**A Meeting of Ashen Parish Council was held**

**on Thursday 11th May 2023 at 7.15pm in Ashen Village Hall**

**Minutes**

Present: Cllr R. Purchas (Chairman) (RP)

Cllr S Simpson (SS)

Cllr L Cockburn (LC)

Cllr O Palmer

Public: 1 member of the public was present

In attendance: Karen Melville-Ross, Clerk to the Council (KMR)

The Declarations of Acceptance of Office and the Registers of Interests were all signed and returned to KMR.

RP opened the meeting to the public. The fact that the village Facebook page does not allow local businesses to advertise was mentioned. SS responded that there had been problems previously with less local businesses advertising and for the excessive use of the page for a particular local business. This defeated the object of the page a community facility for points concerning the community, as there would frequently be nothing but advertisements on the page. Charitable and social events were all free to use the Facebook page. It was agreed to leave it as it is for the time being.

**23.00 Apologies for Absence**

All were present.

**23.01 Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

SS nominated RP as chair, which was seconded by LC. RP nominated SS as vice chair, which was seconded by LC. RP expressed thanks to Simon Mattholie for his time on the Council and for all he has done for the village.

**23.02 Declarations of Interest**

The declarations are as registered and any additional interests will be recorded as necessary.

**23.03Approval of the minutes for the Council Meeting held 16th March 2023.**

The minutes of the above meetings were approved and signed.

**23.04 Financial Matters**

a) The year end accounts were circulated and were approved.

b) The internal audit has been carried out by Tony Couling, for which RP expressed thanks, and approved by him. The additional documents showing the variances on the previous year, the risk assessment and the asset and investment register were also approved. It was agreed that the exemption certificate should be applied for as neither the income nor expenditure exceeded £25,000. The AGAR statement was then signed by RP and KMR. The accounting statement and other statements were also approved and signed by RP and KMR. It was agreed to make the accounts available to the public between 5th June and 14th July 2023. The information is to be put on the notice board and on the website. RP is to send a copy of the AGAR to KMR. KMR is to submit the exemption certificate and the contact details to the auditors by 3rd July.

c) Payment was made to the village hall for hall hire for the meeting.

**23.05 Playing Field**

a) The contract with BDC has been renewed. They have reported bee orchids on the playing field and it was agreed these should be marked up to avoid the grass in those areas from being cut, unless there are any objections from those playing football. RP will contact BDC on this.

b) The working party for the play area is to meet on 17th June at 11am. RP will put up a notice on the board and on Facebook.

**23.06 Village Hall**

a) The VHC AGM was held on 18th April. There is now a new committee, with Zoe as treasurer, Julie as chair and Christine as secretary. The next meeting is on 20th June.

b) on 6th April the solicitors had emailed asking the present position and RP had responded explaining the proposed changes with the new VHC committee to elected on 18th April and the new Council meeting on 11th May. RP is to meet with the VHC to explain the background on extending the lease and sub lease, including the offer made by the VHC on 2nd December 2021 to contribute upto £500 or 50% of the legal fees involved prior to the solicitors being instructed. The quote by the solicitors was around £2,250 to which the contribution to BDC costs should be added. APC had paid about £1,500 to date. It was agreed defer the decision again to the meeting on 19th September by which time it is hoped that the VHC will have reached a decision as to whether or not it wishes to proceed. RP is to report this position to Wayman Long.

c) KMR has contacted Cllr Schwier but he has not had any success in discovering when the street light will be converted to LED either. KMR to chase before the next meeting.

**23.07 Highways**

a) SS is reporting pot holes and is continuing to monitor those she has logged on the portal.

b) Velda had nothing to report on footpaths. SS reported the very overgrown footpath opposite Stours so that it is impassable (FP 17). KMR is to contact Highways.

d) The Street Cleaning Agreement has been renewed and the annual report submitted. RP expressed thanks to Hilary Hutson for all she has done.

**23.08 Neighbourhood Watch and Police**

There was nothing to report but SS mentioned that when there have been 2 significant burglaries in the village recently these have not been mentioned by Neighbourhood Watch. Julie is to raise this with Clive Stewart.

**23.09 Village amenity to include:**

a) There was nothing to report.

**23.10 Administration to include:**

a) The Stour Colne magazine was put on the noticeboard.

b) The VHC had thanked the PC for the donation towards to the coronation party which had been a tremendous success.

c) The Council is one member short and therefore needs to co-opt an additional member.

d) It was agreed that notice should be given on the web site and on the notice board to co-opt and applications should be submitted by 16th June, but with the right reserved to consider late applications. RP is to draft the notice.

**23.11 Planning**

a) Application 23/00194/OUT for land at the rear of Hope Cottage has been refused on all relevant points.

b) The information boards have been offered a site by the Gliding Club.

c) The Council was not given the right to comment on the application for non-material amendments application at Elmfield (23/01180/NMA).

**23.12 Parish Plan**

It was agreed that none of the policies in the plan needed changing and there was no need at this stage for a review. There was no need for an update in the action points table since the last meeting but RP will update the table for the next meeting.

**23.13 Matters raised by the Community Agent.**

Nothing had been raised.

**23.14 Other Urgent Business**

Nothing was raised.

**23.15 Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be on 19th September 2023 at 7.15pm in the village hall.