

COLNEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

 Address: Highfield Park Visitor Centre, Hill End Lane AL4 0RA
 Telephone: (01727) 825 314
 Website: <https://colneyheathparishcouncil.gov.uk>
 E-mail: clerk@colneyheathparishcouncil.gov.uk



MINUTES OF COLNEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT COLNEY HEATH JMI SCHOOL ON THURSDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 2022, 7.30pm

Members in attendance

Cllr K Barnes (Highfield Ward)	Cllr J Mulroney (Highfield Ward)
Cllr H Brazier (Hill End Ward)	Cllr G Shaw (Colney Heath Ward)
Cllr T Burns (Colney Heath Ward)	Cllr K Slaughter (Colney Heath Ward)
Cllr P Cook (Chairman) (Highfield Ward)	Cllr R Solts (Highfield Ward)
Cllr J Llewellyn (Colney Heath Ward)	Clerk of the Council, Ms. L. Chaplin

Other attendees

5 members of the public

22/23-37

APOLOGIES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman opened the meeting and there was a one minutes silence held in honour of the passing of Queen Elizabeth II.

Apologies were not required as all councillors in attendance.

It was confirmed that two councillors and one member of the public were audio recording the meeting.

The Chair made the following announcements:

- Meetings had taken place with developers in line with Parish Council policy on planning applications and pre-application submissions on several developments planned in Colney Heath village.
- The S W Herts Joint Strategic Plan out for consultation and councillors were issued a card with more details.
- SADC Parking Consultation noted a submission will be made shortly.
- Thanks were given to the Clerk for the work and protocols followed during Operation London Bridge (OLB) and the extra hours worked.
- The strip of land owned by the Parish Council located at the entrance to Fredericks Wood was now confirmed to be registered with HM Lands Registry.

22/23-38

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

a) None noted, there was a question to Cllr Solts regarding a company which Cllr Solts had not heard of. There was also a question to Cllr Shaw regarding a potential update to his register.

b) All councillors in attendance confirmed by a show of hands that the published declarations were correct and up to date. Cllr Shaw confirmed he would review his and action accordingly.

c) None received or noted

d) None requested

22/23-39

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

7.36pm Standing Orders were suspended so members of the public could have the opportunity to ask questions/make statements to the Council. No statements made or questions asked so Standing Orders were resumed at 7.37pm

22/23-40

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 28th July 2022 were noted as circulated and taken as read. Chairman asked for any comments as to their accuracy. There were no comments regarding accuracy. The minutes were duly proposed, seconded, and unanimously **RESOLVED** by to be a true and accurate record of the meeting. The minutes were signed by meeting Chairman Councillor Cook for the parish website. **Motion carried.**

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	FINANCE, AUDIT & GOVERNANCE
22/23-41	FINANCE a) Approval of payments Month 5 – August 2022 The payment sheet listing payments 060-079 was noted as circulated. There were no further questions on the payments made. The payments totalling £31,558.20 were duly proposed, seconded, and unanimously RESOLVED by a show of hands to be approved for payment. Motion carried. b) Approval of payments Month 6 – September 2022 The payment sheet listing payments 080-093 was noted as circulated. • Payment 089 Cllr Shaw asked how many leaflets were delivered, the Clerk responded that 940 were delivered in the Highfield Ward. • There was a question about the signatures on the sheets and the use of the authenticated signature via DocuSign was discussed. There were no further questions on the payments made. The payments totalling £3,533.98 were duly proposed, seconded, and unanimously RESOLVED by a show of hands to be approved for payment. Motion carried.
22/23-42	PARISH COUNCIL AUDIT CONCLUSION OF CHPC ACCOUNTS YEAR 2021-22 The circulation of the completed and signed off AGAR was noted by Council, and it was noted that there were no matters raised. The RFO reported that the noticeboards and website had all been updated prior to the statutory legal deadline with the required paperwork. Cllr Barnes thanked the RFO and all those involved in getting this completed again successfully for another financial year.
22/23-43	PARISH COUNCIL COMMITTEES a) HR Committee The redacted minutes of the HR Committee held 14 July 2022 were noted and accepted by Council. There were no questions raised. b) Finance & Governance Committee The minutes of the Finance & Governance Committee held 19 July 2022 were noted and accepted by Council. There were no questions raised. c) Environment Committee The rescheduling of the Environment Committee led to a debate about the future meetings and how the announcement of the Community Governance Review would fit in. It was felt that some meetings should be rearranged and moved so that questions could be drafted by the Parish Council to put to the District Council. After some discussion the meetings were rescheduled as follows: • Finance & Governance Committee scheduled for 20 October is now cancelled • Environment Committee will now be held 1 November • Full Council previously scheduled for 24 November moved to 17 November • Full Council in December scheduled for 22 December moved to 1 December • Full Council in January would now be a Budget/Precept meeting The Clerk was asked to send an email confirming these date changes and to also confirm when the Community Governance Review recommendations would be made to Policy Committee (24 November 2022) and also to SADC Council (7 December 2022)

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22/23-44	PARISH COUNCIL COMMUNITY SURVEY a) The paperwork for the survey was circulated to all councillors during the end of August to allow plenty of time for review prior to the meeting. Comments from councillors included that there was good quality output, and the responses were in depth from those who participated. It was felt that the 5% response rate was representative of a survey of this kind. b) The confidential open text data was debated. The general feeling was that the Council would like all data to be issued in order to be open and transparent. However, after reviewing the first page of the survey issued which stated that all responses will remain confidential, a motion to obtain legal advice on this point was duly proposed, seconded, and unanimously RESOLVED by a show of hands. Motion carried. The Clerk was instructed to keep all information confidential until such time as legal advice was received. c) Councillors were asked to consider how the information from the survey would be used. It was confirmed it would be used largely as guidance for policy and project decisions. Cllr Shaw wished to raise some motions as a result of the survey. The Clerk confirmed that the next few meetings were predominantly going to be about the impact of the Community Governance Review so please give plenty of time for the matters to be considered and that items may have to be deferred.
22/23-45	COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW a) Parish Council Submission The Chairman commented that he was disappointed by the lack of engagement of SADC officers as there was no specific consultation within the parish. There had been no direct contact from any of the District Councillors and it was felt that councillors should engage with councillors and officers should engage with officers. Currently it was felt that neither the officers nor the District Councillors realised the impact of the decision that they are making. A motion that the body corporate would engage with the SADC members, a District Councillor meeting on Zoom to be offered, questions to be prepared by Council to the Policy Committee and officers to engage with the Clerk including Finance, Legal and Governance Officers, the motion was duly proposed, seconded, and RESOLVED by a majority show of hands with one abstention. Motion carried. b) Parish Councillor submission and leaflets There was a question from Cllr Brazier as to why her name was not removed from the main Parish Council submission. The Clerk responded that no councillor name was either added or removed as the submission was from the Parish Council as the body corporate and not attributed to any one or any group of councillors. Cllr Shaw asked why he did not receive a leaflet despite living in Highfield Ward. This was because with the suggested boundaries Cllr Shaw's address was not included in the newly suggested Highfield Parish Council. Cllr Shaw made an objection to the fact that this was not discussed at the previous meeting when delegated authority was given. Cllr Shaw asked that his objection be recorded. Chairman raised disappointment that a leaflet did not get distributed in Colney Heath village. Cllr Slaughter would have liked the Clerk to have attended the Colney Heath Ward meeting to discuss the leaflet, but Cllr Burns and Shaw felt that the Clerk should not be in attendance but gave no reason as to why. There

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	was a debate as to why the leaflet contents was not on the website sooner, the Clerk explained that due to work capacity this had not been possible. c) Request from SADC Electoral Services for assets and financial information relating to Colney Heath Parish Council and CGR The request was read to the Council members. It was noted that SADC expected cooperation but were not giving the same cooperation back. The request was formally noted. Asset register was available and in the public domain but not in the format requested. Members would like to know the background and why the information was being requested without a decision having been made. It was duly proposed, seconded, and unanimously RESOLVED by a show of hands that a copy of the earmarked reserves and asset register be sent to SADC in response. Motion carried. Cllr Shaw asked that before it was sent the asset register had all locations added. The motion by Cllr Shaw was proposed but there was no seconder. Motion failed.
22/23-46	<u>PARISH ADMINISTRATION</u>
	a) Clerk report • OLB was activated on 8th September 2022 and overtime worked by the Clerk on this was approved and paid due to the exceptional circumstances and out of hours working time over the weekend and evenings as a result. • Since the accounts were closed 22nd July 2022 significant time has been spent on a resident and a journalist who both reviewed the accounts prior to closure and then challenged several payments made. There was even an attempt to involve the internal auditor in false allegations, but this was successfully resolved in mid-August. • An FOI request has been made which has taken at least 15 hours of research so far regarding admin staff allocation and expenditure of salaries and then administration, democracy, and legal expenditure for the last 20 years. The question is due to be answered early next week. A further FOI received on the community survey will now be answered due to the Council decision made earlier this evening. • The CH Common Stewardship agreement is coming to an end in 2023 and must be reviewed with a view to offering a 5-year extension. If no grazing is provided and if the funds to manually care for the area is not forthcoming the extension will not be granted, and the agreement will be lost. • The HPT newsletter has been received and will be circulated either tomorrow or early next week. • An access request to Roestock Hut has been received from the Scouts and due to staff annual leave this will not be actioned until w/c 24th October. A key has been issued to the Tyttenhanger Parties Committee to use the accessway to build the bonfire. • A survey of the gas pipeline will take place in November 2022 and will involve a small copper wire being laid across the Common by two engineers. • The Clerk will be on annual leave from Wednesday 5th October and will not return until Monday 17th October, the Finance Officer is also on annual leave Thursday 20th & Friday 21st October returning Thursday 27th October. b) Clerk matters to report since issuing agenda No matters raised.

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	c) Questions to the Clerk from members of Council Cllr Shaw once again raised a request regarding the spine points of staff and went on to state that 'people in the village' were becoming concerned. The Clerk warned the Council of the risks of having inappropriate discussions regarding this subject in a public meeting. Cllr Shaw had been given the information confidentially as a member of a relevant committee, but Cllr Shaw wished the information to be made public. The Clerk explained that only members of staff paid over £50k were required to publicly disclose their salary details. The Chairman also warned Cllr Shaw of the risk of future employment proceedings if he continued with these questions. Cllr Shaw asked if the pay scale range for staff would be made public and placed in the public domain. The RFO clarified and confirmed that the pay scale information requested for staff would not be placed in the public domain. Cllr Shaw was asked to confirm who the 'people' were that were concerned and discussing staff salaries, there was no response to this question. It was pointed out that the largest expenditure line of any company was their staff costs. Some councillors felt Cllr Shaw was being rude and expressed their opinion on this.
22/23-47	REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES a) Highfield Park Trust Cllr Barnes reported on the forthcoming Apple Day which was hoped to be a success as one of the main events in the Trusts calendar. b) Twinning Association There was nothing to report.
22/23-48	QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC <i>9.20m Standing Orders were suspended so members of the public could have the opportunity to ask questions/make statements to the Council. No statements made or questions asked so Standing Orders were resumed at 9.21pm</i> The Chairman thanked all for their attendance and closed the meeting at 9.21pm

Meeting closed at 9.21pm

L Peters LCGI PSLCC CPFA CiLCA
 Clerk to the Council
 Drafted 17/10/2022
 Signed by

Councillor Peter Cook
 Chair

Approved by Council 27th October 2022

