

Blisland Parish Council



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MINUTES FOR THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 15th June 2023

Present: Cllr. Meads (Chair), Cllr. Dickin (Vice-Chair), Cllr. Green, Cllr. Shephard, Cllr. Spencer, Cllr. Stansfield, Cllr Teasdale, and Cllr Trevarthern.

23-06/1 Apologies: Cllr Lowden, Cllr J. Cruse (Cornwall Council).

Also Present: Locum Clerk: Carolyn May

23-06/2 Declarations of Interest: No declarations of interest, or gifts, were made.

The meeting commenced at 7 pm. Cllr. Meads (Chair) welcomed all to the meeting. The Chair welcomed Carolyn May, who had agreed to Clerk the meeting, following the sudden resignation of the Parish Clerk (hereinafter referred to as the 'out-going Clerk').

AGENDA

23-06/3 Public Forum – There were no members of the public in attendance at the Meeting.

23-06/4 Approval of Minutes

23-06/4(1) Annual Parish Meeting - Members considered the Draft Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Blisland Parish Council, held on the **18th of May 2023**.

Cllr. Spencer highlighted an error at Minute 15 (Community Engagement). The Minute reads that the Parish Council 'had' two websites. This should read 'has' two websites.

It was **proposed** by Cllr. Dickin, **seconded** by Cllr. Stansfield, and **RESOLVED** that, with the amendment highlighted by Cllr Spencer, the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Blisland Parish Council, held on the 18th of May 2023, would be accepted as an accurate reflection of the business conducted at the same. Unanimous.
Carried.

The Minutes were duly signed by the Chairman.

23-06/4(2) Annual Parish Council Meeting - Members considered the Draft Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting, held on the 18th of May 2023.

A number of material inaccuracies were identified by Members. These included the following:

- **Agenda Reference 23-05/1** – the narrative provided was deemed, by Members, to be inaccurate. Cllr Meads did not ‘announce that she was to stand again as Chair and asked for a proposer and a seconder.’ It was **agreed** that Cllr Meads did *not* ‘announce’ an intention to stand for election, as an assumption that she would be elected to the position. Rather, the Councillor *offered* to stand/ indicated a willingness to stand for re-election to the position *if* there was a Proposer and Secunder. The manner in which the discussion had been Minuted did not appropriately reflect the nature of the discussion.
- **Agenda Reference 23-05/3** – It was noted that Cllr. Montague was listed on the Minutes as being present at the meeting. That statement is inaccurate. At the date of the said meeting, ex-Councillor Montague had already resigned from the Parish Council and was not in attendance at the same.
- **Agenda Reference 23-05/6** - It was reported in the Meeting Minutes that Cllr Lowden had stated he had listened to the recording of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 16th of March 2023. That statement was inaccurate. Cllr Lowden had, at a further meeting, asked *if* he could listen to the tape.
- **Agenda Reference 23-05/6 (para 2)** – This Minute referred to the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting, held on the 16th of March 2023.

It was noted that the Chair was referred to as ‘she’, whilst other Members were correctly referred to as ‘Cllr’. It was felt that that the reference to Cllr. Meads as ‘she’ was disrespectful to the Chair personally, and to the formal Office of Chairman of the Body. The conduct was deemed to be unprofessional on the part of the out-going Clerk.

It is also stated, within the same Minute, that ‘she (Cllr Meads) moved that the Minutes be changed at 23-03/10 and 23-03/11. She asked for a Proposer and a Secunder’. This assertion was deemed to be inaccurate as, at the time of the discussion, there was already a proposal ‘on the table’ which had been correctly Proposed and Seconded, prior to Cllr Lowden speaking.

Cllr Meads stated that, had the original Proposal failed, then a second Proposal could have been made, thus enabling the commencement of further debate.

The Statement made by the out-going Clerk, that she had been prevented from speaking, is also deemed inaccurate. Cllr Meads stated that she had no recollection of the out-going Clerk wishing to speak, nor that the then Clerk had been prevented from doing so.

The Locum Clerk advised the meeting that, had Cllr Lowden felt that there was an alternative Proposal to be considered, he could have proposed an amendment to the

original proposal. The amendment would then have had to be debated, and decided upon, prior the original proposal being addressed.

Cllr Spencer pointed out that there was no reference made to the fact that the proposed amendments had been disseminated prior to the meeting, and that Members were aware of the same. The Minutes provided an impression that Members had only learned of the proposed amendments at the meeting. Nor was it recorded in the Minutes that the amendments requested were minor in nature and did not affect or compromise the veracity of the Minutes. It was felt to be unacceptable that the Minutes for March 2023 were still being discussed in June. It was hoped that, following the extant meeting, the matter would be deemed 'closed'.

The Locum Clerk advised the meeting that she had, in fact, requested in writing that the out-going Clerk remove the inaccurate Minutes for the meeting of the 16th of March 2023 from the Parish Council website, so that they might be properly amended, prior to being re-published.

Members were advised that the Minutes for the Meeting of the 16th of March had been hand annotated by the out-going Clerk following their approval by the Council, and prior to their publication on the website.

The Locum Clerk advised the Members that such a course of action was inappropriate.

Agenda Reference 23-05/15 - Policy Reviews – Cllr Spencer alluded to comment (a) 'BPC had worked to update many policies over the last few months'. Cllr Spencer stated that he did not recall any of that conversation, other than deferring the Grievance, and Complaints Handling Policies. Cllr Spencer therefore did not understand why this has been captured in the Minutes.

Members agreed that this statement was inaccurate and should be removed from the Minutes. Only paragraph (b) should be retained.

It was proposed by Cllr. Stansfield, seconded by Cllr. Green, and RESOLVED that the ICT provider should be contacted and asked to provide the Locum Clerk with a password for the website, so that the inaccurate Minutes can be removed from the same, amended to remove the annotations, and then republished. Unanimous. Carried.

It was proposed by Cllr. Spencer, seconded by Cllr. Trevarthen and RESOLVED that approval of the draft Minutes for the Annual Parish Council Meeting, held on the 18th of May 2023, would be deferred until the inaccuracies identified are rectified. The amended draft Minutes are to be re-introduced at the July 2023 meeting of the Parish Council .Unanimous. Carried.

23-06/5 - ibid

23-06/6 – None Received

23-06/7 – PLANNING APPLICATIONS

5 Day Protocol

Reference	PA23/02723
Alternative Reference	PP-12038926
Application Validated	Mon 17 Apr 2023
Address	Poundsconce Blisland Bodmin Cornwall PL30 4HJ
Proposal	Retrospective retention of a hardstanding and construction of an adjoining Pole Barn for Agricultural storage (re-submission of Application No. PA23/00826)

Members considered the options provided under the terms of the five-day protocol.

It was proposed by Cllr. Stansfield, seconded by Cllr. Trevarthen and RESOLVED that the Parish Council would approve the application .Unanimous. Carried.

It was agreed that Cllr Stansfield would correspond with the relevant Planning Officer, in order to advise her of the Parish Council's decision.

23-06/8 – PLANNING DECISIONS – Noted

23-06/9 – OTHER PLANNING MATTERS – The Gove Letter. The Chair advised the meeting that she was unaware of any response having been received from Mr Gove, in respect of the letter sent to him by the Parish Council.

Cllr Stansfield advised the Members that Scott Mann MP had undertaken to 'hasten the matter along' (via his Parliamentary Secretary) should a response not be received from Mr Gove in early course.

INVITATION TO CORNWALL COUNCIL PLANNING ENFORCEMENT GROUP LEADER – update

Cllr Meads stated that the meeting held on the 9th of June had been successful. The Enforcement Officer, Mr Alan Mason, had been comprehensive in relation to the way his department operates. Cllr. Green expressed her concerns relating to the inadequately trained Officers, who were attending at sites, unaccompanied, on behalf of Cornwall Council.

Cllr. Stansfield alluded to the issue of the advertising hoardings on the A30. Cllr Meads advised the meeting that the Officer from CC would come back to the Members in relation to the same.

Cllr Stansfield reminded Members that the Chair would have to correspond with Mr Gavin Smith, Head of area 25, in relation to the Helland Barton Farm, and the Regulation 14 representation (which addressed the lack of agricultural guidance, which should be in PPG 7 but which CC does not seem to have).

Cllr Stansfield suggested that the Chair could either correspond with Mr Smith, raising the questions to be addressed, or alternatively, Mr Smith could be invited to meet with the Members to address the issues.

Cllr Stansfield felt that it was concerning that no definitive answer was provided to Members in respect of which decision are taken where, in relation to the determination of planning harm. There must be a mechanism to stop very junior/ inexperienced Officers from merely defaulting to the view that there is no planning harm. A positive relationship between the PC and CC would enable the PC to raise concerns where there is some doubt in respect of a decision made.

It was **agreed** that the Chair would correspond with Mr Smith and extend an invitation to him, to meet with the Members of the Parish Council.

23-06/10 – NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Cllr. Dickin advised the meeting that the Cornwall Council Neighbourhood Development Team is currently awaiting the 'sign off' of the Blisland NDP by the Legal and Finance Departments of CC, and the Service Director. It is anticipated that these actions will take a few weeks to complete.

Following the completion of these actions, the matter will then progress to a referendum. At that juncture the PC will be advised of the relevant referendum dates, and procedures to be followed. It will then be necessary to determine if Parishioners will be required to produce photographic ID, to cast their vote.

23-06/11 – FINANCE

- (a) **Bank Reconciliation** – Not provided.
- (b) It was noted that, despite the out-going Clerk having been asked for bank documents and payment schedules, these had not been received by the Locum Clerk.

Members discussed the fact that there was no means of paying the PC's creditors, due to there being no persons (other than the out-going Clerk) with access to the bank account.
- (c) **Conflict of Interest Document** – The out-going Clerk had requested that the Conflict-of-Interest Document be signed at the extant meeting, as this had been missed at the May 2023 PC meeting. The document was duly signed.
- (d) **Date of Exercise of Public Rights** – this document must be published on the PC website, in order to comply with the External Audit Inspection Requirements.
- (e) **RFO Update** – None
- (f) **Grants** – two grant applications had been submitted but not determined. These will be considered in July 2023.

It was **proposed** by Cllr. Shepherd, **seconded** by Cllr. Trevarthen and **RESOLVED** that the payment of invoices could not be addressed until the Parish Council has control of its finances. Unanimous. **Carried.**

23-06/12 – CLERK'S REPORT and CORRESPONDENCE – None

It was agreed that the Councillor Vacancy item would be deferred for a period of two months. The Locum Clerk to request details of any applicants from the out-going Clerk.

23-06/13 - POLICY REVIEWS

It was **agreed** that the Grievance Policy, and the Complaints Handling Procedure would be removed as agenda items. The Draft Grievance Policy placed on the website by the out-going Clerk is to be removed, as this had not been discussed by Members.

It was **agreed** that the Digital Communication Policy should be re-visited and reviewed by an external person. It appeared that, under the proposals contained therein, a certain amount of control was being centred on the Clerk. It was felt that Aalgard Renshaw Ltd should be asked to review the document.

A list of policies had been provided to the Members, by the out-going Clerk. It was felt that these documents required consideration. The Locum Clerk suggested that a meeting should be held to undertake the task, and to amend policies as required, and to determine which policies are required.

Cllr Spencer is to remove all 'Draft' policies from the PC website. The original Grievance Policy is to be reinstated to the website.

It was **proposed** by Cllr. Trevarthen, **seconded** by Cllr. Stansfield and **RESOLVED** that the Grievance Policy and the Grant Handling Procedure should be removed as agenda items, and that the draft policies be removed from the PC website. Unanimous. **Carried.**

23-06/14 – HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

(a) LMP contract roll-over – agreed.

It was **proposed** by Cllr. Green, **seconded** by Cllr. Dickin and **RESOLVED** that the PC would agree to the continuance of the LMP Contract. Cornwall Council to be advised of this by the Locum Clerk. Unanimous. **Carried.**

It was **agreed** that Cllr Shephard would contact Lanhydrock Garden Services, to have that area around the telephone box added to the green cutting schedule. However, it was further agreed that the action would be deferred as there is highways work to be completed in this area during July, Councillor Stansfield stated that perhaps the area would be tidied following completion of the same. A discussion ensued and it was felt that, although the telephone box is not in the same area, and that it unlikely that CC Highways would tidy the area, Councillor Spencer stated that he would take his strimmer down to the site and cut back the overgrowing plants around the phone box.

Unanimous. **Carried.**

(b) Grit Bins

The grit bins have not been filled yet. It was **agreed** that Cllr. Stansfield would liaise with CC Highways department in respect of this matter.

23-06/15 – ENVIRONMENT

(a) Dark Skies Signage – on-going.

(e) Trees at Pentor – nothing to report.

- (f) **Flower Meadow** – Cllr Shepherd reported that the contractors have stopped cutting the areas highlighted to them by Cllr Shepherd. It was further requested that the area to the right of the entrance to Newton House, where there are reported to be thirty-nine species growing on that patch of ground.
- (g) **Hedge Planting** – deferred to July meeting.
- (h) **Bird/ Bat Box Purchase** – This matter to be removed from the Agenda.

23-06/16 – DUCHY DEFIBRILLATORS

A Lottery Grant Funding application has been submitted. Now that Cllr. Stansfield is able to access to the correspondence relating to the said application, he will be in a position to monitor any responses received.

23-06/17 – INSTITUTE

Institute Windows - Cllr Spencer reported that he had contacted the person appointed to undertake the design of the windows and had agreed that the Parish Council would meet the costs of the same.

Institute Finance – A request was made to the out-going Clerk, for a list of Income and Expenditure, relating to the Institute. No income information was provided. The information cannot be accessed through the PC management system, as all Members had been locked out of the same. It is not known if rent has been collected.

It was **agreed** that the Locum Clerk would make enquiries relating to income. The Institute Booking Process is to be added to the July Agenda.

23-06/18 – VILLAGE GREEN

Benches - Deferred to July meeting.

Picnic Tables – these items are now in situ. **This item to be removed from the Agenda.**

First Aid Training Update – deferred due to lack of information.

23-06/19 – COMMUNICATIONS

New Mailing List - Cllr Spencer advised the meeting that there had been approximately forty new applications requesting to be added to the mailing list. With the thirty addresses currently subscribed, and the latest applications still to be processed, it is anticipated that there will be approximately ninety subscribers by the end of this week.

It was suggested by the Chair that a short notice should be disseminated to the subscribers, to advise them that the scheme was now operational.

Notice Board Update - Cllr Spencer had now measured the existing board. Members discussed citing options and notice board types. Cllr Green highlighted the problem that many parishioners experienced – that they were unsure of which notice board to read, as there are several in the village.

It was suggested that the Parish Council should use a single (new) notice board for its own documents, and that the other boards could be used for village notices.

Cllr Meads undertook to research various notice board companies and advise Members of any sites that may be of interest.

23-06/20 – TRAINING AND MEETINGS ATTENDED

The Inaugural meeting of the Bodmin Community Partnership – 21st June – Cllr Meads and Cllr Stanfield will attend this event.

Code of Conduct Training (Zoom Meeting) – 20th June – Cllr Green will attend this course.

Planning Induction Refresher Session (Zoom Meeting) – 11th July

Institute Booking – the Clerk has received a request from Cllr Lowden, to book the Institute on the (date), for the Blisland Fayre Meeting. Cllr Meads asked how this was to be undertaken. Cllr Spence confirmed that the booking had been made.

23-06/21 – DIARY DATES TO BE CONFIRMED (ibid)

PART II CONFIDENTIAL SESSION

23-06/23

20.58 hrs

Due to the confidential, and immediate nature of the matters to be discussed, it was proposed by Cllr Dickin, seconded by Cllr Trevarthen and RESOLVED that the Parish Council would enter into closed discussions.

In accordance with the provisions set out in the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, section 1(6), the press, and public will be asked to vacate the meeting venue.

Members discussed a number of matters relating to the on-going management of the Parish Council function.

It was **agreed** that :

- A timetable for new Clerk recruitment would be compiled;
- All Parish Council items and documentation would be retrieved from the out-going Clerk;
- Portfolio Management methods would be re-configured.

23-06/24 Close of meeting

At 21.10 hrs, the meeting exited the Confidential Session and the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council closed.

