

**HOPE MANSELL PARISH COUNCIL  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
HELD AT HOPE MANSELL VILLAGE HALL  
14<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2024**

**Present:** Jon Billings (Chair), Diana Tobin (Vice Chair) Tim Hardie, Sheila Heath, Ellen West and Geoff Phelps (Councillors). In attendance Bill Sparkes (Parish Clerk)

1. **Apologies** – Councillor Lori Weber
2. **Election of Chairman.** Jon Billings indicated wished to step down as Chairman and Councillor. No one present was prepared to replace him at the meeting and Jon Billings agreed to continue as chair for the current meeting.
- 3 Discussion took place as to how meetings could be chaired in the future and it was agreed that until a permanent Chair was elected the Councillors present would elect a chair for each Council meeting.
- 4 Discussion then took place about the long-term viability of the Council could re-amalgamate with Weston Under Penyard Parish Council. It was agreed that advice should be sought from the Herefordshire Council Governance Team.
- 5 Election of Vice Chairman. Diana Tobin was nominated by Geoff Phelps and seconded by Ellen West. Councillor Tobin accepted.
- 6 **Register of Interests.** It was confirmed by all Councillors present that the Register of interests was up to date. It was noted that regular positive assurance on this would be required.
- 7 **Audited accounts** for 2023/2024 were presented by the Clerk and agreed by Councillors present. The Clerk and Chairman signed the Accounting Statement and Annual Governance Statement together with Certificate of Exemption AGAR 23/24 Form 2.
- 8 **Policies Review** – No substantive issues raised for the majority of policies. Councillor Phelps requested that Standing Orders should be amended to require council to vote on inviting external speakers to its meetings.

Meeting concluded at 19.55.

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**Present:** Chair – Jon Billings, Vice Chair – Diana Tobin, Tim Hardie, Ellen West, Geoff Phelps and Sheila Heath. In attendance, Bill Sparkes – parish clerk.

**Apologies** – Lori Weber

**Declaration of Interest** – Dispensations – none

**Open Forum.** None

**Minutes** of 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024 were agreed.

**Correspondence Received.** Emails and Open letter regarding a licensing consultation regarding “Gemfest” at Great Howle Farm” on 14 June June.

Clerk and Chairman advised that, unlike with planning applications, the Council is not a statutory consultee on licensing issues. Nonetheless, the chair reported he had emailed the organisers to raise concerns about the absence of meaningful community engagement, and had submitted a formal representation to the licensing office.

**Finance.** Clerk circulated 23/24 Accounts . Accounts were approved.

- (a) Councillor Heath noted that the Bailey Lane End Defibrillator was not mentioned.
- (b) It was agreed that the precept of £2,500 was sufficient for forecast expenditure.

**Roads and Footpaths.** Councillor Hardie (Footpaths Officer) reported he had attended a Footpaths Officer’s meeting.

Herefordshire County Council officers had viewed the stile/steps at School Lane and the crossing at the bottom of The Silent and agreed it should be fixed.

Barrier by the Viewpoint still needed attention.

**Litter Picking Volunteers.** Councillor West had drafted a Registration/Disclaimer form for approval by the Council. Councillor Hardie agreed to consult Herefordshire Council regarding its Litter Picking Policy.

**Local Amenities.** Discussion took place regarding installation of the new defibrillator in Hope Mansell. An electrician has been identified and installation will take place subject to arranging an access date with the property owners.

Discussion took place regarding training for CPR and the use of defibrillators. Parish Clerk to explore options.

Climate Change meeting 6<sup>th</sup> April had been well attended and successful.

**Any Other Business.** – Councillor Heath and Councillor West raised queries regarding drainage of the road in Bailey Lane End after recent heavy rainfall. The Clerk was asked to make enquiries of Balfour Beatty.

**Religious Institutions.** Councillor Heath notified the meeting that after new Government legislation it was now possible for Parish Councils to contribute to Religious Institution's projects.

The meeting closed with grateful thanks, by all present, to Councillor Jon Billings for his hard work during his membership and chairmanship of the Council.

The meeting closed at 20.35.