

Stowe by Chartley Parish Council

Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of Stowe by Chartley Parish Council held on 14th November 2022 in Stowe by Chartley Village Hall at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Cllr Mrs Hurdle (Chair), Cllr Byrne, Cllr Coote, Cllr Mrs Finney and Cllr Sheppard

Cllr Sheppard left the meeting at 9.15 p.m.

Also in attendance: S Gibson (Clerk)

207/22 Apologies

Apologies were accepted from Cllr Mrs Alder and Cllr Lyons

208/22 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest

209/22 Written applications for dispensations under the Localism Act 2011

There were no applications

210/22 To consider the provision of a new telephone for the Clerk: The Clerk explained the nature of the problem with the old phone - when people ring the number they are either told that the number is not recognised or it goes straight to answerphone. One Councillor had obtained a quote and the Clerk had obtained another:

Quote 1: a one-off payment of £150 for a re-furbished phone and a contract for £10 per month

Quote 2: a one-off payment of £40 and a contract for £26.00 per month

It was decided to go for the second quote and to also get a 12 month warranty

211/22 To consider the use of council email addresses: the Clerk explained that at the moment only two Councillors do not use a .gov.uk email address. (This was a point of concern at the recent Stowe-by-Chartley Internal Audit). Not using a .gov.uk email address is very controversial at the moment and so it was decided that all of those Councillors who have the correct email address will continue to receive correspondence from the Clerk as usual but as far as the other two Councillors are concerned, until such time that they can obtain .gov.uk email addresses, the Clerk will send everything to them through the post.

There was also a request that all Councillors' .gov.uk email addresses should be put on the parish council web site. This will be confirmed at the January meeting.

212/22 To consider excluding the press and the public: no member of the press or public was present

213/22 To consider action following the Employment Committee: two members of the Employment Committee appraised the members present, concerning the content of the November the 8th Employment Committee meeting and it concerned the forthcoming Employment Tribunal

that the former Clerk is taking the parish council to. There seemed little doubt that the parish council needs professional help to prepare for the Tribunal and so the question was where to go to get this help. Three different scenarios were painted:

- obtain help through the council's insurers
- use a local solicitor
- use a solicitor that was recommended by the current Clerk and Assisant Locum Clerk and who has a proven track record in dealing with parish council affairs including employment.

Contact had already been made with both solicitors and our insurance company. One solicitor was quite keen to take on the case, especially after he had spoken to two members of the Employment Committee. However, there were concerns that consulting a solicitor as opposed to going through the pc insurance company, would incur unnecessary expenditure. However, there was another concern and that was that if the pc waited for the insurance company to come back with an answer as to whether they would let their legal arm take up the case, there would be a shortage of time between receiving that answer and preparing all of the papers required by the previous Clerk's solicitor, prior to the Preliminary Hearing. The insurance company said that they needed at least five working days to decide whether to take the case on or not. There were only nine working days between the date of the extraordinary meeting and the deadline for submitting papers. At the end of the discussion the following resolution was taken:

Stowe-by-Chartley Parish Council has RESOLVED to engage the services of the second solicitor mentioned above. PROPOSED by Cllr Coote. SECONDED by Cllr Finney

The vote was unanimous. Practical arrangements for getting the appropriate papers to the appropriate solicitor, were then discussed.

The meeting finished at 10.00 p.m.