

CLAYWORTH PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

A Meeting of Clayworth Parish Council was held in the Memorial Hall on Thursday 2nd
February 2023 at 7:00pm.

Present: Councillors D. Pulk, B. Sofflet and T. Taylor
S. B. Brown (Interim Clerk – Bassetlaw District Council)
11 Members of the public

Apologies: Councillor M. Watson

79. STATEMENT ON THE SITUATION REGARDING CLAYWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

Mr Brown, Head of Corporate Services, Bassetlaw District Council read the following statement:

‘On the 9th December, Bassetlaw District Council was contacted by the Clerk to Clayworth Parish Council to advise of his immediate resignation. The communication also advised of the resignation of Parish Councillors Mark Booth and Jenny Booth. This leaves one remaining Parish Councillor, Ben Sofflet who was already a placement by the District Council. The Parish Council is therefore inquorate and without a Clerk.

This is a very unusual situation and not one that has occurred within Bassetlaw before. In order to function into the future the Parish Council needs to approve a budget and precept for 2023/24. Bassetlaw District Council has therefore under Section 91 of the Local Government Act 1972 made an Order appointing District Councillors Darrell Paulk, Ben Sofflet, Mark Watson and County Councillor Tracey Taylor as Parish Councillors. These members are representatives from District Wards neighbouring Clayworth and the County Electoral Division. Copies of the Order had been accepted by the Secretary of State. The District Council’s Head of Corporate Services, Stephen Brown, is acting as interim Clerk to the Parish Council.

The Parish Council and local residents need to be aware that the District Council can pass its full costs for these interim arrangements to be met by the Parish budget. The District Council does not however feel this would be fair to local residents who have no involvement in the events surrounding this situation. Nevertheless interim arrangements will need to be put in place for the next couple of months which will have a financial impact.

The District Council regards the current position to be undesirable. Parish Councils are local authorities in their own right. They should be run through local representatives and be independent of the District and County authorities. Nevertheless, given the highly unusual situation, Bassetlaw District Council has been faced with no alternative. It wishes to see Clayworth Parish Council return to full autonomy from the May elections and return to local decision making’.

90 .DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

It was reported that new Councillors had signed the Declaration.

91. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor B. Sofflet was appointed Chairman of the Parish Council.

92. APPOINTMENT OF VICE –CHAIRMAN

Councillor D. Pulk was appointed Vice Chairman of the Parish Council.

93. PUBLIC SESSION

A resident asked about access to the defibrillator Cabinet. It is understood this can be accessed by dialling 999. The Parish Council's involvement with the defibrillator, if any, needs to be ascertained.

94. APOLOGIES

Councillor M. Watson.

95. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

96. MINUTES

It was agreed that the minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 19th October 2022 be accepted as a true and correct record. The Council approved them and the Chairman duly signed them.

97. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None.

98. FINANCE

- a. Bank balances
A report on the balances was noted.
- b. Payments

Sharpe Group Ltd – Monthly Website Charge £25 **approved**

Memorial Hall Grant – A £500 request was **approved**.

Church Graveyard - £500 request **declined**

The Council were advised that the guidance on the payments to Parochial Church Councils was the same as that previously obtained by the former Clerk to the Parish.

In 2018 the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) published guidance to remind Parish Councils that they cannot donate money to churches, their grounds or property. There are specific powers written in Statute which permit expenditure by local councils. If there is no provision for a particular expenditure within the Act then a Parish Council may not make any payment (by money or in kind).

The Council voted unanimously **not** to fund the church grant request for the graveyard and not to fund the church clock due to the above reasons.

99. PARISH COUNCIL BUDGET 2023/24 AND PARISH PRECEPT REQUEST

The Council considered the indicative budget for 2023/24.

AGREED that a precept of £9,000 be submitted to Bassetlaw District Council.

100. CORRESPONDENCE

None

101. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the Council voted to exclude to exclude members of the public the following agenda item so that the Council can discuss staffing matters.

102. INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS TO MANAGE THE PARISH COUNCIL UNTIL THE MAY ELECTIONS

The Council that given the situation facing the Parish Council there were a number of organisational and governance related matters that need to be resolved prior to the May elections and the appointment of new Parish Councillors.

AGREED that

(1) a locum Clerk be appointed until the end of May 2023 in line with a confidential report considered by the Parish Council.

(2) that online banking arrangement be established for the Parish Council with Councillors Sofflet and Pulk as signatories.

Signed

.....(Chairman).....

.....Date

It was agreed that the date of the Parish Council Annual General Meeting will be Wednesday 17 May 2023 in the Memorial Hall. The Chairman closed the meeting at 7:50pm.

Signed(Chairman).....

Date: