT reclaimed	For the period April 2022 to March 2023	2,935.88
Bank Interest	To March 31st	9.80
PAYMENTS		
Clerk	Salary	552.10
	Office running costs	137.99
HMRC	PAYE	137.80
Sage Payroll	Monthly subscription	8.40
Mark White	March short cut to front area of village green	90.00
Keepnet Limited	Website, email, and domain hosting annual charges	435.60
Jane Olds	Internal audit for the year to 31 March 2023	200.00
Chilswell Contractors	27 Safety bollards on the village hall car park	3096.00
BANK BALANCES		
Reserves account		11,540
Current account		47,450

46/23 Insurance policy renewal

In 2022 the parish council took out a five-year long-term agreement with Zurich Insurance. The premium remains unchanged for the duration of that agreement.

Before starting the policy Cllr James Greenman had consulted insurance brokers to find the most appropriate policy and price and Council then concluded that the Zurich arrangement was most suitable.

At this April 2023 Council meeting the council unanimously resolved to continue with the policy for year two.

47/23 Annual Risk Assessment

The risk assessment is normally undertaken in April, but the outgoing council resolved that the review should be responsibility of the new council in, say, July.

The Internal Auditor recommended that the schedule should include a risk prioritisation based on the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance Practitioners' Guide. This would involve assessing the severity of impact if something were to happen and how likely it is to happen, by giving "likelihood" a number in the range 1 to 3, and similarly "Impact" in a scale of 1 to 3. Multiplying the two numbers will give the "Risk Priority" in a scale of 1 to 9.

Again, the outgoing council resolved that the review should be responsibility of the new council.

ACTION The new council

48/23 Approved Contractors

The outgoing council confirmed its confidence in the current ongoing contractors:

Mark White

Topping the village green grass each month in the season. £390

Fine cutting the area at the front of the green twice a month. £90 per cut

Mark McCracken.

Bayworth Triangle grass mowing. £50 per cut.

White gate areas grass strimming. £35 per visit.

Strimming pond and telephone kiosk area. £25 per visit.

Village green benches and gateways grass strimming. £25.

Mick Herring.

Playground inspection with minor repairs undertaken at that visit.

Three times a year at £64.50 for each inspection.

49/23 New safety bollards on Sunningwell Village Hall car park

The agreed project to insert 27 wooden safety bollards on the sides of the front area of the village hall car park has been completed and inspected. Approval was therefore given to pay the Chilswell Contractors' invoice of £3,096.

The length of the boundaries protected is 18.5m on the Church View side and 20m on the Pond Cottage side. Bollards are 150mm by 150mm pressure treated timber and are spaced at 1500mm spacing with a 1000mm post length above ground to provide a visible barrier to drivers entering or reversing into the parking space.

50/23 Refurbishment of the parking area on Bayworth Triangle

Work to replace the parking area surface is due to start on 15th May and should be finished within 10 days. Cllr Paul Darby is due to receive the program of work and will send a copy to the clerk.

ACTION Cllr Paul Darby

51/23 Playground

The project to upgrade the playground is in a holding position at a stage where correspondence from the cricket club says the proposed expansion area is used for car parking on match days. The cricket club suggest that the area between the playground boundary fence and the hedge to the north could possibly be used.

The project needs to be discussed by the new parish council, with the knowledge that Cllrs Mike Wykes and Gina Bale are prepared to help with the handover and Gina, potentially, with the significant fund-raising requirement.

ACTION The new council

52/23 Email accounts on the secure .gov.uk domain and server

All Parish Council email correspondence is undertaken using a secure government domain and personalised .gov.uk email addresses. This ensures all official email records are saved on the council's server indefinitely and it also protects the individual councillors.

All the current councillors will retire on Tuesday 9th May and their council email accounts will be archived at an appropriate stage after all final administrative matters have been concluded.

ACTION Clerk

Once the full composition of the new parish council is known, email accounts will be opened for each councillor in advance of the first council meeting.

ACTION Clerk

53/23 Parish Council elections scheduled for 4th May 2023

The nomination process for the 4th May election resulted in just two persons being elected. The District Council's Returning Officer notified the Sunningwell Parish Council Clerk via a Notice of Uncontested Election and announced that the number of persons elected does not constitute a quorum for Sunningwell Parish Council. He instructed the clerk that no formal meetings of the parish council should be held after 5th May until a second election on 14th June enables a council to be formed.

The clerk contacted the District Council's Democratic Services Manager who confirmed that the situation means no parish council decisions can be made until the council becomes quorate at the next council meeting which is scheduled for Thursday 29th June.

54/23 Annual Parish Council Meeting scheduled for 25th May 2023

The Statutory requirement that the Annual Parish Council must be held in May cannot be complied with due to the lack of a quorum, and so will need to be postponed to the June meeting.

Each year the Annual Parish Council Meeting needs to elect the Chairman for the coming year. We will first need the new councillors to sign their Acceptance of Office Forms and be aware of the need to complete a Register of Interests.

The election of a chairman does not involve a statutory process or a requirement for nominations. Any councillor can stand for election as chairman, without notice or nomination of another.

55/23 Annual Meeting of the Parish also scheduled for 25th May 2023

The Annual Meeting must, by statute, be held between 1st March and 1st June. We are unable to comply because of the quorum situation and so this meeting will also be postponed. This can be discussed at the 29th of June council meeting.

The Annual Meeting of the Parish is not a council meeting but rather a gathering of local government electors who are invited to comment or raise questions as representatives of a village society or as an individual.

56/23

At the end of the formal business for the April meeting, the Chairman thanked all the councillors for their dedication over various long periods of service until this final meeting of the current council. He also acknowledged the professionalism and support provided by the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer from May 2011 to the present day. This was echoed by all councillors. It was noted that the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer is an appointed local government officer and remains in office through and after the elections. The Chairman then closed this final meeting of the current council.

57/23 The next Parish Council Meetings will be on **Thursday 29th JUNE 2023 from 7:30 p.m. in Sunningwell Village Hall**

The April meeting closed at 9:15 p.m.