

COCKING PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
4 SEPTEMBER 2023, 6.30PM

PRESENT: Cllrs Miss F Russell (Chair), T Carter, D Imlach and W Renney.

IN ATTENDANCE: G Burt, Clerk to the Council
Cty Cllr Tom Richardson
Dis Cllr Jess Brown-Fuller
3 Members of the Public

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence was received from Cllrs A Cornwell, Mrs J Jackson and D Summerfield due to prior engagements. The apologies and reasons given was approved.

2. Declarations of Interest

Members and officers were invited to make any declarations of pecuniary and/or non-pecuniary interests that they may have in relation to items on the agenda and were reminded to make any declarations at any stage during the meeting if it then became apparent that this may be required when a particular item or issue was to be considered.

3. Questions from Visitors

A resident commented on several overgrown verges and hedgerows which were either restricting use of footways or impeding sightlines; he was encouraged to report them to WSCC via the website. The Clerk would report one hedgerow.

A resident spoke in support of a suggestion to set up a youth club in the village; Cllrs looked forward to hearing of the proposal in due course.

4. To receive reports from County & District Cllrs.

Dis Cllr Jess Brown-Fuller who had circulated a report in advance, reported on a program of exciting events in Midhurst to help the town recover following the detrimental road closure following the Angel Hotel fire. A Southern Water-planned long road closure of the crucial Rumbolds Hill had been reduced to one day only – 11 September. She had recently been adopted as a Prospective Parliamentary Candidate (PPC) and would relinquish her role if elected.

Cty Cllr Tom Richardson reported on the 99 Flex service which runs through the rural areas between Chichester and Petworth, and the 98 Flex services which serves the areas to the north of Petworth. It also covered the Cocking area and we would endeavour to help publicise it. WSCC believed there were no schools in the County affected by the reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC). He was working on a potential Community Highways Application to have a large area of his division designated as Quiet Lanes, and hoped included-parishes would be supportive. He said WSCC were looking at how many road closures were instigated by Southern Water, often under the guise of emergency works at the 11th hour.

5. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the 3 July 2023, previously circulated were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. Matters Arising from the Minutes

The Chairman reported that she understood the application for 210 Cocking might be turned down by officers, but it was hoped it might instead go to Committee and be determined by Councillors.

7. Planning

There were no planning applications.

8. Highways Updates

- a. Footpaths & Footways – Cllr Imlach would arrange to top up gravel on the FP from Church Lane to the War Memorial.
- b. Cycleways – nothing to report.
- c. Traffic Calming – Community Speedwatch – The new group now had the required minimum of x4 members and Cllr Carter had kindly agreed to take over as coordinator.

9. Updates on Parish Matters

- a. Playground – Sadly, George Hughes who had cut the grass for many years was retiring with immediate effect following a recent illness. The Clerk would write to convey the Council's appreciation and best wishes accordingly. Members were disappointed to learn of recent vandalism; Cllr Imlach had the necessary repairs all complete or in hand. Other parts of the equipment were now looked brighter having been painted.
- b. Village Hall – Exterior painting had not gone according to plan with suppliers supplying incorrect paint. Cllr Imlach would obtain several quotes in time for the budget-setting process in the autumn. A Fixed Wiring survey was planned. The Car Park required weed-killing - Cllr Imlach to arrange. It was planned to remove saplings growing to the rear of the hall.
- c. New Platinum Jubilee Noticeboard – installation had started and was awaiting completion. Two planters had been added to the project F.O.C.
- d. Rainwater goods had been replaced on The Croft bus shelter.
- e. The bus shelter at the garage had suffered from litter and torn notices during the recent spate of vandalism.
- f. Cllr Imlach hoped to fit the slats into the sagging bench at the playground.

10. Finance

- a. Payments since last meeting were **RESOLVED** and any receipts NOTED – Appendix A.
- b. Bank Reconciliations to 13 July and 17 August 2023 were **RESOLVED** – Appendices B and C and the corresponding bank statements were subsequently initialled by Cllr Carter.
- c. The External Audit Report for 2022-23 had been received – Appendix D. Members were pleased that as usual no material matters of concern had been raised.

11. Any Other Matters for Information

Cllr Carter reported that the Defibrillator had been re-registered on the SECAMB mapping database.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 2 October 2023 6.30pm

The meeting closed at 7.27pm

Chairman:

Date:

APPENDIX A

INCOME & EXPENDITURE SINCE LAST MEETING TO 4 SEPT 2023						
EXPENDITURE						
				GROSS	VAT	NET
26/07/2023	R.S. Hall & Co	1040	22-23 Internal Audit	£180.00	£30.00	£150.00
26/07/2023	G Burt	1041	Clerk salary - July	£241.65		£241.65
26/07/2023	HMRC	1042	Clerk Tax - July	£60.60		£60.60
26/07/2023	Arthur Gallagher	1043	Insurance premium	£1,647.60		£1,647.60
04/09/2023	Moore	1044	External Audit 2023-24	£252.00	£42.00	£210.00
04/09/2023	Andrew James	1045	Recreation Field Grass cutting - June	£290.00		£290.00
			Recreation Field Grass cutting - July	£260.00		£260.00
04/09/2023	G Burt	1046	Clerk salary - Aug	£241.85		£241.85
			Mileage	£162.00		£162.00
			Wkg from home allowance 22-2	£216.00		£216.00
			Postage	£0.75		£0.75
04/09/2023	HMRC	1047	Printer carts.	£61.47	£10.24	£51.23
04/09/2023	D Imlach	1048	Clerk Tax - August	£60.40		£60.40
Paint for playground			£66.54	£11.09	£55.45	
Post mix for play ground			£14.38	£2.40	£11.98	
Rainwater goods / Croft bus shelter			£13.81	£2.30	£11.51	
Paint for play ground			£5.99	£1.00	£4.99	
04/09/2023	Littlefield Lawncare	1049	Ironmongery for play ground	£22.06	£3.68	£18.38
04/09/2023	Andrew James	1050	Play Area mowing 2023 season (Part)	£800.00		£800.00
04/09/2023	Andrew James	1050	Recreation Field Grass cutting - Aug	£260.00		£260.00
			Play Area mowing	£50.00		£50.00
04/09/2023	Cowdray Estate	1051	Ground Rent - Village Hall - 2nd Part	143.66		143.66
			Ground Rent - Rec Field - 2nd Part	100.00		100.00
				£5,150.76	£102.71	£5,048.05

APPENDIX B

BANK RECONCILIATION				
CASHBOOK				
Balance brought forward as at 01/04/2023		£9,677.73		
Add Total Receipts		8,774.00		
Less Total Payments		(2,659.64)		
TOTAL		£15,792.09	◀	
BANK				
Lloyds Treasurers A/C (13/07/2023)		15,792.09		
Less unrepresented cheques				
Plus unrepresented deposits		-		
TOTAL		15,792.09	◀	

TALLY

APPENDIX C

BANK RECONCILIATION				
CASHBOOK				
Balance brought forward as at 01/04/2023		£9,677.73		
Add Total Receipts		8,774.00		
Less Total Payments		(4,869.73)		
TOTAL		£13,582.00	◀	
BANK				
Lloyds Treasurers A/C (07/08/2023)		13,582.00		
Less unrepresented cheques				
Plus unrepresented deposits		-		
TOTAL		13,582.00	◀	

TALLY

Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate 2022/23

In respect of

Cocking Parish Council

1 Respective responsibilities of the body and the auditor

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is not a full statutory audit. It does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it does not provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/>.

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2023; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors

2 External auditor report 2022/23

Except for the matters reported below on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with the Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Section 14(1) of the Audit and Accounts Regulations 2015 provides that the period of public rights should be a 'single period of 30 working days'. This year the Council provided a period of 31 working days for the review of their records. Whilst we do not consider providing a longer period than stated to be more than a trivial breach of the regulations, this could lead to other issues. We would therefore anticipate that in future the dates are calculated to provide a period of precisely 30 working days.

In completing the current year's Annual Governance and Accountability Return, the council has adjusted the 2023 box 1 balance so that it does not equal the 2022 box 7 balance c/fwd, which does not accord with proper practices. Whilst we appreciate rounding may be required to ensure boxes 1 to 6 sum to box 7, these should be undertaken within the year (boxes 2-6) rather than as part of the opening or closing balances. Based on this the Council should consider the response to Assertion 3 within Section 1 of the return (fully complying with laws and regulations) when completing the 2023-24 return.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

NONE

3 External auditor certificate 2022/23

We ~~certify~~^{do not certify} that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2023.

^aWe do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name

 MOORE

External Auditor Signature



Date

17/08/2023