

## St Martins Parish Council

Minutes of a Meeting of the St Martins Parish Council held on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 7.00 pm in St Martins Village Hall.

**PRESENT:** Cllr's Andrew Cast, Mark Hayball, John Hodgson, Sophie Hughes-Saunier, Duncan Laing, Sue Schofield, George Smith, and Helen Williams.

Also in attendance, Shropshire Cllr Steve Davenport, one member of the public and the Parish Clerk.

### 050/03/24.C Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Neil Arthan, Vivienne Fisher, Alan Langley, Nina Mistry, and Natalie Rowley.

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

Parish Clerk

### 051/03/24.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. Cllr Sophie Hughes-Saunier declared an interest in item 065/03/24 (Allotments).

### 052/03/24.C Parish Council Casual Vacancy

There are still two vacancies on the parish council. Further notices would be put up.

### 053/03/24.C Minutes

**Resolved:** with two abstentions that the minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024 having been previously circulated be approved and adopted as a true record.

Chairman

### 054/03/24.C Urgent Items

There were no urgent items that related to financial, health and safety issues or issues that required immediate attention. However, the Parish Clerk said he may have to raise an item at the end of the meeting.

Parish Clerk

### 055/03/24.C Public Session

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

**056/03/24.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.

Following a query on a footpath on the Morlas Meadows site adjacent to Overton Road, it has been agreed that this would not be constructed as the present highway one on Overton Road was sufficient.

**057/03/24.C Police Report**

The latest police report (February) had been received and circulated to all Cllr's prior to the meeting. Cllr's expressed concern over the increase in the number of various incidents recorded in the monthly police report. Agreed that Michael (Mike) Hogg as the newly appointed neighbourhood officer for Oswestry Rural North which covers our area, should be invited to the next meeting.

Unfortunately, our application through the 2024 Road Safety Grant Fund for additional Speed Indicator Devices in the village, on this occasion has been unsuccessful due to an unprecedented high volume of applications and that our application does not sufficiently meet the criteria required (Police and Crime Commissioner comments).

**058/03/24.C St Martins Recreation Partnership**

Dates are confirmed, in the diary, to gather final questionnaire feedback from Yrs 8-9 and 10-11 at school assemblies (9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> April – after Easter holidays). This will conclude the consultation activity unless the PC have any other “gatherings of note” worth having the “survey stand” present at?

Existing survey results (120 approx.) are being uploaded into the google forms workbook, to allow for reporting summaries / graphs etc to be produced. Early feedback suggests community recreation in the centre of the village is just as desired as a “sports pitch” type MUGA at the school. To this end, George & I have an initial exploratory meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> March, with one of the Trustees of the Ifton Miners' Welfare Institute and Recreation Ground (locally known as The Stute), to understand any possible recreational facility provisions within the IMWIRG site.

3 MUGA supply companies are being met, on the school site, tomorrow and Wednesday. Each company will be asked to provide high level design options / costs / implementation timeline to allow understanding and comparison of their respective offers. A more detailed tender process will need to follow and may involve additional supply companies if the current 3 do not pass muster. This initial phase should allow the SMRP to understand what could be achieved for a £250-£350k total project cost (including planning permission, project management, specialist services costs, not just the build cost). Survey feedback and school curriculum needs will be assessed alongside what facilities could be physically / financially viable. I would hope that discussions in late April will provide a firm decision on the “what”, allowing further work during May to establish the “who” and the “how/when”.

Parish  
Clerk

**059/03/24.C Highway Issues**

Work has now commenced to repair the potholes on Colliery Lane.

The highways department would be notified over the state of the mud on the road in Bradford Lane and damage to the grass verges in this area.

The first grass verge cut had taken place but only on selected grass verges along Overton Road.

**060/03/24.C St Martins Amenities Fund**

The Parish Clerk had now obtained from SC Highways their proposed schedule of grass cutting for 2024. This was based on a four-week cycle. Plans and quotation tender documents had now been sent out to four local contractors to enable the parish to have a fortnightly cut.

Parish Clerk

The Chairman and Parish Clerk were also looking at costing for replacement damaged street nameplates.

Parish Clerk

**061/03/24.C Street Lighting**

Scottish Power had still to connect power to the streetlight on Overton Road at the entrance to Garden Village and one in Mount Bradford Lane. One of the pedestrian beacons by Stans Superstore had now been repaired.

Parish Clerk

It was reported by many Cllrs over the poor standard of erecting the new streetlights on Overton & Ellesmere Roads. The main issue was that columns are not set up vertically. Also, the old redundant columns on Ellesmere Road have still not been removed.

Parish Clerk

**062/03/24.C Financial Matters****Accounts for Payment**

BACS	Staff	Salary & Expenses	£1163.43
BACS	HMRC	PAYE & NI	£301.30
BACS	Nigel Thomas	Play Area Inspections	£26.00
BACS	Huw Manford	Litter Picking, etc.	£304.25
BACS	Highline Electrical	Street Lighting Repairs	£34.80
BACS	Shropshire Council	Street Lighting Energy 4 <sup>th</sup> Qtr.	£1039.04
BACS	Scribe	Annual Software Renewal	£806.40
BACS	Midland Computers	Microsoft & Security Upgrade	£94.99
DR	HSBC	Bank Charges	£8.00
DD	Veolia	Bin Emptying	£35.93

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

Parish Clerk

**Grant Applications**

**Resolved** That the following grant applications are approved.

Graham Edwards Memorial Fund £200.00  
St Martins Youth Club £250.00

Parish  
Clerk

A request from St Martins Allotments Association was deferred until the next meeting.

**063/03/24.C Planning**

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

**Reference:** 24/00502/FUL (validated: 15/02/2024)

**Address:** Smithy Cottage, Overton Road, St Martins, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY11 3AS

**Proposal:** Erection of detached garage

**Parish Council Decision:** Deferment requested pending additional information on any biodiversity net gain.

Parish  
Clerk

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**Reference:** 24/00628/OUT (validated: 21/02/2024)

**Address:** 55 New Ifton, St Martins, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY11 3AE

**Proposal:** Erection of single two storey detached dwelling

**Parish Council Decision:** Deferment requested pending additional information on any biodiversity net gain.

Parish  
Clerk

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The following planning decisions were noted.

**Reference:** 23/05518/FUL (validated: 22/12/2023)

**Address:** Bryn Awelon, Rhyn Lane, St Martins, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY10 7AY

**Proposal:** Proposed new single-storey rear extension to an existing dwelling

**Decision:** Grant Permission

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**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.

**Decision:** Grant Permission

**064/03/24.C Shropshire Council (SC).**

Shropshire Cllr Steve Davenport updated the meeting on the work to repair potholes in Colliery Road, drainage work at Escob Bridge, Stans Roundabout alterations now completed and the ongoing safety issues outside the school.

**065/03/24.C Arthan's Pond/Allotments**

The Chairman reported that we have received a formal Notice of Interest from St Martins Allotments Association. They have informed him that they are expecting to confirm their true interest following their AGM of next week,

Nothing has been received from any group associated with the Pond. The final date for applications is 28th March. The Lease detail is still being produced from our Legal experts. Until we pass the 28th of March, deadline for applications, there is nothing more to report.

**066/03/24.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.

For those amongst us who are of a certain age to recall the TV comedy named “Yes Minister” we may remember the frustration encountered by the elected Minister, wishing to act in a positive manner to the electorate but being continually thwarted by Civil Servants and with viewers laughing at the absurdity of the situation by the excuses given by public employees for not making any changes to their comfortable work-style.

It is therefore with great regret and sadness that I must report that comedy has now met with reality and that exact absurdity is now in front of us in respect of the Escob Bridge project.

We had hoped that the current planned work of repairs at the site to repair the spring and damaged drain, which incorporated temporary Traffic Lights, could be extended to allow the lights to remain and, by doing so, include them as the key part of the feasibility study. To myself, Edward, and Steve, it seemed totally sensible and logical.

Despite our very best actions, Shropshire Officers have reacted with shock and disdain, fending off requests by padding responsibility away to other officers who seems to be ignorant of key matters and descending into a spiral of “you can’t do that” - “you need special permission” - “please speak to.....”.

The nub of the matter is that if we wish to retain traffic lights, that will, according to Council officers, delay the outstanding application for CIL funding that is needed to progress the works. I have to say that I read and reread their words used in the decision and I did not understand why!

Sadly, I have reached a stage where I simply do not have enough remaining days in my life to waste attempting to persuade Shropshire Officers that common sense and logical actions should be considered.

Eventually, I have accepted defeat. The suggestion of temporary traffic lights has been withdrawn and the progression of the application of CIL funding will continue, despite me expecting it to be completed by the end of February and still wondering how such a simple process of ‘form filling’ can possibly take so long to conclude.

**067/03/24.C Biodiversity Policy**

Cllr Sophie Hughes-Saunier reported that she was made aware by Cllr Rowlands of Weston Rhyn Parish Council that under the 2021 Environment Act, public authorities including parish councils operating in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Government guidance published on 17 May 2023 clarifies that, as a public authority, parish councils must:

- consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- agree policies and specific objectives based on their consideration.
- act to deliver their policies and achieve their objectives.

Both Weston Rhyn, and Selattyn & Gobowen Parish Councils have policies in place. The Parish Clerk would contact Gobowen PC for a copy of their Biodiversity policy.

Parish  
Clerk

**068/03/24.C Stans Field**

Cllrs considered what action, if any can be taken to reduce the amount of dog poo now being found in this area. Suggestions were for better signage, including the public 'Right of Way', and repairs to fence adjacent to field. Cllrs George Smith, Helen Williams, and SC Steve Davenport to meet and report back at the April meeting.

Parish  
Clerk

**069/03/24.C North Shropshire MP Helen Morgan**

We continue to forward any areas of concern to Helen Morgan MP. Her latest quarterly update for Parish & Town Councils has been circulated to all Cllrs. New posters have also been put up in all parish notice boards.

**070/03/24.C Shropshire Association of Local Councils (SALC)**

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

Cllrs considered a motion proposed by Oswestry TC and approved at the Area Committee Meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> of February for a policy of not using glyphosate or neonicotinoids on our land, to include allotments. Cllrs felt this was a badly worded proposal.

**Resolved:** to adopt the following policy.

St Martins Parish Council acknowledges the discussions and research into the use of glyphosates and neonicotinoids across pasture and agricultural lands and encourage the users to be aware of, and conform to, any regulations appropriate for their use. We further encourage land users, wherever possible, to consider alternative methods to manage the control of weeds. In respect of Allotments in this parish, this Council would expect the land users to follow the guidance of their National Support body.

Parish  
Clerk

**071/03/24.C Correspondence**

There were no items of correspondence.

**072/03/24.C Members Reports**

Cllrs reported the following,

Graffiti had been witnessed on properties in Cedar Close. This would be reported to Star Housing.

The Village Life magazine celebrates 10 years of publication this year. The AGM will be held on 25<sup>th</sup> May when a request will be received for volunteers to assist with the publication.

Parish Clerk

Cllr John Hodgson informed the meeting that this would be his last meeting as they are moving away from the village. The Chairman and many Cllrs passed on their best wishes and gratitude for all the work John had put into the Parish Council.

Parish Clerk

**053/03/24.C Urgent Items**

**Resolved:** that Cllr Helen Williams is appointed Chairman of Finance Committee.

Parish Clerk

**073/03/24.C Next Meeting**

Next meeting Full Council on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2024 @ 19.00 in St Martins Village Hall.

There being no further business the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance, and declared the meeting closed at 20.38 pm.

Signed .....

Date .....

Chairman