
ASTON LE WALLS PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Debra Kirton, New House, Main Street, Aston Le Walls, Northants, NN11 6UF

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Minutes of The General Meeting held on Tuesday 7th May 2024 at 7:30pm in the Village Hall.

Attendees: Cllr. Matt Hawkins **(MH)** Chair, Cllr. Rhiannon Harris **(RH)** Vice Chair, Cllr. Tom Boston **(TB)**, Cllr. Grahame Barnes **(GB)**, Cllr. John Funnell **(JF)**, Cllr. Richard Burgess **(RB)**, Cllr. Lee Lewis **(LL)**, Cllr. Alison Eastwood WNC Silverstone Ward **(AE)**, Debra Kirton **(DK)** Clerk

Others: Mr. Charles Lees

Meeting opened at 7:27pm

1. Apologies & Declaration of Interest

- a. Apologies - None
- b. Declaration of Interest - None

2. Election of the Chair

- a. Cllr. Matt Hawkins was nominated by Cllr. (TB) and seconded by Cllr. (GB) and re-elected as Chair for the year 2024-2025 and duly signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Election of the Vice Chair

- b. Cllr. Rhiannon Harris was nominated by Cllr. (MH) and seconded by Cllr. (LL) and re-elected as Vice Chair for the year 2024-2025 and duly signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Delegated Responsibilities

- c. The responsibility for specific village tasks remains the same.

Confirmation of Adoption of Financial Regulations and Financial Risk Assessment

- d. The Chair Cllr. (MH) signed the Financial Regulations model 2019 and Risk Assessment document in the presence of the Parish Councillors and Parish Clerk. It was noted that the updated 2024 Financial Regulations has only been released in the past few days and will be adopted later in the year.

Adoption of Standing Orders/Code of Conduct

- e. The Chair Cllr. (MH) signed the Adoption of Standing Orders/Code of Conduct 2018 updated in 2022 in the presence of the Parish Councillors and Parish Clerk.

Confirmation of Election of Internal Auditor

- f. The Parish Council has appointed Mrs. Julie Challenor Independent Examiner as The Internal Auditor.

3. Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 7th March 2024.

The Minutes have been approved as a true record and signed by the Chair Cllr. (MH)

- a. Matters arising from the previous meeting held on Thursday 7th March 2024 None.
- b. Actions points from the previous meeting held on Thursday 7th March 2024
Item ii The felling of the large willow tree has been completed.

Speaker Cllr. Alison Eastwood Silverstone Ward

I am pleased to inform you that West Northamptonshire Council concluded the financial year positively, with major expenses in children's and elderly services. Council taxes have risen by 4.99% and there has been significant staff restructuring and relocation to Angel Square for cost efficiency.

The Local Area Partnership (LAP) supports older people, children, and rural isolation. Cllr. Eastwood serves as our lead, and the Council is encouraged to contact Cllr. Eastwood for housing and funding concerns.

Regeneration projects are underway, and I encourage everyone to attend performances at the Northamptonshire Music and Performing Arts Trust (NMPAT), the country's biggest teaching provider for young musicians.

The council has invested in a JCB Pothole Pro, designed to repair potholes four times faster than before. It is important that the Parish Council and residents report potholes promptly via the "Fix My Street" portal, as the council aims to address them within three months.

Additionally, Sam Simons of West Northamptonshire Highways monitors the impact of heavy loads from HS2 on our roads.

Finally, Cllr. Eastwood mentioned that the Equestrian Centre is still awaiting a license for the construction of the bund.

Cllr. (MH) Chair thanked Cllr. Eastwood

4. Correspondence to include Website and IT

The Parish Council website is up to date. The Council receives requests for resident's views on consultations from WNC. Cllr. Harris Vice Chair asked if all Councillors would agree to her posting on the website appropriate Residents Panel polls. All Councillors agreed.

Cllr. (RH) Vice Chair, mentioned that she preferred Parish Online for the new website provider, mentioning its user-friendly functionality in comparison to Cuttlefish. Cllr. (MH) Chair requested that all Councillors view the demo from Cuttlefish and visit Helmdon Parish Council's website, which recently switched to Parish Online for their opinions. A decision to agree the new website provider will be made at the June meeting.

5. Financial Matters:

a.

Balances & Invoices for approval of payment. The Clerk read out the financial matters, bank balances, invoices paid, and invoice for approval.

Balances @ 7th May 2024

Business Instant Account	£16,096.48
Treasurers Account	£331.70
TOTAL	£16,428.18
War Memorial Account	£466.09

Receipts / Payments / Invoices Approved from 7th March 2024 – 7th May 2024

Receipt/Payment	Details	Amount (Inc VAT)	Date Paid
Receipt	Interest (Gross) Business Bank Instant	15.40	11.03.24
Receipt	Interest (Gross) War Memorial Fund	0.51	11.03.24
Payment DD	Microsoft 365 – Renewal of Subscription	59.99	18.03.23
Payment BACS	Clerk PAYE – Month 12	267.44	30.03.23
Payment BACS	Printing Paper – Stationary	15.00	31.03.24

Receipt	Interest (Gross) Business Bank Instant	14.90	09.04.24
Receipt	Interest (Gross) War Memorial Fund	0.48	09.04.24
Receipt	WNC Precept 2024-2025 1 st Part	5,000.00	26.04.24
Payment BACS	Clerk PAYE – Month 1	266.72	29.04.24
Payment BACS	Shire Forestry & Fencing Ltd	1,800.00	01.05.24
Payment BACS	Npower Business Street Lighting 1.1.24-31.3.24	104.64	07.05.24

Authorisation of expenditure

Invoice	Description	Amount	Approved
2024 Julie Challenor	Internal Auditor	100.00	Yes
CPRE	The Countryside Charity Annual Subscription	36.00	Yes
NCALC	Annual Membership	282.09	Yes

b.

The Annual Accounts 2023/24

Signed by the Chair Cllr. (MH). The Annual Accounts will be published in accordance with the AGAR Regulations on the Parish Website.

c.

AGAR 2023/24 Certificate of Exemption for Smaller Authorities was signed by the Parish Clerk and Chair Cllr. (MH). The certificate will be published in accordance with the AGAR Regulations on the Parish Website before 1st July 2024.

d.

The Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 was signed by the Chair Cllr. (MH) and the Parish Clerk. The statement will be published in accordance with the AGAR Regulations on the Parish Website.

e.

The Accounting Statement 2023/24 was signed by the Chair Cllr. (MH) and the Parish Clerk. The statement will be published in accordance with the AGAR Regulations on the Parish Website.

f.

The Parish Council VAT 126 return for the period 01.04.23 – 31.03.24 was completed by the Parish Clerk and signed by the Chair Cllr. (MH).

The Independent Audit Statement signed by the Independent Examiner dated 21/04/24 was presented to the Chair Cllr. (MH). The Internal Audit Report 2023/24 will be published on the Parish Website.

6. Review of the Annual Parish (Open) meeting held on Thursday 11th April and any issues

The Open Meeting was well represented by the village groups, school, and church. No issues raised.

7. Village Maintenance

a. Pocket Park – Mr. Charles Lees informed the meeting that the ROSPA report highlighted the need to replace three wooden posts. The Council agreed for the Clerk to contact Mainline Timber to order the necessary parts. Additionally, it was noted that the Willow tree has now been felled and the logs have been stacked. There was discussion regarding the best way to dispose of the logs. Two options were discussed, offering them to villagers in exchange for a contribution or selling them to a log business, with all the funds raised going towards the rebuild of the village hall.

- b. Millennium Gardens – No concerns. The garden has been mowed, the slope where the steps once were, would benefit from soil being spread over.
- c. Streetlighting – All working. Cllr. (LL) will begin renumbering the posts.
- d. Defibrillator – All in working order.
- e. Public Footpaths & Rights of Way – Luke Wilson will be looking at the fencing along the Turkey farm. There are no concerns about the Haras fencing erected by HS2 around the Turkey farm. Litter picking needed along Stoney Bump.
- f. Trees and General Parish Environment – Cllr. (MH) Chair will follow up with Mr. Simon Davis regarding the offer to inspect the trees in Pocket Park. Cllr. (RB) has access to a chipper and Cllr. (LL) has offered to use his chainsaw to clear further overgrown, small trees and hedges.
- g. Winter Maintenance – Grit bins outside St. Leonard's and on Appletree are full.

8. General Updates

- a. Welsh Road
Damage to the raised curb (Chicanes) along Welsh Road.
- b. HS2 Liaison, Highways and Road Safety Update
Report to Simon Davis and Sam Simons the damage being caused by heavily loaded vehicles and horse boxes mounting the curb by the Chicanes along the Welsh Road.
- c. Neighbourhood Watch
Police Street Surgery in the village on Saturday 11th May 12:30 – 2pm outside the RC church.

9. Any Other Business

- a. Cllr. Harris mentioned that she had noticed garden waste being dumped along Blacksmiths Lane. Cllr. (MH) Chair and Cllr. (TB) will look.
- b. A Tree Surgeon had been noted inspecting the Cherry Tree along the Welsh Road. The Parish Council are not aware of any notifications.
- c. Mr. Charles Lees would like to discuss the VAS unit and recent traffic report at the June meeting.

10. Dates of Next Meetings to be held in the Village Hall: 13th June, 11th July, no meeting in August, 12th September, 10th October, 14th November, no meeting in December.

Meeting Closed at 8:45 pm.