THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF

THE SHOTTON PARISH COUNCIL

HELD ON TUESDAY 31st MAY, 2023

Present: Councillors L Cox (Chair)
AWJ Bright, G Bright, JWA Bright, I Cochrane, M Cooper, L Cox, R Hardy, LA Hill, A Kelly, RB Lacey, S Maitland, H Mountain, M Mountain, M Parker, KT Wood.

Apologies: None
County Councillor C Hood

Public Participation

No issues were raised by Members of the Public
The Police were present due to the PACT meeting being re-arranged and provided a summary of crime statistics and police activity for the period April to May 2023.
The Chair thanked the Police for their report.

1718. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL**

Nomination for Chairman, duly proposed and seconded was received for Cllr Lorraine Cox

RESOLVED that Councillor Lorraine Cox be elected as Chairman of the Shotton Parish Council for the ensuing year.

Councillor Cox thanked the Council for the honour and privilege of being Chairman of Shotton Parish Council for the previous year and thanked Members and the Clerk & Groundsman for their support and confirmed she would fulfil the duties placed upon her to the best of her ability .

1719. **TO RECEIVE THE CHAIRMAN'S DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

RESOLVED that the declaration of acceptance for the office of Chairman as signed by Councillor Lorraine Cox, be received.

1720. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL**

Nomination for Vice-Chairman, duly proposed and seconded was received for Cllr Jamie Bright .

RESOLVED that Councillor Jamie Bright be appointed Vice Chairman of the Shotton Parish Council for the ensuing year.

Councillor Bright accepted the position and thanked Members for their support.

1721. **TO RECEIVE THE VICE CHAIRMAN'S DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

RESOLVED that the declaration of acceptance for the office of Vice-Chairman as signed by Councillor Jamie Bright, be received.

1722. **TO APPOINT MEMBERS TO SERVE ON OUTSIDE BODIES AND ORGANISATIONS**

The Clerk outlined and gave details of the different outside bodies and groups for the benefit of Councillors.

RESOLVED that the Council's appointed representatives on outside bodies be:
Easington Area Association of Parish and Town Councils (3 Reps): Councillor M Parker.
CDALC Small & Medium Councils Forum (2 Reps): Councillor KT Wood
In appointing the above, it was noted that other Members or the Clerk could deputise as and when required.

1723. **TO APPOINT MEMBERS TO SERVE ON THE PARISH COUNCILS COMMITTEES OR SUB COMMITTEES**

The Clerk outlined and gave details of the work of the different Committees and Groups for the benefit of Councillors.
RESOLVED that the following Members be appointed to the Council's Committees and Working Groups and that such meetings be convened as and when required:
Committees
Health & Safety Committee - Councillors I Cochrane, H Mountain, MA Mountain and J Bright.
Finance Committee – Councillors I Cochrane, M Cooper, G Bright, M Parker and K Wood.
Sports Committee - Councillors I Cochrane, R Lacey, K Wood, J Bright, L Cox and A Bright
Working Groups
Shotton Banner Working Group - Councillors I Cochrane, R Hardy, J Bright & S Maitland.
Car Park Working Group – Cllrs J Bright, A Bright, I Cochrane & R Hardy (Mr TD Blakey co-opted).
In appointing the above, it was noted that other Members could deputise as and when required.

1724. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

No declarations of interest were received.
RESOLVED that, the information given be note.

1725. **TO FIX THE AMOUNT OF THE CHAIRMANS ALLOWANCE 2022/2023**

Pursuant of Section 15(5) of the Local Government Act 1972, it was **RESOLVED** that the Chairman's Allowance remain at £500.00.

1726. **TO FIX THE DATES AND TIMES OF ORDINARY MEETINGS AND ANY COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THE ENSUING YEAR**

RESOLVED that the ordinary meetings of the Parish Council be fixed as the last Monday of each month with the exception of August (no meeting due to recess) and December (due to Christmas and New Year holidays) and that Committee meetings and Working Groups be convened only as necessary or required. If required, the dates of all meetings could be amended should circumstances dictate.

1727. **TO ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

1728. **TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 24th APRIL 2023**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the last Meeting held on 24th April 2023, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, be approved, and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

1729 **COUNTY COUNCILLORS' REPORTS**

County Councillor C Hood had circulated a written report of his work since the last meeting, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.
Cllr M Parker thanked County Cllr Hood for the financial support recently provided to the Shotton Community Garden Group
County Councillor IC Cochrane provided a verbal report on the following matters:

- Alcote House usage by Friends & Parishioners of St Saviours and events
- Sign language classes available free of charge to anyone interested starting in July 2023 (5.30-7.30pm)
- An interim digital sound system for St Saviours Church bell had been purchased for the coronation pending repairs and replacement of the existing church bell.
- 2 gravestones badly damaged through DCC grass cutting works. And necessary repairs are to be undertaken by DCC.
- St Saviour's Church are looking for more volunteers and helpers
- Update on current consultation and proposals for boundary changes and County Councillor representation across County Council Divisions, specifically affecting Shotton Colliery. Members were provided with a link to the consultation to offer comment, it being suggested that Shotton could be a 1 member division.
- Numerous resident matters continue to be addressed.

Cllr M Parker thanked Cllr Cochrane for his report for his help in fixing St Saviours church bells.

RESOLVED that, the information given be noted and the reports be received.

1730. **COUNCILLORS REPORTS OF THEIR ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS ON BEHALF OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

No meetings had been attended.

RESOLVED that the information given be noted.

1731. **SHOTTON PARTNERSHIP, COMMUNITY CENTRE AND AAP UPDATE**

Councillor Rona Hardy provided a progress report on initiatives undertaken since the last meeting:

AAP

- No matters to report due to no AAP meeting.

Shotton Partnership

- Coronation celebrations were well attended and received a lot of publicity through local newspapers.
- Grants of:
    - £12k received from Ballinger Foundation (operation of 3 Youth Clubs)
    - £11k from Rank towards meals during the day
    - £2.4k Fun & Food programme
- Half-term holidays had been a very busy week with meals for over 150 children provided as well as various activities during the week culminating with a bus trip tomorrow.

RESOLVED that, the information given be noted.

1732. **COUNCILLOR WORKING GROUPS – PROGRESS REPORTS**

i. **Facebook Page for Shotton Parish Council**
384 Followers and continuing growth in interest.(Cllr K Wood)
RESOLVED that the information given be noted.

ii. **Jubilee Poetry Competition Working Group**
Awaiting determination of designated places for permanent location of poetry plaques. (Cllr L Cox)
RESOLVED that the information given be noted.

RESOLVED that the information given be noted.

1733. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(a) Payments
RESOLVED that the cheques and payments read out and detailed by the Clerk for May 2023 be endorsed and approved for payment.

(b) Asset Register 2023
RESOLVED that the updated Asset Register circulated by the Clerk be received and accepted.

(c) Annual Accounts and Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2022/2023

The Clerk outlined that the Final report from the Internal Auditor (DCC) was currently awaited however still circulated to each member, a copy of the completed Annual Accounts and Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2022/23 under the Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015 which included:

- Income & Expenditure and Balance Sheet for Year Ended 31 March 2023.
- Bank Reconciliation at 31 March 2023.
- the Annual Governance Statement 2022/2023.
- the Statement of Annual Accounts 2022/2023.

together with a draft notice of public rights to be published in accordance with the statutory deadline.

The Clerk confirmed that the report of the Internal Auditor was awaited and would be circulated when received for the next meeting as this was necessary to complete the AGAR.

RESOLVED that that the 2022/23 Annual Accounts and the Annual Governance & Accountability Return be approved and signed with the following confirmed, it being clearly noted that this was subject to the receipt of the signed off pending Internal Audit report to be presented to a future meeting of the Council.

i. The Council had in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.
ii. The Council maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.
iii. The Council took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and proper practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of the council to conduct its business or on its finances.
iv. The Council provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations
v. The Council carried out an assessment of the risks facing the council and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.
vi. The Council maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the council accounting records and control systems.
vii. The Council took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.
viii. The Council considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events, or transactions, occurring

either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on the council and, where appropriate have included them in the accounting statements.

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Shotton Parish Council Annual Accounts and Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ending 31st March 2023 be approved and signed by the Chairman and Clerk & RFO it being noted that the approval was subject to the receipt and consideration of a satisfactory annual report from the Councils Internal Auditor to ensure full compliance with the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR for year ended 31 March 2023)

1734. **PLANNING MATTERS**

RESOLVED that the planning matters (applications, approvals, appeals and withdrawals) which had previously been circulated to members be received and noted.

1735. **PROGRESS REPORT OF THE CLERK**

The Clerk reported on the following items:

a) *YIF Community Outreach Youth Hub*

It had been a very busy month progressing the YIF application and good progress had been made with SIB confirming the project had been approved by the Grants Panel and now awaited the final Grants committee approval at the end of June.

In order to continue, as discussed at the last meeting the external works had to be reduced on the capital side of the project by removing the overflow car park and bus layby from the YIF application. The planning application still included the overflow car park but not the bus layby due to the complexities of the required traffic management regulations and the need for Durham County Council as the Highway Authority to be fully engaged with a solution for the school bus.

It was intended to submit a further grant application through the Levelling Up Towns & Villages programme for the overflow car park which the Clerk confirmed he was hopeful of receiving approval because of it's priority in the village and it being linked to the substantial Outreach Hub investment and other investment by the Parish Council at the Community Park.

Work continued on the revenue part of the YIF bid with Shotton Partnership (£107,350) which provided for Youth Workers to be engaged and eventually for Shotton Partnership 2000 Ltd to "grow their own" future Youth Workers.

The deadlines were extremely tight and more additional hours for the Clerk would be required for which budgeted provision had been made.

The Clerk circulated copy plans and designs for the proposed Outreach Community Youth Hub.

RESOLVED that the information given be noted and further developments be awaited.

b) *Clerk Additional Hours*

In May 50 additional hours had been worked by the Clerk and quite significant further hours would be required to deal with the additional work being undertaken with regard to YIF submission, Year-end accounts and end of year payroll of which budget provision had been made.

RESOLVED that the information given be noted.

c) *Village Coal Hutch Planters*

The High Haswell Community Benefit Fund though County Durham Foundation had recently approved the £4000 grant towards the 3 Coal Hutch Planters to be located at each of the Village entrances as part of the net project sum of £5050 which had been submitted.

The Clerk had ordered the planters from David Ogilvie Engineering, and it was hoped that delivery would be late June and he was working closely with Shotton Partnership Environment Group with respect to assistance with locating the planters and their future planting and maintenance. The existing 2 planters were to be relocated to the Community Hub Garden.

RESOLVED that the information given be noted and further developments be awaited.

d) *Chairmans Civic Chain New Inner Row*

RESOLVED that the Chain of office was still awaited from Thomas Fattorini Ltd following the manufacture and fitting of a new inner row to be made and fitted .

e) *HM Land Registry Business E-Services Registration*

The Clerk outlined he had submitted an application to HM Land Registry to enable the Council to obtain title deeds and document through their business e-services portal which allowed direct debits to the Council for such requests. He had been dealing with some land title queries and needed to pull together office copies of the Councils land holding assets, and this would be more expedient.

RESOLVED that the information given be noted and the action taken by the Clerk be endorsed.

f) *Clerks Early Retirement*

The Clerk outlined that over his time as Clerk he had secured millions of pounds of external investment culminating in the current grant applications. He explained he would be 62 this year and the YIF Outreach Hub project would take 2 years. He asked if the Council would consider him retiring at 64 and consider providing additional years to take him up to retirement age. This would also provide the opportunity for the Council, to look at recruitment for his successor.

Members were happy to consider this and agreed that costings should be sought for consideration.

RESOLVED that the information given be noted and further developments be awaited.

1736. **CORRESPONDENCE, BULLETINS & CIRCULARS**

RESOLVED that the correspondence, bulletins, and circulars received by the Clerk since the last meeting be received and noted.

1737. **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

RESOLVED that the next meeting, be held on Monday, 26 June 2023 at 6.00 p.m. at Shotton Community Hub and if required a Special Meeting of the Council be convened upon receipt of the Annual Internal Audit Report for 2022/23

CERTIFIED AS A TRUE RECORD

CHAIRMAN .....
Date: 26th June 2022