

St Martins Parish Council

Minutes of a Meeting of the St Martins Parish Council held on Thursday 8th February 2024 at 7.00 pm in St Martins Village Hall.

PRESENT: Cllr's Neil Arthan, Andrew Cast, Vivienne Fisher, Mark Hayball, Duncan Laing, Nina Mistry, Natalie Rowley, Sue Schofield, George Smith, and Helen Williams.

Also in attendance, three members of the public and the Parish Clerk.

026/02/24.C Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr John Hodgson and Shropshire Cllr Steve Davenport.

Proposed, seconded, and carried that reasons given are accepted.

Cllr Sophie Hughes-Saunier apologies were received by email after the meeting. Cllr Alan Langley was absent.

Cllr Glenn Pennington had forwarded the following email. I have enjoyed my time as a Parish Councillor, thinking about, and debating, and actioning community issues, and I have respect for my fellow Councillor's who are seeking the best welfare for St Martins. I wish them a prosperous and successful year. And I thank you, Edward, for your concern and professionalism. Please receive this resignation as effective forthwith.

027/02/24.C Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

- a) Declaration of any disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter to be discussed at the meeting and which is not included in the register of interests. **None received.**
- b) To consider any applications for dispensation. **None received.**
- c) Declaration of any other interests in the agenda items. **None received.**

028/02/24.C Parish Council Casual Vacancy

Unfortunately, an applicant for this position had reported that in the last two days, some unforeseen things have emerged related to his work, which mean that truly he would not be able to commit to serve properly on the Council.

There are now two vacancies on the parish council.

029/02/24.C Minutes

Proposed: Cllr Mark Hayball **Seconded:** Cllr Vivienne Fisher

Resolved: **with one abstention that the minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Thursday 11th January 2024 having been previously circulated be approved and adopted as a true record.**

Parish Clerk

Chairman

030/02/24.C Finance Committee Minutes

Cllr Helen Williams presented the minutes of the Finance Committee Minutes held on the 29th January 2024.

Proposed: Cllr Helen Williams **Seconded:** Cllr Nina Mistry

Resolved: **that the minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council Finance Committee held on Monday 29th January 2024 having been previously circulated be approved and adopted as a true record.**

Cllr Helen Williams

It was also agreed that the interest from the CCLA investment, currently estimated at £20,000, should be put into a new highways cost code under the heading 'St Martins Amenities Fund'.

Parish Clerk

031/02/24.C Urgent Items

There were no urgent items that related to financial, health and safety issues or issues that required immediate attention.

032/02/24.C Public Session

The members of the public present did not wish to raise any issues therefore the council moved onto the next agenda item.

033/02/24.C Parish Clerks Progress Report

Still no response from Sue Lovecy, Head of St Martins School on several issues raised at the last meeting over parking outside the school. Firstly, there was the increase of parents at the start and end of the school day now parking on the grass verges depositing mud on the road when leaving and damaging the grass verges. Secondly, there had been an increase during the day of visitors coming into school and parking on the road adjacent to the school when there are adequate spaces in your main car park. We still await a response on what steps, if possible, can be taken to resolve these issues.

Parish Clerk

Andrew Williams had expressed concern over the speed of traffic on Moors Bank and cars parking on the footway, also on Moors Bank.

Parish Clerk

034/02/24.C Police Report

The latest police report (January) had been received and circulated to all Cllr's prior to the meeting.

Parish Clerk

Our application through the Police & Crime Commissioner on the Safer Roads Grant Scheme had been received. Decisions would be announced in March.

It was noted that Michael (Mike) Hogg Pc 20424 is the newly appointed neighbourhood officer for Oswestry Rural North which covers our area.

035/02/24.C St Martins Recreation Partnership

A further progress report had been received from Tessa Lanstein.

Unexpectedly, she had a builder / handyman available, and on site, during January to progress her home renovation project. This has meant that she had been fully occupied with project manager and goffer tasks to keep progress on track; unfortunately, she had no ability to focus on the SMRP, apologies for this. The builder moves on to another job week commencing 19th February and she can commit to at least 4 days a week (as required) from then onwards to complete the tasks originally outlined for January completion. There is no reason why all the tasks listed for January, cannot be completed during February so she will provide an update for the March meeting accordingly.

The Parish Clerk then gave a verbal report on the progress of this partnership since 2017 including income and expenditure to date.

036/02/24.C Highway Issues

Following the Finance Committee meeting the parish clerk reported on some of the highway issues that could be improved through the new Cost Code of St Martins Amenities Fund. These included sub-contracting out some of the grass cutting throughout the village subject to receiving a schedule and frequency of cuts Shropshire Council planned which had not been available for the past two years, replace street name plates which Shropshire Council had not been able to action for the last twelve months and replace the stone bus shelter opposite the entrance to Garden Village with one similar to our existing ones.

Parish Clerk

As regards the Alleyway from Garden Village to Overton Road, which was unadopted, it was agreed to not take on the responsibility for this area but include a monthly litter pick and sweep through our contract with our handyman.

Parish Clerk

The Chairman reported that following his own instigation and during a zoom meeting with Ffion Horton of Shropshire, he expressed his disappointment at the construction and design of the newly modified Roundabout at Stans. He had subsequently produced for her a photographic design showing the unusual areas and his suggestions for where improvements could be made. She advised that she was meeting the contractors early next week and would bring his points to them.

037/02/24.C Street Lighting

Scottish Power had still to connect power to the streetlight on Overton Road at the entrance to Garden Village. One of the pedestrian beacons by Stans Superstore, which had been repaired since the December meeting, was still not working again.

Cllr Steve Davenport & Parish Clerk

038/02/24.C Financial Matters

Accounts for Payment

BACS	Staff	Salary & Expenses	£1010.02
BACS	HMRC	PAYE & NI	£301.30
BACS	Nigel Thomas	Play Area Inspections	£39.00
BACS	Huw Manford	Litter Picking, etc.	£346.93
BACS	S C Critchley	Mole Catching, Stans Field	£510.00
BACS	Office Express	Office Paper	£15.95
BACS	Vision ICT	Domain.gov	£78.00
DR	HSBC	Bank Charges	£8.00
DD	Veolia	Bin Emptying	£33.91

Proposed: Cllr Duncan Laing **Seconded:** Cllr Helen Williams

Resolved that the above payments be agreed in accordance with the Parish Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

Parish Clerk

039/02/24.C Precept 2024/2025

Proposed: Cllr Helen Williams **Seconded:** Cllr Nina Mistry

Resolved to approve the recommendation of the Finance Committee to set a precept for the financial year 2024/2025 of £58,476

Parish Clerk

Cllr Sue Schofield enquired how many years it was since the parish council last increased the parish precept.

Parish Clerk

040/02/24.C Planning

To consider any new planning applications received since the last meeting.

Reference: 24/00029/FUL (validated: 05/01/2024)

Address: Ponderosa, St Martins, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY11 3HJ

Proposal: Replacement of side extension and alterations to internal layout.

Parish Council Decision: Support

Parish Clerk

Reference: 24/00107/FUL (validated: 24/01/2024)

Address: 102 New Ifton, St Martins, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY11 3AJ

Proposal: Proposed pitched garage roof to existing garage and installation of flush mounted pv panels

Parish Council Decision: Support

Parish Clerk

The following planning decision was noted.

Reference: 23/05093/FUL (validated: 04/12/2023)

Address: 12 Moors Bank, St Martins, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY10 7BE

Proposal: Dropping 6.4 metres of Kerbing to enable off road parking and electric vehicle charging point

Decision: Grant Permission

041/02/24.C Shropshire Council (SC).

Shropshire Cllr Steve Davenport had sent his apologies for the meeting.

042/02/24.C Arthan's Pond/Allotments

To receive a progress report from the Chairman on the future management of Arthan's Pond/Allotments. *Agreed to move this item to the end of the meeting.*

043/02/24.C Funding various projects through CIL

The Chairman gave the following progress report on the current position of funding various projects in the parish through CIL.

Yesterday, after a great deal of gnashing of teeth and pulling of hair, I participated in a zoom meeting with Shropshire Council Officer Ffion Horton. The instigator of the meeting and key player, Rosie Corner was again missing. She had called in sick that same morning. During the meeting I liaised with Ffion in the semi-completion of an application form for funding for capital works at Escob Bridge. Ffion attempted to provide me with a copy of the application, but due to the vagaries of simple electronic sharing, that proved to be impossible. Fearing that I may pass-away with old age awaiting a solution, I emailed Ffion asking to be simply "kept up to date" with the process. She confirmed that the Parish Council Feasibility Study would not progress until funding had been identified and that Shropshire Council had written and confirmed that the funding would be released if the study was indeed found to be feasible.

Parish
Clerk

Cllr's suggested we need an update on the safety issues outside the school for the next meeting.

Cllr Steve
Davenport

044/02/24.C Biodiversity Policy

With Cllr Sophie Hughes-Saunier not in attendance, this item was deferred until the March meeting.

Cllr
Sophie
Hughes-
Saunier

045/02/24.C North Shropshire MP Helen Morgan

We continue to forward any areas of concern to Helen Morgan MP. She had responded to our concerns over the flooding at Escob Bridge, and as a result, firm dates had been set by Shropshire Council Highways to resolve the flooding and pothole issues in this area.

Cllr Vivienne Fisher reported that Helen had secured free parking at Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals for our volunteer drivers when attending hospital appointments.

046/02/24.C Shropshire Association of Local Councils (SALC)

All correspondence received from the County Secretary had previously been circulated to all Cllr's.

047/02/24.C Correspondence

There were no items of correspondence.

048/02/24.C Members Reports

Cllr Helen Williams reported the street sign for Berwyn Drive off Overton Road was damaged.

Parish Clerk

Cllr Sue Schofield said she was confident that the fruit and vegetable show would be held this year.

Parish Clerk

Cllr Natalie Rowley reported a further pothole at Escob Bridge.

Cllr Vivienne Fisher expressed concern over the mess at Mount Pleasant in Ellesmere Road. The planning enforcement team will be asked to investigate.

Parish Clerk

049/02/24.C Next Meeting

Next meeting Full Council on Thursday 14th March 2024 @ 19.00 in St Martins Village Hall.

Proposed: Cllr Mark Hayball **Seconded:** Cllr Sue Schofield

Resolved: that the press and public are excluded from the meeting in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 s1 due to the confidential nature of the matter to be discussed.

042/02/24.C Arthan's Pond/Allotments

The Chairman gave the following progress report on the future management of Arthan's Pond/Allotments.

Since our January meeting and following approval from Council, a formal letter had been sent to the Secretary of St Martins Village Hall Trustees.

A response had been received to that letter but without providing full answers across several questions. However, comment was made that no documentation could be located which confirmed that permission for changes to the land had been requested by the Trustees or confirmed as acceptable by the Parish Council

The Chairman had been provided with folders containing extensive paperwork and minutes of meeting from the Allotments Association from 2010 to the present day. From examination of same, it was clear that no sub-lease between the Trustees and Allotments Association existed. Ongoing investigations could neither locate any paperwork between the Trustees or indeed the Parish Council relating to access or use by any group involved with fishing activities at the pond.

With these facts, combined with previous confirmation that various lateral demands of the Trustees and their operation of the Lease from the Parish Council had not been achieved, it unequivocally proved that the Lease was now irrevocably broken and should be terminated.

The Chairman advised that the most sensible solution would be for the Trustees to apply to have the Lease returned and for the Parish Council take back control of the area. That would enable all parties some 'breathing space' to consider their options and agree a workable way forwards; either by the creation of a new shorter-term lease with the Trustees or the Parish Council working directly with the land users.

However, speed was of the essence as this time in the year was normally when annual passes to the pond were sold to fisherman by the Village Hall Trustees, and that action could prejudice the handing back of the Lease if actioned before the Lease was ended.

The Chairman has been invited to attend at a Trustee meeting on Tuesday 12th February. He wanted to attend and present the meeting with his findings and suggestions. He asked Councillors to support him in this course of action. The request was proposed by Cllr Mark Hayball, seconded by Cllr Sue Schofield, and approved by a show of hands with two abstentions.

There being no further business the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance, and declared the meeting closed at 20.20 pm.

Signed Date

Chairman

Chairman