

HOPTON AND COTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 12TH APRIL 2023 HELD AT HOPTON VILLAGE HALL

AGENDA

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TIME

1. Welcome and introduction by the Chairman
2. Introduction of the new Parish Clerk
3. Consider matters raised by the members of the public; up to a collective maximum of 20 minutes in duration
4. Close of Public Participation Time

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

1. Apologies for absence received- acceptance and recording of apologies
2. Record declarations of interest from Councillors
3. Approval of the minutes from the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 30th March 2023
4. Discuss matters arising from the minutes not covered later in the Agenda
5. To receive a statement regarding HCPC and CIO position
6. Discuss the proposal for Parish Council policies to be updated
7. Financial Matters
 - 7.1 To propose the dispersal of funds
 - 7.2 Review and approval of payments
 - 7.3 To propose the addition of signatories for the Parish Council bank account

CLOSE OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING TO PUBLIC

8. Discussion of confidential salary considerations
9. To propose and agree on the date of the next Parish Council Meeting

END

HOPTON AND COTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 12TH APRIL 2023 at 7:00PM HELD AT HOPTON VILLAGE HALL

Present :	Councillors	Cllr S Spennewyn Cllr M Notman Cllr A Elkin Cllr P Gilbert
	Parish Clerk	A Mclean
Also in Attendance	Internal Auditor	K Squires- Toplis Associates
	Members of the Public	One member of the public present

Also Present:

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TIME

A member of the public attended to express his concerns as a resident and enquire into an update on the Serco Appeal to the Secretary of State against the decision of Stafford Borough Council in its refusal to grant planning permission to Serco to change the use of Stafford Court to house asylum seekers on the site.

Information was provided that the appeal will be heard at a Public Inquiry, in which the venue of which is yet to be confirmed, commencing at 10:00am on 16th May 2023 until 18th May 2023 and a further day again commencing at 10:00am on 23rd May 2023.

Cllr Spennewyn agreed to represent the Parish Council at the Appeal.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

1. APOLOGIES RECEIVED- ACCEPTANCE AND RECORDING OF APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr P Cunningham, Cllr S Mead and Cllr C Rider.

2. RECORD DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS IN ANY ITEM TO BE DISCUSSED

No declarations of interest were made.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8TH MARCH 2023

The minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 8th March 2023 were considered, approved and duly signed as a correct record of the meeting.

4. DISCUSS MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES NOT ON AGENDA

None.

5. TO RECEIVE A STATEMENT REGARDING HCPC AND CIO POSITION

Cllr S Spennewyn delivered a statement in relation to HCPC and CIO position; please refer to the addendum 1.

6. DISCUSS THE PROPOSAL FOR PARISH COUNCIL POLICIES TO BE UPDATED

Cllr S Spennewyn discussed the proposal for the Parish Council policies to be updated. It was agreed that a working group would be set up at the next meeting and that reviews would then take place

7. FINANCIAL MATTERS

7.1 TO PROPOSE THE DISPERSAL OF FUNDS

- A. The dispersal of funds in relation to the proposed purchase of two Defibrators was discussed by Cllr S Spennewyn. Hopton Village Hall, the Utilities Building at St Mary's Gate and Beaconside Health Centre was proposed as possible locations for the machines to be situated.

Discussions were made in relation to electricity requirements for running and ongoing maintenance. Cllr M Notman confirmed companies offer maintenance within the initial cost.

Cllr M Notman agreed to follow up on obtaining up to date quotes and further consideration. Cllr S Spennewyn agreed to contact the Practice Manager at the Beaconside Health Centre for further discussions into the proposed installation at that location.

- B. The dispersal of funds in relation to the grass cutting for the football pitch at Hopton Village Hall was discussed. Following on from previous meeting discussions, Cllr M Notman presented a favourable quote from Trent Ground Maintenance and it was agreed for Cllr M Notman to accept the quote for a six monthly term for the grass to be cut on football pitch at Hopton Village Hall, from April 2023 to September 2023, to start with immediate effect.
- C. The dispersal of funds in relation to the installation of a new parish notice board at Redrow was followed up and Cllr M Notman confirmed that three quotes had been obtained and shown to all attendees. It was voted and agreed to proceed with the most cost effective quote and resolved to purchase the parish notice board which will be supplied and fitted by Signs 2000 Stafford.

Three quotes were considered:

- A. Quote 1
Signs 2000 Stafford
Aluminium composite sign with vinyl graphics, two locakbale notice boards and fixing channel 2 off 76 diameter x 3 metre posts, cap, baseplate and post clips
£1,005.00 + VAT
Gross Amount £1,206.00
- B. Quote 2
Panel Warehouse
2- Bay 4 x A4 External recycled plastic notice board
£1,470.57 + VAT
Gross Amount £1,764.68
- C. Quote 3
The Parish Notice Board Company
2- 1500mm x 1200mm Aluminium board curved or flat top

£1,340.00 + VAT
Gross Amount £1,608.00

Cllr M Notman will request the order and installation will follow once a risk assessment has been presented by Redrow in relation to the placement of the board.

Cllr S Spennewyn agreed to distribute leaflets, with the support of Cllr S Mead, within the area of Redrow to inform them of the Parish Council and installation of the new parish notice board.

7.2 REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS

The schedule of payments report, together with supporting documents was reviewed and approved; please refer to the addendum 2.

7.3 TO PROPOSE THE ADDITION OF SIGNATORIES FOR THE PARISH COUNCIL BANK ACCOUNT

Cllr S Spennewyn proposed the addition of signatories for the Parish Council bank account, alongside himself who is currently on the banking mandate.

It was proposed, seconded and AGREED to bring additional signatories onto the bank account and agreed that Cllr M Notman and Cllr C Rider would be added alongside Angela Mclean (Parish Clerk) to the Parish Council bank account, in order to operate the banking system and add payments onto the system, for dual authorisation from any two of the three Cllrs to be added to the banking mandate.

Cllr S Spennewyn agreed to obtain a copy of the current bank mandate and establish the procedure for adding Cllr M Notman, Cllr C Rider and Angela Mclean (Parish Clerk) onto the bank account.

CLOSE OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING TO PUBLIC

8. DISCUSSION OF CONFIDENTIAL SALARY CONSIDERATIONS

Cllr S Spennewyn discussed the salary considerations for a Parish Council employee. It was agreed to be discussed directly with the employee in relation to the current core working hours and salary in respect to this.

9. TO PROPOSE AND AGREE ON THE DATE OF THE NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on 10th May 2023, 7:00pm at Hopton Village Hall.

Signed: Dated:
Chairman

Angela Mclean
Parish Clerk

April 2023

ADDENDUM 1

Hopton and Coton Parish Council 12 April 2023

A statement on the relationship between HCPC and Hopton Community Hub (CIO) 1.

This is a statement issued by Hopton and Coton Parish Council with regard to the relationship with Hopton Community Hub

The statement will be followed by a full report produced by Hopton and Coton Parish Council in conjunction with Toplis Associates. In addition, the parish council is being supported by solicitors to validate legal material and its position with regard to this issue.

This statement will be issued to all parish boards, the parish council's website and appropriate media sites

History

With regard to the act of separation of the running of the village hall from the parish council itself, it is clear that discussions began in 2018/2019 between the parish council and those individuals who became trustees of the Hopton Community Hub. The main reason for this separation was to allow the Hopton Community Hub to become registered as a charity and to engage in activities which will generate the provision of funds to improve the village hall and the parish itself.

The CIO became operational on the date of 1/04/2020

(CIO - charitable incorporated organisation)

Charitable objects (from the Charity Commissions website for the CIO)

THE OBJECTS OF THE CIO ARE TO ESTABLISH AND RUN A VILLAGE HALL AND TO PROMOTE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE INHABITANTS OF HOPTON AND COTON PARISH AND SURROUNDING AREA, WITHOUT DISTINCTION OF SEX, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, AGE, DISABILITY, NATIONALITY, RACE OR POLITICAL, RELIGIOUS OR OTHER OPINIONS, THE PROVISION OF FACILITIES FOR RECREATION OR OTHER LEISURE TIME OCCUPATION OF INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE NEED OF SUCH FACILITIES BY REASON OF THEIR YOUTH, AGE, INFIRMITY OR DISABLEMENT, FINANCIAL HARDSHIP OR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES OR FOR THE PUBLIC AT LARGE IN THE INTERESTS OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND WITH THE OBJECT OF IMPROVING THE CONDITIONS OF LIFE OF THE SAID INHABITANTS.

A statement on the relationship between HCPC and Hopton Community Hub (CIO) 2.

The parish council is fully interested to see how this objective is to be Realised. The parish council fully recognise that Covid impacted upon the operation of the CIO. However, grants were given by SBC to allow business continuity and furlough staff and these monies are currently held within the village hall account.

What should have taken place

The CIO had to operate at arms length from HCPC

Costs and management of the village hall should have been agreed and fully detailed within the legal documents that both sides agreed to and such legal documents were signed and notarised

This legal separation is a strict requirement of :-

the Charity Commission.

the Local Government Act and the Audit Commission rules.

The relationship of the parish council as landlord should have been substantiated by the introduction of a lease to the tenant known as Hopton Community Hub.

The management responsibilities of both parties should have been enshrined within a management agreement

The parish council should have ensured that all accounts were audited by the appropriate owner and published for public view

What did happen

The CIO adopted its position of tenant without either a lease of management agreement being in place.

Hopton and Coton Parish Council 12 April 2023

A statement on the relationship between HCPC and Hopton Community Hub (CIO) 3

Proper costs and cross charges were not agreed and were not put in place. The action has caused the parish council to breach the strict rules and guidance of the Local Government Act, The Charity Commission guidance and the internal auditors.

The parish council could be regarded as operating illegally because certain costs have been placed upon the precept (ie the tax placed by the parish council upon the wider residents of the parish), when those costs should have been born by the CIO wholly and totally.

The parish council is taking advice as to how to deal with the situation of an unleased tenant supposedly managing the village hall .

What does Hopton and Coton Parish Council intend to do to alleviate this situation

The parish council is working with the solicitors who drew up the original lease and management agreement to review this documentation.

The parish council is taking separate legal advice as to the position of the village hall account.

The parish council has tasked Toplis Associates to produce a full report of the situation and to recommend suitable actions.

This report will be made available at an appropriate time to the relevant parties.

Toplis Associates will chair a meeting between HCPC and the CIO in order to determine a way forward.

This way forward will result in the introduction of a lease and management agreement.

If a way forward cannot be agreed then a suitable legal position will be sought where costs will be met by both parties .

ADDENDEUM 2

Date	Beneficiary	Detail	Amount
31.03.2023	M Ali	General Expenses	£13.43
31.03.2023	A Mclean	Software Expenses / Car Park / Travel Expenses	£50.77
01.04.2023	SPCA	Annual Membership	£378.89
March 2023	Councillor S Spennwyn	Hard Drive	£58.99