

MINUTES of St Andrews Parish Full Council meeting held on Monday 7th October 2024 at 7.30pm in the Redhouse Community Centre, Frankel Road.

PRESENT: Cllrs Daniel Adams, Kola Beyioku, Jake Chandler (vice-chair), Steve Heyes, Sue MacDonald, Paul Morris, Paul West. Locum Clerk Mrs Deborah Bourne, Admin Assistant Mrs Louise Rose.

Also Present: One member of the public

41 **Appointment of a Proper Officer**

The first item of business was to confirm the appointment of Mrs Deborah Bourne as Locum Clerk and Proper Officer to the Council.

RESOLVED to ratify the decision made by the Staffing Committee to appoint Mrs Deborah Bourne as Locum Clerk. Terms of the appointment are:

- ✓ Duration : Three Months (with the potential for extension)
- ✓ Rate of Pay : £30.00 (Thirty Pounds) per hour
- ✓ Hours : 18 hours per week to be worked over three days.

42 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for Absence were received from Cllrs Emma Faramarzi, Mary Friend, and chair Vera Tomlinson. Cllr Chandler (vice-chair) was present, so chaired this meeting.

43 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest in matters contained on this Agenda.

44 **Minutes**

The minutes of the extra-ordinary meeting held on 4th September and the minutes of the full council meeting held on Monday 9th September 2024 had previously been circulated.

RESOLVED to adopt these minutes as a true record of the meetings. They were duly signed by Cllr Chandler as confirmation of the decision.

45 **Temporary Suspension of Meeting**

RESOLVED to suspend the meeting temporarily to enable the following activities:

- a. *Representations from members of the public present.*
One member of the public present.
- b. *Update from Borough Cllrs Adams, Chandler & Mills*
SBCllr Adams updated members on various Swindon Borough Council activities currently affecting St Andrews Parish.

Cllr Chandler, as a SBCllr, thanked members for giving Borough Councillors the opportunity to update this Parish Council.

- c. *Chairmans Announcements.*
Members were reminded that poppy wreaths were due to be laid on Remembrance Sunday; 10th November. An invitation has been received to attend the Borough's Act of Remembrance with the Borough Mayor. Locally, there is an opportunity to lay wreaths at Tadpole Village and at St Andrews Church. Members are encouraged to attend whichever event they feel appropriate as leaders of the parish of St Andrews.

Members were asked to think about projects for the future, in readiness for setting the 2025/26 budget, and to promote positive leadership within the parish.

46 **Re-instatement of Meeting**

Members agreed to resume the meeting. The Councils Standing Orders will now be observed.

47 **Committee / Working Group (WG) Updates**

- a. *Grounds Maintenance / Play Areas*
- b. *Planning*
- c. *Staffing*
- d. *Redhouse Community Centre*
- e. *Youth*
- f. *Parish Council Office (WG)*

Members approved previously circulated minutes for the above Committees. It was also noted that a Planning meeting had been held just prior to the start of this meeting and the Parish Council Office Working Group had met during the afternoon today.

48 Annual Accounts April 2023 to March 2024

The Council End of Year Accounts (1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024) were due to be submitted prior to 30th June 2024. Due to lack of staff earlier in the year this deadline was not met.

Clerk reported that three appropriate Accountants had been approached to complete and submit end of year accounts, and to help with recording the first six months this year's income and expenditure on to the Councils Accounting programme. The first Accountant was not able to help due to lack of capacity, being completely booked with other Councils until the New Year; the second unfortunately has recently been very ill and so is reducing the amount of new work for the foreseeable future. The third company can help.

RESOLVED to appoint DCK Accounting Solutions to produce end of year accounts ready for Full Council adoption and External Audit as soon as possible.

49 Financial Records April 2024 to date

As a consequence of the difficulties explained above no invoice or receipt records have been entered on to the accounting system for this financial year. The Councils chosen accounting method (Rialtas Omega) is the most suitable for the size of council and is programmed especially for parish councils.

Discussion on how the backlog of entering details on to the system should be carried out included:

- Members had hoped the Admin Assistant could be trained to carry out this task
- Getting outside help will not improve the situation in the longer term
- The estimated cost supplied by DCK Accounting will need to be taken from reserves
- Training is offered by the Accounting Package provider
- Suggest staff training and help with immediate problem
- Staff shortages will continue with RCC Manager about to take maternity leave

RESOLVED to appoint DCK Accounting Solutions to key in all backlogs, and for the locum clerk to closely monitor the progress. Training of staff will be further discussed at the next staffing committee meeting.

50 Governance

a. Completion of Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR)

Members noted that Section One of the AGAR would require positive responses for the External Auditor. These affirmations will be made at the same time as the financial statement is adopted.

b. Accounts paid by the chair, Cllr V Tomlinson

Whilst there were staff absences earlier in this year some Council invoices were paid from the Chairs Personal Account, rather than the Council Accounts. Details of those payments are shown in the table below:

Paid to Date	Invoice No. Description	Total Amount Paid	VAT Element of Invoice
SBC* 27 Jun 24	280170033 Fuel for Grounds Maintenance Vehicles	£1,375.75	£229.29
SBC* 24 Jun 24	280170041 Use of Wash Down facility at SBC Depot	£48.00	£8.00
J Manny 1 July 24	63123 Repair to main door RCC	£174.00	£29.00
Spaldings 3 July 24	In settlement of Monthly Account	£107.58	£17.93
SLCC^ Enterprises 3 Aug 24	Training for Admin Assistant	£144.00	£24.00

*Swindon Borough Council

^Society of Local Council Clerks

RESOLVED to arrange payment of £1,849.33 (One thousand, eight hundred and forty-nine pounds, thirty-three pence) to Cllr Vera Tomlinson as reimbursement for invoices as detailed above. The Locum Clerk will investigate if the VAT element of the invoices can be claimed back, as they have been paid by a third party.

c. Councillors Allowances

It was noted that qualifying Councillors had received their allowances for the first half of this financial year. Only elected members are eligible for this allowance.

51 Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED to exclude the Press and Public for the next Agenda item to allow for discussion of establishment, property or finance matters that publicity would be considered prejudicial due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

52 Establishment Matters

Removed due to confidentiality.

53 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of St Andrews Parish Council will take place on Monday 11th November 2024 at 7.30pm in the Redhouse Community Centre.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.

.....
Chairman