

# South Mimms Parish Council

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council

held on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2019 at 7.30 p.m. at South Mimms Village Hall

<b>Present:</b>	Councillor Yvonne Harverson	Chair
	Councillor Paula Arnold	Vice Chair
	Councillor Mark Edwards	
	Mrs Julia Reading	Locum Clerk

Approx. 10 Members of the Public

Cllr Harverson opened the Meeting by thanking everyone for attending. She advised that owing to the sudden resignation of the Parish Clerk, the agenda had been drawn up to cover essential business only.

### 1/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The absence of both Cllrs Binstead and Brewster was noted.

It was also noted that Cllr Brewster had not attended any Meetings of the Parish Council since the extraordinary Meeting in June 2018 and the Locum Clerk advised that his continued absence would lead to his automatic disqualification from the office of Parish Councillor, unless the remainder of the Council approved the absence. In view of the proximity of an Ordinary Election taking place in May 2019, it was **agreed** that Cllr Brewster's period of office would be treated as continuing for the time being, but that the Locum Clerk would seek written confirmation from him regarding his intentions for the remainder of the term of office and whether he would seek re-election.

### 2/19 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

None.

### 3/19 PARISH CLERK VACANCY

The Chair reported that after the December Meeting Ms Rebecca Burdick had tendered her resignation after a brief period as Parish Clerk. The Council thanked Mrs Reading for stepping in again to help at this Meeting.

The vacancy for a Parish Clerk was therefore re-opened, and an advertisement had been placed with HAPTC and on the Council's noticeboard and website. Details had been circulated to other local councils and all those present were urged to pass on any recommendations to fill the post as quickly as possible. Depending on the response, a paid-for job advertisement would be considered in the coming weeks.

Mrs Reading told the Meeting that she had initially agreed to help the Council for a few weeks in August 2018, and had then agreed to stay on in a limited capacity until handing over to the new Clerk at the December 2018 Meeting. While Mrs Reading was still willing to help where possible, she would in future be unable to commit enough time to the role to achieve any more than a skeleton service to the Council, and she would be unlikely to be available for future Meetings.

It was **agreed** that the Council would reduce its activities to fulfil essential functions only until a new Clerk could be appointed. There was a requirement to hold four Meetings a year, including the Annual Meeting. Certain deadlines and obligations would need to be met, for example the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and the Locum Clerk would prepare a schedule identifying these.

**Post-Meeting note** – it has come to the attention of the Council that in this Ordinary Election year, there is a limited period during which the Annual Meeting must take place. See Minute 10/19 below.

#### **4/19 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 6<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2018**

The minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2018 were **agreed** as a true record and signed by the Chair.

#### **5/19 MATTERS ARISING**

Arising from minute 126/18, Cllr Edwards spoke again of the earmarked funds held in respect of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds received in 2017/18 and 2018/19.

It was clear that in general CIL funds must be spent on projects directly linked to infrastructure changes resulting from increased development in the area, and that routine repairs and maintenance of existing infrastructure appeared not to qualify. It was also noted in response to a question from the audience that all councils [in England] were expressly prohibited from spending any money, whether from CIL or other fund sources, on maintaining or improving church property, other than for the maintenance of a closed churchyard.

Cllr Harverson recalled a casual conversation she had had with the head teacher of St Giles Primary School regarding a possible extension of the playground area and queried whether this type of project might qualify for funding or part-funding from CIL money. Cllr Edwards thought that there was likely to be a case for expenditure of this nature but cautioned against making assumptions

It was **agreed** that more definitive advice should be sought from Hertsmere Borough Council about acceptable uses of CIL funds and Cllr Edwards volunteered to investigate this and report to a future Meeting.

#### **6/19 SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS**

**Resolved** that the following payments be approved:

<b>Item</b>	<b>Payee</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Cheque</b>	<b>Dated</b>
Locum clerk, expenses	J Reading	£17.99	000308	10/01/2019
Locum clerk, salary	J Reading	£367.50	000309	10/01/2019
Transfer from deposit to current account		£1500.00	n/a	TBC

#### **7/19 BUDGET FOR FINANCIAL YEARS 2018/19 and 2019/20**

A schedule of budget v expenditure for the current year was considered alongside draft budget estimates for the forthcoming year commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019.

Owing predominantly to the extended vacancy for the Parish Clerk, costs had been significantly lower than expected and in practice this was likely to continue at least until the end of the current financial year. A surplus of income over expenditure was therefore expected to be carried forward to 2019/20 and would added to the Council's reserve funds.

The Council would be liable for the costs of the Ordinary Election scheduled for May 2019; however the amount could vary between c. £100 and up to c. £2000 depending on whether or not the election was contested. Funds had been set aside in preparation for the possibility that more than five candidates would stand at the election, and this contingency would be carried forward in reserves if not needed.

Cllr Edwards suggested that some non-recurring items of expenditure in 2019/20 should be met from reserves and excluded from the calculation of the precept request to be considered in the next item.

The budget schedule appended to these minutes was **approved unanimously** as a working document in view of the uncertainties over the duration of the vacancy for Parish Clerk.

#### **8/19 PRECEPT REQUEST TO HERTSMERE BOROUGH COUNCIL FOR 2019/20**

It was noted from Hertsmere Borough Council's Corporate Director's letter of 23 November 2018 that the proposed Council Tax Base for South Mimms was 319.8, and that a precept request from the Parish Council was needed by Hertsmere by Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

The precept requested and received from Hertsmere in 2018/19 was £15223, and it had been established in minute 7/19 that part of this income would remain unspent at the year end.

Cllr Edwards proposed and it was **agreed unanimously** that the Locum Clerk would send a precept request to Hertsmere Borough Council by the deadline for £13582. This equated to a Band D rate of £42.47 (Tax base x Band D = Precept) and represented a reduction of 10.78% on the previous year's request.

#### **9/19 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

#### **10/19 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

**It was noted** that the date of the next Meeting of the Parish Council was scheduled for Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2019 at 7.30 pm. A person able to take minutes would be needed.

The lettings administrator for the Village Hall had confirmed that the following dates were available for future Meetings, up to June 2019. With the exception of the May meeting, it was possible that some of the dates may need to be cancelled in any prolonged vacancy of the Parish Clerk, but dates would be rearranged if necessary for the Council to meet its statutory obligations.

Ordinary Meetings of the Parish Council: Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> February; Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March; Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> April; Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> June. *The dates are subject to the availability of a new Clerk or another person able to take minutes*

The Annual Meeting and first Parish Council Meeting is mandatory following the Ordinary Election on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> May and **MUST** be set no earlier than Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May and no later than Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> May. The Meeting will be held on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> May.

#### **11/19 PUBLIC QUESTION SESSION**

- A member of the audience asked whether any further progress had been made on the purchase of a defibrillator to be installed at the Village Hall. The Locum Clerk noted that this was to have been one of the first tasks for the new Parish Clerk to undertake but that from necessity the project was now deferred once more in the current vacancy for the post. It was confirmed that funds to cover the costs of purchase, installation and community training were included in the budget schedule for 2019/20.
- An increase had been observed in overnight parking in Blanche Lane by passengers for a coach travel company. Councillors responded that while this was an irritation, no contravention of existing parking controls appeared to have taken place and the perpetrators were private motorists rather than a commercial enterprise.
- A member of the audience asked whether any further progress had been made on adding a Disabled parking bay at St Albans Road behind St Giles Church. It was believed that a former Clerk had started inquiries and the Locum Clerk would now investigate what had happened.
- The Locum Clerk had circulated an email to Councillors which had recently been received from a resident of Frowyke Crescent, asking whether the Parish Council would consider undertaking repairs to the grass verges caused by car parking (arising from the narrow width of the road), along with modifications to the verges to prevent future erosion. The Chair advised that the Parish Council did not have responsibility for work of this type but was happy for the Locum Clerk to refer the matter to Hertsmere Borough Council or Hertfordshire County Council.

The Meeting closed at 8.25 p.m.

Chair ..... Date .....