

# Butlers Marston Parish Council

Minutes of the annual meeting of the Parish Council held on **Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024** at **7pm** at St Peter's & St Paul's Church, Church Lane, CV35 0NA

**Present:** Cllr Corpe, Cllr Mitchell-Hilton, Cllr Bloomfield, Cllr Weaver, Cllr Carton, Clerk.

**In attendance:** 1 member of the public, County and District Cllr Mills, District Cllr Scorer.

1. **Election of Chairman** – It was proposed and agreed to elect Cllr Corpe as the Chairman.
2. **Election of Vice-Chairman** - It was proposed and agreed to elect Cllr Weaver as Vice-Chairman.
3. **Apologies for absence** – None. Cllr Carton, and Cllrs Mills and Scorer will be late.
4. **Members' declarations of interest for items on the agenda** – None.
5. **Public participation session** – It was suggested that pots have lasted over 10 year and require less maintenance than an open flower bed however flower bed might be cheaper in the long term. No responses have been received relating to the newsletter article about planting around the War Memorial. A public poll detailing both options costs and maintenance will be posted on the village Facebook group page.
6. **To confirm the council's eligibility and intention to adopt the General Power of Competence with immediate effect** – It was confirmed that the Parish Council (PC) is eligible due to the Clerk being CiLCA qualified and all councillors having been elected therefore the PC adopt the GPC.
7. **To approve the minutes of the Parish Council (PC) meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2024** – The minutes were proposed, agreed, and duly signed.
8. **County/District Councillor reports** – Cllr Mills and Cllr Scorer provided written reports which can be found on the website with the minutes.
9. **Outstanding matters/actions from previous minutes**
  - 9.1 Update re Warwickshire County Council's (WCC) proposals to resite the bus stops in the parish - At the parish public meeting held on Thursday 25th April the results of the feasibility study were published and the public were given the opportunity to make comments. In general the public comments questioned the need for the move however the new sites would improve safety issues with the current/adopted bus stops, whilst also improving the communities facilities and enhancing the areas accessibility. Separately it was raised the need for a bus shelter which the PC can consider at a later date. These comments have been passed on to WCC. The PC needs to now agree to proceed with the relocation of the bus stop based on the feasibility study and secure the funding. Currently District Councillor Mills does not have enough delegated budget to cover the total cost of £12,500 but can provide £6,000. Cllr Corpe has spoken to the WCC's Bus department and they can only provide funding for the bus flagpole and road markings. Cllr Corpe is still waiting for confirmation from the authors (WCC Highways Minor Works Team) of the feasibility study to confirm the figures as there may be slight reduction. The costs relate to the dropped kerbs and tactile paving so we could discuss this with Highways to see if this is something they would contribute towards. Failing this the PC would need secure funding from grants or local resident fundraising.

*Cllr Carton joined the meeting at 7:22pm.*

It was proposed and agreed to go ahead with the bus stop resiting as per option 1 provided by WCC. **The next step is to work out what part of the proposals can proceed with funds currently available and how the remaining parts of the project can be funded.**

One comment from the public in the parish meeting was that not many people use the bus. It was felt that the PC should try to encourage use of the bus by providing information to the parishioners regarding what the bus routes are and when the buses come as many people don't realise there are so many buses or where they go and although there is information online about this it isn't terribly user friendly so providing more user friendly information may encourage more parishioners to use the bus service. It was agreed that this information should go in the newsletter. **Cllr Mitchell-Hilton to put in the newsletter. Cllr Carton to contact Stagecoach to find out the details of the local routes, prices, and times.**

9.2 Butlers Marston Church Restoration and Reorder Group - At the parish public meeting held on Thursday 25th April the Working Group presented the current progress of the project and the schedule going forward. The group is still holding monthly meetings and is preparing the documents needed to submit to the DAC before a site visit. The activities of the project have caught the attention of the acting Bishop of Coventry and there may be a Bishop visit on 3<sup>rd</sup> September to review progress and showcase the plans that are being put forward. It would help the project if the PC could write a letter of support for the proposed reorder as this will strengthen the groups case that this is a truly community led project. It was proposed and agreed to write a letter advising that the PC are supportive of the scheme and provide information about the PC's need such as what facilities are required in the Church to make it suitable for Parish Council meetings such as lighting, heating, comfortable seating, wifi and meeting space. In addition the PC should outline that as the Church is the only public building it is the only location to hold local and national election polls and we need a building fit for this purpose to meet our public obligation. **Cllr Weaver agreed to write the letter on behalf of the PC.**

9.3 Bus shelter/phone box refurb project - Retaining Wall - No further update on previous meeting. Estimated cost is £800 for the wall but this could be reduced if the PC can source the stone free of charge or at a lower cost. The person who built the Kennel Hill properties is enquiring if he can source another pallet of stone and the costs (originally from Stamford Lincolnshire).

Noticeboard – The PC is still waiting to hear from Orbit as the landowners of the trees which need removing and when they can install the new notice board. Cllr Corpe continues to chase. The old noticeboards still need to be refurbished and installed into the bus shelter and the public noticeboard as agreed previously needs to be refurbished which together is estimated to cost £50. **Clerk to send the measurements of the new noticeboard to Cllrs Corpe and Bloomfield.**

Repurpose of the Bus Shelter/Phone Box - The plan was to convert the phone box into a book exchange box. No other ideas have come forward for this or the bus shelter at the moment so until the wall and general refurbishment is complete this will stay open.

9.4 Update re discussions with Highways re width of footpaths - Footpath Widths - At the parish public meeting held on Thursday 25th April Cllr Mitchell Hilton and Cllr Carton published their initial findings of the areas that need improving around the village. This will now be finalised and submitted to WCC highways to review and agree what can be done to improve them. The Memorial Cross Footpath - Cllr Corpe has no update on this path being maintained but Orbit have agreed they are looking into a possible long term solution.

9.5 Maintenance of War Memorial - Cllr Mitchell Hilton and Cllr Carton have spoken to a resident who might be able to help and now just need to follow this up. **Cllr Carton to get the parishioner's e-mail address and provide to clerk. Clerk to forward e-mails from the War Memorials Trust to the parishioner.**

9.6 Update re ensuring the PC has complete records for any easements/wayleaves for owners of property around the Village Greens - A date is set to meet with some residents about areas of the village green and the PC is still seeking advice from Warwickshire Association of Local Councils as to how best to resolve the records and ensure all relevant parties are protected going forward.

#### **10. Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023-24**

- 10.1 To receive the Internal auditor's report, agree any actions to be taken and to appoint an internal auditor for the current financial year – The internal auditors' report was received with no issues raised. It was proposed and agreed to appoint Katrina Briggs as the Internal Auditor for the 2024-25 financial year.
- 10.2 To complete and approve the Annual Governance Statement for the 23/24 audit – It was proposed and agreed to tick 'yes' to all statements except statement 9 which is 'N/A'. The document was signed by the Chairman and Clerk.
- 10.3 To approve the Accounting Statements for the 23/24 audit – Proposed and agreed. The document was signed by the Chairman.
- 10.4 To approve completion and signing of the AGAR Certificate of Exemption for 23/24 – Proposed and agreed. The document was signed by the Responsible Finance Officer and the Chairman.
- 10.5 To agree the dates for the Notice of Public Rights – proposed dates are Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> June to Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2024 – Proposed and agreed.

#### **11. Finance**

- 11.1 Confirmation of the bank balances as at 01.05.24 of £117.30 and £6,658.41 – Cllr Weaver confirmed the balances stated are correct.
- 11.2 To approve the following payments made using delegated powers: Proposed and agreed.

23.04.24	WALC	Annual membership	£146.00
23.04.24	Kirsty Buttle	Salary and expenses Apr	£132.59

- 11.3 To note the following receipts: Noted.

12.04.24	HMRC	VAT refund	£494.69
22.04.24	SDC	Precept	£2,459.00
09.04.24	Lloyds	Interest	£4.22

#### **12. Planning applications received - None**

#### **13. Planning decisions received - None**

#### **14. To re-adopt the following policies with no changes made: Proposed and agreed.**

- 14.1 Risk Assessment
- 14.2 Publication Scheme
- 14.3 Scheme of Delegation
- 14.4 Financial Regulations
- 14.5 Standing Orders
- 14.6 Disciplinary Policy
- 14.7 Data Breach Policy
- 14.8 Freedom of Information Policy
- 14.9 Data Protection Policy
- 14.10 Complaints Procedure
- 14.11 Privacy Notice

- 14.12 Records Retention Policy
- 14.13 Subject Access Request Procedure
- 14.14 Role Holder Privacy Notice
- 14.15 Social Media Policy
- 14.16 Guidance on Code of Conduct
- 14.17 Code of Conduct
- 14.18 Gifts and Hospitality Policy/Register
- 14.19 Financial Control and Internal Audit Procedure
- 14.20 Grievance Policy
- 14.21 Health and Safety Policy
- 14.22 Communication Policy
- 14.23 Debit Card Policy

**15. To approve the following new policies:** Proposed and agreed.

- 15.1 Biodiversity Policy
- 15.2 Butlers Marston Church Reordering Group Terms of Reference – Also to be reviewed by the PCC.

*Cllr Mills and Cllr Scorer joined the meeting at 8:38pm.*

**16. Information exchange - Grass Cutting Update**

The Village Greens Mowing - The new grass cutting contractors are called Continental Landscapes and they have finally arrived for the first cut this year. However they are having timing issues due to the previous contractor not fulfilling their commitments in March. You will see that the cut is very rough and was completed in a hurry. The PC now has a contact number for the contractor whereas before the PC had to go through the district council. Concerns have been raised regarding this month's cut. With only 6 cuts this year and the NO Mow May policy the next cut will not be until mid to late June, so the volunteers from the parish may need to cut the grass before the next cut. However caution is needed as a parishioner kindly cut the memorial without consulting the PC and when the contractor came they just cut round the edges leaving the top as it looked cut.

The Bank Mowing - The bank has been mowed by Severn Trent Heritage Estate Department's (STHED) contractor and there are expected to be two further cuts this year.

The Bank - Severn Trent Heritage Estate Department (STHED) has asked if the PC would consider becoming the legal owners of The Bank on the village green. Their suggestion is The Bank is an asset Severn Trent cannot use and is therefore a burden on the water bill payers to maintain this part of the historical assets that they inherited when privatised. If the PC was keen to own The Bank, Severn Trent's legal team would start investigations into whether this is possible, which would involve agreeing a 'peppercorn charge' for the exchange and the handover of any surveys and documentation relating to the asset. In their words 'The Bank is in excellent condition' and they plan to improve the manhole this year.

Purchasing The Bank would make the PC the legal owners and responsible for the maintenance and upkeep (such as mowing) but would have more control over what it could be used for within the Scheduled Monument parameters. For example planting wildflowers, placing an information sign or creating a local attraction. However this would become a potential burden on the PC and the residents if any fundamental maintenance was needed.

**Clerk to put this item on the next agenda for consideration.**

**17. Proposal to exclude the public and the press in order to discuss a staff matter (item 18) –**  
Proposed and agreed.

*The Clerk left the meeting @ 9pm*

**18. To consider the following items in relation to the Clerk's pay**

- 18.1 To consider increasing the Clerk’s payscale – currently SCP 16 – It was agreed that the Clerk’s payscale should be increased and backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> April but the amount will be approved at a meeting later in the year after further information has been received from WALC.
- 18.2 To consider providing a home office allowance – It was proposed and agreed to provide the Clerk with a home office allowance of £26.00 per month back dated to April 2024.
- 18.3 To consider contributing to a pension scheme – The PC needs to investigate options before making a decision on this. Item to go on next agenda.

Meeting closed @ 9:21pm

**Date of next meeting – 25<sup>th</sup> Jul 2024**

Signed..... Date.....