

Little Bardfield Parish Council



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Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and Annual Parish Meeting
Wednesday 10 May 2023 at 7pm

MINUTES OF MEETING

Present: Cllr Andrew Davies (Chair), Cllr Juliet O'Brien and Cllr Colin Simpson. Clerk: Kate Rixson

District Councillor Dr Mike Tayler, County Councillor Martin Foley and retiring councillor Terry Cutmore attended.

1. **Chair's Welcome:** The Retiring Chairman Cllr Davies welcomed all present and opened the meeting.
2. **Election of Chairman and declaration of acceptance of office**
It was proposed by Cllr Simpson and seconded by Cllr O'Brien that Cllr Davies should continue as chairman. Cllr Davies was duly elected and signed a declaration of acceptance of office as chairman.
3. **Election of Vice-chairman and councillors' declarations of acceptance of office**
It was proposed by Cllr O'Brien and seconded by Cllr Davies that Cllr Simpson should continue as vice-chair. Cllr Simpson was duly elected. Declarations of acceptance of office were made by Cllr Simpson and Cllr O'Brien.
4. **Councillors' declarations of interest in items on the agenda**
None.
5. **Public forum**
Attendees were invited to contribute to the discussion as items arose.
6. **Minutes of the annual parish council meeting on 11 May 2022 to be approved**
The Minutes were agreed to be an accurate record and signed by Cllr Davies as chairman.
7. **Reports on Matters Arising from the Minutes which are not on the agenda**
None
8. **Review of Asset Register**
The register was reviewed and approved.
9. **Review of Risk Assessment**
The assessment was approved. It was noted that the parish council has two defibrillators. Cllr Dr Tayler advised that these should be accessed only after phoning 999. The emergency services would supply a code to open the cabinet if it was locked. It was important to ensure that the ambulance service had up to date details of both defibrillators, and Dr Tayler could assist with this. **Action:**
Clerk

10. Review of Standing Orders

The NALC model Standing Orders 2018, updated 2022, were adopted with the following amendments (indicated in bold below):

Standing Order 15 (b) (xv): the Proper Officer shall refer a planning application received by the Council to the Chairman or in his absence the Vice-Chairman....within **five** working days of receipt
Standing Order 17 (e): A completed draft annual governance and accountability return shall be presented to all councillors at least **7** days prior to anticipated approval by the Council.

11. Review of Financial Regulations

The template NALC model financial regulations 2019 were adopted with the following amendment (shown in bold below):

Financial Regulation 5(c) on Banking arrangements: the clerk and RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise...fund transfers within the council's banking arrangements up to the sum of **£2,000.**

12. Acceptance of end of year accounts

Copies of the cashbooks including a bank reconciliation and analysis of spending and income had been circulated. At the end of the financial year (31 March 2023) the balances were as follows:

- a) Parish Council Treasurer's account £12,241.65
- b) Community Fund account: £14,326.22

Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Cllr Davies and seconded by Cllr O'Brien and agreed unanimously. The analysis for each account would be placed on the website. **Action: Clerk**

13. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2022/23 and publication

- a) The council received and noted the Annual Internal Audit Report. The auditor's narrative report had been circulated and considered. The council noted that the auditor had signed page 4 of the AGAR Form 2 on 28 April 2023. It was confirmed that the Community Fund was a separate trust with the Parish Council as trustee, and its funds were properly held and accounted for separately from the parish council's funds.
- b) The council approved the Annual Governance Statement (page 5, Section 1 of Form 2) and questions 1 to 9 answered in the affirmative. The correction of a clerical error at question 4 was approved and was initialled by the Clerk. The Statement was signed by the Chairman and Clerk.
- c) The council approved the Annual Accounting Statement (page 6, Section 2 of Form 2) which had been signed by the Responsible Financial Officer (Clerk) on 9 May 2023. The restatement of the figures for 2021-22, to exclude transactions within the Community Fund trust accounts, was noted and the Statement was signed by the Chairman.
- d) The council declared itself exempt from external audit as its gross income and expenditure were both below £25,000 in 2022-23. The Certificate of Exemption (page 3 of Form 2) was signed by the Responsible Financial Officer (Clerk) and the Chairman.
- e) The council agreed that public rights of access to the accounting records could be exercised between 5 June and 14 July 2023 inclusive. The AGAR and other documents as required by the regulations will be placed on the website and notice of the access period would be given.

Action: Clerk

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.30pm.