

RATTLEDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 25th June 2024 at 18:30 in Rattlesden Village Hall

Present: Cllr. Tony Edwards (Chair), Cllr. Sarah Osborne (Deputy), Cllr. Steve Atkinson, Cllr. Paul Bradnam, Cllr. Russell Morley, Cllr. Dan Jewers.

In Attendance: County Cllr. Penny Otton, District Cllr. Nicky Willshere, Parish Clerk Nick Skelhorn and one member of the public.

Absences: Apologies received from; Cllr. Dave Goodlad.

2024/073 **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr. Atkinson declared an interest in item 7.1 on the Agenda (Planning application DC/24/02450) which concerned his property.

2024/074 **Minutes of the Last Parish Council Meeting**

It was collectively resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on 28th May 2024 be approved as a true record of events.

2024/075 **Public comment and questions on agenda items**

Mr R. Osborne kindly shared his professional knowledge to support the Council's discussions on item 12 (IT Software Options), details of which are appended to these minutes. The Clerk and Council thanked Richard for his time and valuable contributions.

2024/076 **County Councillor's Report**

Cllr. Otton's report was received, a copy of which is appended to these minutes. Cllr. Edwards sought an update on the parking restriction markings to be placed adjacent to the drop curb near the bottom of Rising Sun Hill. Cllr. Otton confirmed she would follow-up.

2024/077 **District Councillor's Report**

Cllr. Willshere's report was received, a copy of which is appended to these minutes. Cllr Willshere provided additional feedback on her discussions with BMSDC on required works to St. Nicholas' Close (repairs to walls, lack of parking for users), confirming that historically plans to improve the area had been created, but had not been progressed. She confirmed she was to maintain pressure to deliver works.

2024/078 **Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes**

078.1 'Minute 071.7 Maintenance Work': The weeding around the bottle banks and works to replace the benches at Cemetery Green and the green adjacent to the Whalebones were completed, with the latter costing £70 less than the quotation as an existing concrete plinth was found beneath the undergrowth. The Clerk is still finalising quotations for new village signs.

078.2 'Minute 071.9 Water Leak, Lower Road': The Clerk continues to seek feedback on the issue.

RATTLEDEN PARISH COUNCIL

2024/079

Planning

079.1 June Applications:

DC/24/02450 (4 Rectory Meadow – Tree works to reduce height of 1no Robina). The Council confirmed they had no objections via email given the consultation deadline.

DC/24/02567 (The Nest, Bird's Green – Listed Buildings Consent to convert an existing walk in wardrobe into an ensuite). The Council confirmed they had no objections via email given the consultation deadline.

DC/24/02799 (Peal Cottage, Church Path – To vary Condition 2 of the previous granted application, namely amend drawings and site plans). The Council, whilst noting their previous reservations on the appropriateness / character of the proposed, collectively agreed that the now amends were immaterial and confirmed they would not object.

079.2 Applications Approved/Rejected in June: Application DC/24/01517 (1 Church Path, Listed Building's Consent to replace external doors / paint front windows) was granted on 3rd June 2024; Application DC/24/02450 (4 Rectory Meadow, as above) was granted on 21st June 2024.

2024/080

Finance

080.1 Financial Report: The Clerk's financial report to 31st May 2024 was received. The current account balance stood at £635.36 and the deposit accounts at £114,604.83, of which £70,311.13 represented CIL funds. The Clerk provided commentary on the budget variances to date, namely a £231.24 overspend in payroll (due to a capitalised April payment of backdated pay to the Clerk following revision of the published Salary bands in the previous year), and a £1,188.51 overspend in total payments to date due to additional planned spending of reserves since the Budget was drafted. The Clerk confirmed also that all CIL monies, save £5,000, was being transferred to the new Dudley Deposit account (the £5,000 held back due to only being able to withdraw funds via postal application), with the transfer seeing all Council funds now protected by the FSCS Compensation Scheme and a higher rate of interest on CIL funds (3.75%).

080.2 Payments Schedule: The schedule of payments for June 2024 was approved totalling £2,984.06. Supporting information was provided for the increased monthly grounds maintenance costs, namely the introduction of an additional £75/month charge to afford four more grass cuts per annum and a one off £80 charge to afford weeding of the bottle bank area and removal of brambles around the Millenium Arbour (collectively approved by the Council via email in June).

080.3 GDRP Compliance: Following feedback from the internal auditor that additional financial information should be publicised where possible to support Council financial transactions, it was collectively agreed, to prevent GDPR issues, that copies of any supporting documentation would continue to be made publicly available upon request, but that a note was to be added to all minutes going forward to make the public aware as per the below.

RATTLEDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Should a member of the public wish to view any supporting documentation in relation to the above please contact the Rattlesden Parish Clerk.

- 2024/081 Millennium Arbour Revamp**
The Clerk confirmed, following investigations, that the existing soil required work/improvement to offer the best chances of future success. He presented anticipated costs for soil improver (£100) and a wisteria (£35) which was duly approved.
- 2024/082 Dog Waste Bins**
The Council reviewed recent public comments and discussed options to improve current facilities (moving the bin on Poy Street to a more visible location, possible additional bins near the Baptist Church footpath / along Top Road). It was also noted how all parish bins could be used for dog waste since collections had been combined – the Clerk is to approach BMSDC to see if stickers can be provided to identify the dual use.
- 2024/083 Commemorative Oak**
Comments received from Mrs Goodchild on the proposed variety and size were noted (red oak dislikes alkaline soils, and larger size may be more difficult to establish). It was resolved that a small common English Oak was to be obtained within the previously identified budget. Cllr. Atkinson also share initial options for commemorative plaques, confirming he was still awaiting some quotations.
- 2024/084 IT Software Options**
The Clerk confirmed costs of various email/file storage options previously circulated by email (c.£350/annum for a Microsoft package vs. c.£12/annum for a domain name and email option alone). Following input kindly received from Mr R. Osborne (item 2024/75) the Council confirmed that a domain name/email only option would be sufficient for its needs. The clerk was to finalise costs, review accessibility and report back.
- 2024/085 Highways Verges**
The Council collectively noted how the current length of the verges throughout the Parish were causing issues (poor visibility at junctions, forcing traffic into the centre of the road, concealed potholes etc.). Following Clerk confirmation that the annual cut was not scheduled until late July, the Council resolved that the Clerk was to obtain options and quotations for conducting a cut of all verges as soon as possible, and costs thereafter for annual maintenance options.
- 2024/086 Rattlesden Church of England Primary Academy**
Cllr. Atkinson confirmed that the school has maintained its previous Ofsted ‘Good’ rating and that the full (ungraded) report was now available online. The Council collectively commended the retiring head teacher and her team for their hard work and dedication.
- 2024/087 Rolling Review of Council Policies – 08 Planning Committee: Terms of Reference**
Given the Planning Committee had not been formally reappointed, and that currently there was not a need for planning matters to be considered by a separate entity, the Clerk was tasked to review and amend the policy to make it specific to the whole Council and submit changes for review / approval.

RATTLEDEN PARISH COUNCIL

2024/088

Matters to be Brought to the Attention of the Council

088.1 SID charging: Councillors noted Cllr. Goodlad's request for assistance in charging the SIDs going forward, with Cllr Edwards confirming he was to assist.

088.2 New Bus Shelter: The clerk shared indicative costs (£5000-£6000k) for the removal / disposal of the old shelter and erection of a brick based and 'chunky' oak tiled new shelter. The Clerk is to reshare images of the proposed installation and obtain more formal quotations.

088.3 Old Benches: The clerk confirmed his desire to dispose of the old bench removed from Cemetery Green due to its dilapidation and confirmed that the Five Bells Public House were willing to take the bench removed from the green adjacent to the Whalebones (this no longer in fitting with the new benches / needing restoration). The Council approved.

The meeting closed at 19:58

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