

BITTERLEY PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Bitterley Parish Council, at 7pm 18th November 2024

- Present:** Cllrs A Holman (Chair), R J Osborne, P J Martin, T Millard, J Reardon-Smith, and R Watkins. In Attendance: H Coonick (Clerk/RFO).
- 2024/276 Apologies Received and Accepted:** Cllrs G Dolphin, K Parry, and D Rogers
- 2024/277 Declarations of Interest**
- i. To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests: None
 - ii. To declare any Non-Pecuniary Interests: None
- 2024/278 Public Participation:** No members of the public were in attendance.
- 2024/279 To Approve the Minutes of the Meeting on the 21st October 2024:**
RESOLVED: to approve the minutes and they were signed by the chair.
- 2024/280 Shropshire Councillor Report:** Cllr Huffer was not present and had not sent a report.
- 2024/281 Clerks Report:** NJC pay award had been agreed which results in a 63p per hour increase backdated to April 2024. The contractor used by other parishes is interested in providing a service. Shropshire Council have been asked to investigate why the grant for Environmental Maintenance for 2024-25 has not yet been paid to Bitterley Parish Council. The information from the War Memorial Trust has been forwarded to the landowner of the Bedlam War Memorial. The Planning Enforcement Team are expecting the owners of Tulip Cottage to make a retrospective planning application. The Clerk has reviewed the policies and will put forward for consideration those which are outstanding before the end of March.
- 2024/282 Ledwyche Solar Farm Liaison Group Update:** Cllr Reardon-Smith updated the meeting about the response from Shropshire Council, via Stuart Anderson MP.
RESOLVED: to invite Stuart Anderson to visit the site with councillors to look at the issues of following up conditions set when planning is agreed by Shropshire Council.
- 2024/283 Consider the Grant Submissions:** Councillors considered an application from St Mary's Church PCC, Bitterley for £1,000 to assist them to maintain the churchyard. The Parish Council's Grants Policy states that 'no one application may receive more than 33% of the budgeted grant pot in any one year. Cllr Holman proposed, and Cllr Reardon-Smith seconded. Voted five in support one against.
RESOLVED: to make a payment of £256.66 to St Mary's Church PCC, Bitterley for churchyard maintenance for 2024-2025 and advise them to submit any future applications by June.
- 2024/284 Consider the Environmental Maintenance List of Tasks:** A group of Councillors met to agree the areas in need of environmental maintenance: a. village to the bridge in Cleeton St Mary b. near the concrete tracks in Farden c. before and after the railway bridge on Henley Road in Bitterley d. Several sites on the Clee Stanton Road e. Near Henley Farm. Areas for further investigation are a. Henley Lane opposite Ledwyche Brook b. Squirrel Lane after Squirrel Farm c. Triangle at Snitton Gate and road outside the Watkins Farm.
RESOLVED: to contract Mr Lewis for 35 hours to work on the five areas and write to Network Rail asking them to clear the drain under the railway line. Cllrs Holman and Dolphin will assist the contractor with the specific sites requiring work.

- 2024/285** **Agree Attendance at Shropshire Association of Local Council's Nature Recovery: Town and Parish Councils Conference:**
RESOLVED: Cllr Holman will attend. This event is free.
- 2024/286** **Consider Making a Request to National Air Traffic Services (NATS) to Remove the Gate at the NATS Station to Allow the Right to Roam:** NATS, the owners of the Common and the Commoners all agree that the gate can be removed. An email will be sent confirming this to the commoners.
RESOLVED: To ask NATS to remove the gate.
- 2024/287** **Consider Nominations to Attend the Lord Lieutenant's Shropshire Garden Party on 4 June 2025:** Cllr Osborne will approach two potential nominees and if they accept, the council will nominate them.
- 2024/288** **Consider Councillors Attending General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) Training:** Those councillors who intend to stand again at the election in May 2025 are encouraged to attend the GDPR training. The Clerk will provide the dates to all councillors.
- 2024/289** **Financial Matters:**
- i. Note Income: the grant from Shropshire Council for Environmental Maintenance has not yet been received.
 - ii. Approve Payments: a. Rocking Horse Media £40 b. H Coonick (Clerk) Salary Oct-Dec and Travel Expenses c. SALC Councillor Training £35:
RESOLVED: to make the payments.
 - iii. Agree Expenditure on the Environmental Maintenance Budget for 2024-2025:
RESOLVED: to pay 35 hours at £22 per hour for the work identified in item 284.
 - iv. Appoint the Auditor for 2025-2026: councillors considered the options available and whether they were competent and independent.
RESOLVED: to appoint Rebecca Turner as the auditor.
 - v. Consider the Reserves Policy:
RESOLVED: to adopt the Reserves Policy
 - vi. Consider the Draft Budget: there were several changes required, and the amended version will be presented to the council at the January meeting for adoption and to set the precept.
 - vii. VAT Reclaim:
RESOLVED: to make a claim from 1/10/23 to the 31/3/25 in April 2025.
- 2024/290** **Councillors Report:** Cllr Holman reported that she attended the Shropshire Association of Local Councils Annual General Meeting. The main themes were the difference Parish Council's do make to their communities, the push to support Environmental issues. Cllr Holman felt there were lots of Environmental scheme but was not sure of how effective they were.
- 2024/291** **Action List:** defer to the next meeting.
- 2024/292** **Items for the next Agenda: a. Ledwyche Solar Farm Liaison Group Update b. Adopt the Budget and Set the Precept**
- Next Meeting: 7.00 Monday 20th January 2025 at Bitterley Village Hall**

Signed by the Chair:

Date: