

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Handforth Parish Council held
on Tuesday 10th May 2016 at 7:30pm, The Youth Centre, Old
Road, Handforth.**

Present: Cllr Burgess

Cllr Clark

Cllr Samson (Chair of Handforth Parish Council)

Cllr Smith

Cllr Sullivan

Cllr Tolver

Cllr Thompson

Also present Mr Brooks, Parish Clerk and thirteen members of the public.

Part A

16/14/1 To elect a Chair of Handforth Parish Council.

Cllr Thompson proposed himself as Chair, seconded by Cllr Tolver.

Motion failed: three for and four against.

Cllr Sullivan proposed Cllr Samson as Chair, seconded by Cllr Smith.

Motion carried: four for and three against.

Cllr Samson was elected as Chair of Handforth Parish Council. Councillor Samson thanked those councillors who voted for her, and hoped that those councillors who voted against her would work with her in the coming year.

16/14/2 To receive apologies for absence- none.

16/14/3 To note declarations of Members' Interests.

Cllr Samson informed the meeting that she was a school governor at Wilmslow Grange Primary School. Cllr Sullivan declared an interest in item 16/14/8, in that she knew one of the payees.

16/14/4 Open Forum-

There was a question from a member of the public about councillors abstaining when voting. Cllr Samson responded that councillors may vote as they wish, but it was considered bad practice for councillors to abstain on a frequent basis.

16/14/5 To approve and sign the minutes of the HPC meeting of the 12th April 2016.

Cllr Sullivan proposed, seconded by Cllr Clark that the minutes of the Handforth PC meeting held on 12th April be approved and signed.

Resolved: unanimously.

16/14/6 To approve and sign the minutes of the extra-ordinary HPC meeting of the 19th April 2016.

Cllr Burgess proposed, seconded by Cllr Samson that the minutes of the extra-ordinary Handforth PC meeting held on 19th April be approved and signed.

Motion carried: five for and two against.

16/14/7 To receive a report from the Clerk.

The Clerk's report focussed on progress that had been made on the short term projects agreed at the Handforth PC meeting in October 2015.

The Chair thanked the Clerk for his report.

16/14/8 To approve accounts for payment.

Cllr Tolver proposed, seconded by Cllr Thompson that the accounts for payment of £82,922.86 be approved.

Motion carried: six for and one abstention.

16/14/9 To elect a Vice Chair of Handforth Parish Council.

Cllr Burgess proposed Cllr Smith as Vice- Chair of Handforth PC, this was seconded by Cllr Sullivan.

Motion carried: four for and three against.

16/14/10 To elect members of the following committees and outside bodies:-

Planning & Environment Committee- Cllrs Burgess and Sullivan.

Finance Committee- Cllrs Burgess, Sullivan, Smith, Thompson and Tolver.

Employment Committee- Cllrs Burgess, Samson, Sullivan Thompson and Tolver.

Hampers of Hope working group- Cllr Burgess, Sullivan, Smith, Thompson and Tolver.

Manchester Airport Representative- Cllr Sullivan.

SK9 Youth Group Representative- Cllrs Burgess, Sullivan, and Samson.

Local Plan Group- Mr P Goodman, the Parish Clerk, Cllr Tolver and Cllr Thompson.

All of the above was agreed without a vote. It was noted that as the Planning Committee only had two members and should have a minimum of three permanent members to avoid the need to use substitutes. This would have to be revisited at a later council meeting.

16/14/11 To approve the Handforth Parish Council Financial Regulations.

Cllr Burgess proposed, seconded by Cllr Sullivan that this item be deferred to a later meeting.

Motion carried: five for and two abstentions.

16/14/12 To approve the Handforth Parish Council Standing Orders.

Cllr Burgess proposed, seconded by Cllr Thompson that this item be deferred to a later meeting.

Motion carried: six for and one abstention.

16/14/13 To approve the terms of reference of Handforth Parish Council committees.

Cllr Burgess proposed, seconded by Cllr Sullivan that this item be deferred to a later meeting.

Motion carried: six for and one abstention.

16/14/14 To approve new cheque signatories for the Handforth PC current account.

Cllr Thompson proposed himself as a cheque signatory, seconded by Cllr Tolver.

The motion failed three for and four against.

16/14/15 To consider two bids for financial support from the SK9 Youth Group, with a total cost of £5623.50.

Cllr Tolver proposed, seconded by Cllr Thompson that the sum of £1000 (20%) of the total Wilmslow Lacrosse bid be approved.

Resolved: unanimously.

Cllr Clark proposed, seconded by Cllr Sullivan that the sum of £311.75 (50%) of the RHS garden bid be approved.

Motion carried: six for and one abstention.

Cllr Thompson abstained on the vote on the RHS bid, as just before the voting was to take place he declared an interest in the item.

16/14/16 To consider two bids for financial support totalling £1000 from groups wishing to celebrate the Queen's 90th Birthday.

Cllr Smith proposed, seconded by Cllr Burgess that the Wilmslow Grange PS application for £500 to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday be supported.

Resolved: unanimously.

Mobility Action Group application. Councillors had raised a number of questions about this application and the Clerk had forwarded them to the organiser of this group but not received a response.

Cllr Samson proposed, seconded by Cllr Smith that this item be deleted from the agenda.

Motion failed: two for, three against and two abstentions.

Cllr Thompson proposed, seconded by Cllr Tolver that this item be deferred to a later meeting.

Motion carried: four for, one against and two abstentions.

16/14/17 To confirm that the next meeting of Handforth Parish Council will take place on the 14th June 2016.

It was agreed without a vote that the next meeting of Handforth Parish Council would take place on 14th June 2016, 7:30 pm at Handforth Youth Centre.

Part B

Cllr Sullivan proposed, seconded by Cllr Clark that pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, members of the press and public will be excluded from this part of the meeting on the grounds of the confidential nature of the business.

Resolved: unanimously.

Prior to considering this item Cllr Smith read out a statement

'Repeated emails from Cllr Tolver call into question the integrity of the four Cllrs involved in the selection process for the position of Parish Clerk. The process followed has been the same as that which was followed for the current Parish Clerk.

Cllr Tolver likened the selection process to the behaviour of Michael Jones, ex Leader of CEC, and insinuated that the police would be investigating the interviewers for the Parish Clerk.

Cllr Thompson has published a photograph which he maintains show 2 of the interviewers and their spouses as members of Friends of Stanley Hall Park and demonstrating "a cosy relationship with a candidate. Neither of the interviewers are members. One of the spouses is.

Not once during this interview process have I heard any discussions regarding favouritism towards any of the applicants, by those taking part in the interviews. On

the contrary, when all the CVs were being examined, the comments were wholly concerned with the high standard of all the applications. I know that the sole aim of all those Cllrs involved in the selection process is to recruit the best candidate possible for HPC. All these inferences and attempts via emails to sabotage the process through such disgraceful means are at best disappointing and at worst defamatory.'

Cllr Tolver asked that the Clerk read out a statement that he had prepared.

'I would like to record my extreme concern that Councillors Samson, Smith, Sullivan and Burgess have taken part in the vote on this item on the agenda due to their close association, friendship and/or acquaintance with one of the candidates interviewed for the post of Parish Clerk. I consider they should have declared their interest and taken no part in the debate or vote, and I consider to have done so to be morally wrong and a clear conflict of interest. I also believe it was almost certainly in breach of the law.

I have given prior notice of my concerns to all Councillors of the Parish Council. I proposed an alternative panel of independent interviewers, but the above-mentioned Councillors refused the proposal.

The Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee of Cheshire East Council shared my concerns and supported my proposal, and phoned the Parish Clerk to express her views, but they were rejected. These Councillors have wilfully ignored good advice on the conduct of an extremely important piece of Council business.'

The Clerk pointed out to the meeting that no vote on this item had been taken place and that Cllr Tolver's statement was therefore premature. He confirmed that he had spoken to Cllr Smetham and that he did not agree with her comments.

16/14/18 To ratify the appointment of a new Parish Clerk.

Cllr Sullivan reviewed the interview process, informing the meeting that the interview panel unanimously agreed that Mr A Comiskey Dawson was the best candidate.

Cllr Sullivan proposed, seconded by Cllr Samson that Mr Comiskey Dawson be offered the post of Parish Clerk subject to satisfactory references on an SLCC contract incorporating the terms outlined in the job advertisement.

Resolved: unanimously.

16/14/19 To consider the transitional arrangements regarding the post of Parish Clerk.

Cllr Clark proposed, seconded by Cllr Thompson that the Clerk contact Mr Comiskey Dawson and make the appropriate transitional arrangements then report back to all councillors by email.

Resolved: unanimously.

The meeting closed at 8:55 pm.

Chair.....

Date.....