

# Ingoldmells Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at the Royal Arthur Centre on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023 commencing at 7.15pm. These are notes of the meeting until approved as a true record.

Present:

Cllrs S Chamberlain (Chair), J Sargent (Vice-Chair), K Brinkley, G Clements, J Ellis, L Hemingway, M Holyer, R Stevens, A Stubbins, A Vincent and S Walmsley.

There were 3 members of the public in attendance. However, as no questions were put to the Council, it was **resolved** to move into full session.

## 1. Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all present, reminding attendees about relevant standing orders relating to behaviour, to turn off mobile phones and of appropriate escape routes in the event of a fire.

## 2. To appoint a minute taker

It was **resolved by majority** to appoint Cllr Sargent to take the minutes for the meeting.

## 3. Apologies

It was **resolved unanimously** to accept apologies from District and County Cllr Davie.

Cllr Stubbins interrupted the meeting at this stage to voice his opinion on the current state of the Council without a Clerk calling it a "shambles". Cllr Stubbins' insolence continued as he demanded the Chair and Vice-Chair resign. The Chair explained the difficult circumstances but advised he would explain further in his report under item 12.

Cllr Ellis added to the disrespectful rhetoric calling the situation "a disgrace", agreeing with Cllr Stubbins, claiming that the Chair should not have taken annual leave when matters need addressing. Cllr Ellis mentioned how other Councillors felt that nothing was being done. In reply, the Chair mentioned how it was only Cllr Stevens who volunteered to help the Council through a difficult period without a Clerk and asked for more Councillors to come forward to offer their help.

Cllr Ellis accused Cllr Chamberlain of only attending 3 Council meetings in 2022. However, Cllr Ellis provided no evidence to support this claim, which was disputed by the Chair. Cllr Chamberlain explained the duties of the Chair are almost identical to other Councillors, apart from coordinating meetings, being the face of the Council, and having a casting vote in the event of a tie.

Cllr Walmsley agreed with the opinions expressed by Cllrs Ellis and Stubbins continuing the insolent rhetoric as well as being belligerent towards the Vice-Chair. The disruption was curtailed as the Chair reiterated his reasons for absence were valid, adding that he has not asked Councillors for help, but he is not the one complaining about the current state of affairs, he's trying to make progress.

## 4. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Stevens declared an interest in the plans for Hardy's on Sea Lane and Cllr Clements declared an interest in a planning notification on item 11.

**5. To confirm the minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2022.**

With no Clerk in place to present the minutes, it was agreed to defer to a later date.

**6. To confirm the minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022.**

With no Clerk in place to present the minutes, it was agreed to defer to a later date.

**7. To confirm the minutes of the Meeting with Money Minders.**

The previous Clerk did not type up the minutes from this meeting. The Vice-Chair has written to Money Minders to ask if they recorded the meeting or took minutes the Council could use. There was no response from Money Minders prior to the Council meeting.

**8. To approve the list of accounts submitted for consideration.**

- a. October Income and Expenditure
- b. November Income and Expenditure

With no Clerk in place to present the accounts, it was agreed to defer to a later date.

**9. To approve payment of outstanding invoices.**

The Chair presented an invoice from Chubb for £1,800.15 for an annual contract for the Council buildings intruder alarms. It was **resolved unanimously** to pay the invoice.

A second invoice was presented from Metric for £1,158.34 for an annual service contract for the car park ticket machines. It was **resolved unanimously** to pay the invoice.

**10. To discuss community matters which need referring to the District and County representatives for a response.**

Cllr Davie put in his apologies, however, he emailed an update to Councillors prior to the meeting.

**11. To receive notification of any planning permissions, refusals, or amendments.**

Planning applications and notifications were emailed to Councillors prior to the meeting. There were no comments from Councillors about open applications with ELDC's planning department.

**12. To receive a report from the Chairman to the Council.**

The Chair advised both he, Cllr Sargent, Cllr Vincent and Cllr Holyer have been in the office putting a lot effort in trying to make progress. Cllr Chamberlain advised the Council have been able to acquire the services of a temporary Clerk, for 2 days a week, as previously agreed in November. Cllr Chamberlain advised the temporary Clerk could start on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> February.

Cllr Ellis asked if the job has been advertised yet. The Chair referred to the Vice-Chair who advised that the position is advertised on Indeed, the Job Centre website, and the LALC website. It can be advertised on Monster and CV Library as well. Cllr Sargent advised that Councillors will be sent CVs to review to consider for interview when they come in.

Cllr Hemingway requested hard copies of CV's.

A brief discussion took place regarding the 1953 flood commemoration event. Too many Councillors were trying to speak at the same time, as such Cllr Chamberlain reminded Councillors to raise their hand and speak through the Chair.

Cllr Vincent requested that it be recorded in the minutes that the Council have received a different notice board to the one agreed and the wording on the board is also different to what was agreed at Council.

Cllr Chamberlain advised the Caravan Club would like to return in March 2024.

Cllr Holyer advised that the Council are entitled to a recycling bin with the purple lid for cardboard and could this be requested from ELDC.

Cllr Chamberlain reported that there was a leak in the library roof and a contractor was able to do a temporary repair and will return to fix more permanently.

### **13. To discuss the contractor cleaning the bus shelters.**

Cllr Vincent reported to the Council that there is no glass panels in the bus shelters and the Council should not be paying for cleaning. The Chair asked whether the Council should consider the contractor only cleans the windows on the Council buildings.

Councillors again spoke out of turn and over each other. Cllr Chamberlain reminded Councillors to raise their hands and speak through the Chair. Cllr Ellis protested that she would address whoever she wants on the Council. Cllr Chamberlain advised it's in the standing orders to address the Chair. Cllr Stubbins also disputed the standing orders.

Cllr Chamberlain requested the Council submit a motion on the agenda item to progress the meeting. Councillors were advised the current contractor charges £155.00 to clean the Council buildings and bus shelters.

It was **resolved by majority** to have the windows cleaned on the Council buildings, not including the bus shelters.

It was **resolved by majority** to put the window cleaning contract out for tender, with a deadline for new tenders to be submitted to the Council by April 2023.

### **14. To consider an event to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III in May 2023.**

Cllr Chamberlain reported that Mrs Oakley has already booked the hall for the event. Cllr Stubbins requested a donation from the Council towards the cost of the event. At this stage Cllr Vincent advised he, Cllr Ellis and Cllr Stubbins were involved in the organisation of the event and was therefore a conflict of interest. Cllr Stevens sought clarification as to who the event was for. Cllr Chamberlain suggested it should be for the residents of Ingoldmells. Cllr Ellis advised it had not yet been decided who they wanted to cater for. Cllr Stevens recommended the group should come back to Council when they have quotes. It was **resolved** to defer to a later date.

### **15. To consider purchasing 2 new desks and chairs, as well as disposing of the 2 desks in the office.**

Cllr Sargent advised the Council that the current desks in the office were damaged and the set up was no longer good enough for a professional office environment, suggesting it was in need of improvement. Cllr Vincent and Stevens recommended that the desks could be repaired or tables we currently have could be used instead. Cllr Ellis suggested that there are other priorities that

need addressing before this. Cllr Holyer advised this was not budgeted for in the current financial year. No proposals were made.

**16. To consider purchasing a better laptop and monitor for the office, includes trading in the current laptop.**

Cllr Vincent thought that the laptop was purchased for the previous Clerk to solely take the minutes, however, it was removed from the office for personal use. No proposals were made regarding the purchase of a better laptop. It was **resolved by majority** to let the expert Cllr Stevens know to assess the laptop.

**17. To consider earlier start time for meetings.**

Cllr Chamberlain reported to the Council that he would prefer if the Annual Parish Meeting could start at 7:00pm. Cllr Ellis argued that when the meeting is held at 6:00pm more residents attend. It was **resolved by majority** to hold the 2023 Annual Parish Meeting at 7:00pm. Date to be confirmed.

**18. To consider capital projects for 2023-24**

Cllr Sargent gave examples of updating play area equipment or new village signs of projects that could be planned.

Cllr Chamberlain suggested that the car park should be considered for re-tarmacking and re-lining. It was discussed that there were funds in other accounts, so any money spent on the car park would not affect the budget or precept.

Cllr Stevens recommended that additional equipment should be put in both parks.

The library roof was discussed as it needs replacing, as well as replacement panels in bus shelters around the village.

Councillors also mentioned previous plans to install a hearing loop in the Royal Arthur Centre and the Council Offices should be requested for.

**19. To approve the budget for the 2023-24 financial year.**

A rough budget was provided to Councillors to consider, unfortunately, no comparison to previous budgets was available.

Councillors discussed amending figures on utilities, salaries, and expenses.

Cllr Sargent advised what Section 137 could be used for as there wasn't much allocated in this section.

Councillors were advised that on this draft budget, the income was forecast to be less than the expenditure. Ideally, there would be parity. It's important for Councillors to consider passing a budget planned to run at a deficit. The Council does have good reserves to meet any shortfall.

Cllr Sargent suggested that the Council should draw £30,000.00 instead of £25,000.00 from the investments to increase the income.

It was **resolved** to defer the budget until the February meeting.

**20. To approve the precept for the 2023-24 financial year.**

Cllr Sargent advised a potential 10% increase in the precept is in line with inflation and would mean a band D property costs would go up under £9.00 per year, it was also what was forecast in the draft budget.

Cllr Ellis spoke about how residents are struggling financially, and the Council should consider a 2% increase.

Councillors discussed whether ELDC's taxbase of 514 is correct. However, this is not something the Parish Council can control.

Cllr Walmsley thought 10% was too much. Cllrs Ellis and Stubbins spoke about how there should be no increase as residents are struggling. Cllr Ellis requested to ask for the opinion of a member of the public in attendance who advised a 6% increase is affordable.

Cllr Ellis proposed no increase in the precept, seconded by Cllr Stubbins. The motion did not carry with 4 votes for and 7 against.

Cllr Sargent proposed a 10% increase. It was not seconded.

Cllr Stevens proposed a 6% increase, seconded by Cllr Clements. The motion **resolved by majority**, 7 votes for, and 4 against.

**With no further matters to discuss, the Chair of the Council closed the meeting at 9:10pm.**

Signed.....

Chair of the Council - Cllr S Chamberlain

Signed.....

Minute Taker for the meeting - Jack Sargent

13<sup>th</sup> February 2023