**Minutes, Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council 26 February 2024 at the Civic Hall.**

**Present:** Cllrs K Dawson (Chairman), B Beeley (Vice Chairman)

E Adamson S Al-Hamdani

K Barton M. Bingley

M Birchall H Bishop

R Blackmore L Dawson

J Garner P Gaul

A Marland K Phillips

M Powell L Thompson

D Wall P Walsh

A Wrigley

The Chairman Cllr K Dawson welcomed Councillors and led the prayers.

**3545. To receive Public Questions**

None received

**3546. Chairman’s Urgent Business**

None to discuss

**3547. Correspondence**

None received

**3548. To receive apologies for Absence:** Cllr G Sheldon

**3549. To receive Declarations of Interest**

None declared

**3550. Notice of Motion - on banking facilities:**

Proposer: Cllr Amy Wrigley, Seconder: Cllr Roger Blackmore.

This council notes that:

* according to data from the Post Office, since 2015 Oldham East and Saddleworth has lost 75% of its banking facilities. There is no remaining bank available in the whole of Saddleworth Parish, which includes around 25,000 people, and covers nearly half the geographic area of Oldham Borough;
* the removal of ATM services has continued, leaving residents with limited options to get cash withdrawals;
* while branch and local Post Offices are able to fulfil some of the functions that banks did previously, they are not able to provide all of them.

This council therefore:

* supports the principle of the provision of a banking hub to provide businesses and residents with the facilities that they need without the requirement to go to Oldham town centre;
* will request that LINK carry out an access to cash review for the area, which will determine whether the area should have a Post Office run banking hub.

Notes: The form to request an access to cash review is available at <https://www.link.co.uk/consumers/request-access-to-cash/>

Cllr Wrigley read the Motion and Cllr Blackmore, seconder, explained in more detail. It was then discussed. The Link will carry out an independent review based on certain criteria on the banking facilities across the Parish, covering certain criteria, population, demographics, deprivation, transport facilities etc.

Suggested locations for a banking hub were discussed; Uppermill Post Office, the Civic Hall. Cllr Garner expressed concern about the security management if cash handling was involved. Cllr Blackmore explained the hub would be more of a consultation facility. The review would take into account the cash point provision currently. Cllr Al -Hamdani advised there would be no specific process to increase the ATMs.

Cllr Gaul advised that the Oldham Branch of Barclays is closing shortly, the nearest branch will be Middleton. The Post Office offers some services but not all.

Concerns were raised that a banking hub would only be open 2 or 3 days per week. The proposal needs to ensure that that it must be open as much as possible, including some evenings and Saturdays.

Cllr Al-Hamdani advised that 75% of banking services have been lost in Saddleworth, we need to fight for these facilities. He believes there is a very strong case for a hub in Saddleworth

.After more discussion, a vote was taken, all in favour, Motion carried. The Clerk will now contact The Link on behalf of the Parish Council.

**3551. To approve and confirm as a correct record the Draft Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 22nd January 2024**

The minutes were proposed by Cllr Al-Hamdani, seconded by Cllr Phillips. All in favour.

Cllr Gaul expressed his thanks to the Clerk for the consistently high standard of her minute taking.

**3552. To note the minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee meeting held 25th January 2024**

Cllr Garner asked for further information on the Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Al-Hamdani responded with the information requested and Cllr Beeley explained the consultation process.

Cllr Dawson expressed his thanks to both Cllr Beeley and Cllr Al-Hamdani for all their work over the years on the Neighbourhood Plan.

The minutes were then proposed by Cllr Beeley, seconded by Cllr Al-Hamdani. All in favour.

**3553. To note the minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held 30th January 2024.**

Cllr Beeley requested an amendment to point 592. To be changed from Borough to Parish.

Cllr Wall requested an amendment to point 593 regarding the wording of public access being shut off.

The minutes were amended and then proposed by Cllr Phillips, seconded by Cllr Garner. All in favour.

**3554. To note the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held 5th February 2024.**

A question was raised regarding FUL/251823/23. Cllr Bishop advised that further information had been received following the meeting and the original recommendation was revisited. These minutes reflect the amended recommendation.

The minutes were then proposed by Cllr Adamson, seconded by Cllr Bishop. All in favour.

**3555. To note the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held 15th February 2024**

The minutes were proposed by Cllr Al-Hamdani, seconded by Cllr Phillips. All in favour.

**3556. Community Fridge Scheme – update from the Task & Finish Group.**

Cllr Powell, on behalf of the Task and Finish Group updated councillors on the progress so far. A pack has been received on how to get this scheme up and running. The group have agreed that Uppermill Library would be the ideal place to site the community fridge and Cllr Al-Hamdani had already contacted them to facilitate a meeting date to discuss further. There was some discussion around the pros and cons of other similar schemes around the area. It was agreed the Task & Finish Group would be able to offer further updates at the next ordinary meeting of the council.

**3557. Chairman’s Regalia – Finance Committee recommendation**

Cllr Al-Hamdani explained the reasoning for the recommendation to Council (Finance meeting minutes15th February) the chains are kept in the safe but remain accessible for civic occasions and that the medallions would be fitted onto ribbons to be worn for more regular use.

One of the aims being to reduce the costs of expensive repairs. There was some debate around this. Cllr Beeley asked for information about the total spend on the regalia. Cllr Al-Hamdani advised repairs to the chain over the last year were approx. £250. Cllr Beeley pointed out that the regalia represents the governance of the meeting and brings into play the constitution, the standing orders and the code of conduct. Cllr Bishop advised that when balancing the books it was difficult to justify the continued spend of repairs. Cllr Blackmore said that the option of the ribbon was a good compromise.

After some further discussion councillors voted on the recommendation. Proposed Cllr Al-Hamdani, seconded Cllr Blackmore, 12 in favour, 3 against, 4 abstentions.

Recommendation carried.

**3558. Accounts for Payment Income £12,221.50 Expenditure £29.600.04**

The accounts were proposed, seconded and approved.

**3559. Date of the next meeting:- Monday 25 March 2024 at 19.30hrs**