

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held**  
**By Zoom on Monday 23 November 2020**

There were present: Cllrs. B Beeley - Chairman

P. Byrne - Vice Chairman

Cllrs.

B. Lord

P. Lord

K. Dawson

L. Dawson

K. Phillips

R. Darlington

M. Woodvine

L. Lancaster

S. Al-Hamdani

R. Darlington

R. Knotts

J. Batty

G. Sheldon

Members of Press and Public:

Gemma Carter (Press)

Aimee Belmore (Press)

**2994. Prayers**

The council meeting was opened with prayers led by the Reverend Hilary Edgerton.

**2995. Public Questions**

There were no public questions

**2996. Apologies for absence**

Apologies received from Cllrs. Bingley, Curley and Hudson.

**2997. Declarations of Interest.**

None.

**2998.** Cllr. Sheldon informed the councillors that permission had been sought from OMBC regarding the erection of greenhouses on the allotment site. Permission had been granted providing the greenhouses were no larger than 8x6ft or 6x4ft. Cllr. Byrne will inform tenants of the decision and the Estates committee will ratify 7 December 2020.

Approved unanimously.

**2999. Minutes of Council meeting held Monday 26 October 2020.**

Approved.

**3000. Minutes of Strategic Planning Committee held Thursday 29 October 2020**

Approved

### **3001. Minutes of Planning Committee held 2 November 2020.**

Approved

### **3002. Minutes of Finance Committee held Monday 16 November 2020.**

Approved.

### **3003. Proposed Changes to Committee membership**

Cllr. L Dawson was voted onto the Finance Committee.

Cllr. Hulme has relinquished the Chair of the Traffic & Transport Committee but will remain on the committee. Cllr. Battye has agreed to act as Chair until the next AGM.

The Chair requested that a notification be placed in the Saddleworth Independent which will give notice of the meetings and for any interested parties to contact the clerk. AB agreed to publish a notice.

Cllr. Hulme has resigned from the Planning Committee. The Chair stated that a representative for Saddleworth South was needed. The Chair said that she would make ask Cllr. Curley to join the Planning Committee.

### **3004. Motion proposed by Cllr. Woodvine, seconded Cllr. Sheldon**

This Council finds itself in an unsustainable financial situation, which has been accelerated and exacerbated by Covid-19, leaving exposed existing financial causes for concern that now need to be addressed.

#### **a. This Council notes to resolve that:**

- Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the financial situation has worsened.
- It will balance the books for this year, next year and infinitum, not running a deficit; if this is not possible an independent audit of the Budget, setting out an alternative, will be done.
- All options are on the table for discussion no matter how radical and will be heard, discussed and voted upon with courtesy and decorum.
- It must be put on a firm financial footing and avoid raising the precept until all measures to reduce costs and waste have been explored properly and discussed before a Full Meeting.
- Saddleworth Civic Hall must break even by 2021 and make profit going forward.

Cllr. B. Lord stated that the Civic Hall was a facility for residents of Saddleworth.

Cllr. S. Al-Hamdani said that it was the role of the Parish Council to provide funds for the community not make a profit, and that there was no legal responsibility for the Parish Council to make a profit or break even, and that each point did not make sense from a financial point of view. Cllr. Al-Hamdani also stated that due to hardship caused by Covid 19 raising the precept should be avoided if possible. Cllr. Battye suggested that the matter be referred to the Finance Committee. Cllr. Knotts said that efforts had been made to run the Civic Hall as a business, and there could be room for improvement once the pandemic is over. Cllr. Lancaster agreed with the thrust of the motion, to avoid raising the precept and look at costs associated with the Civic Hall.

Cllr. Byrne formally proposed that the motion be amended and the content of the motion be referred to the Finance Committee for debate and returned to Full Council if major changes were proposed. Cllr. Knotts seconded.

Cllr. Woodvine said that the motion was intended to inform the way Saddleworth Parish Council manages the precept, having a duty to ensure to discuss public money and to ensure how the money is spent and to justify the Parish Councils' existence.

Vote on the original motion as amended.

13 in favour and 2 abstentions.

### **3005. Motion 2.**

#### **Motion proposed by Cllr. Al-Hamdani, Seconded by Cllr. K Dawson**

##### Parish Council Committees and Standing Orders

The Council notes that in order to run as effectively as possible, regular reviews of its operational structure and standing orders are to be encouraged.

There is a wide variance in the committee structures of other Parish Councils in comparison to our own

As such, this Council resolves to:

- Create a special task and finish group to review the current committee structure of the Parish Council, to see if it can be improved upon. This should review other committee structures used elsewhere to see if adoption would benefit Saddleworth Parish Council. The end goal should be the fewest possible structures to deliver the most effective support for the communities of Saddleworth;
- Ask the special task and finish group to review the current standing orders, both with specific regard to the committee structure, and to improving the transparency and accessibility of residents to the decision making process;
- Review the changes that have been made to the working methods of the Council during the coronavirus pandemic, to see whether these can be adopted long-term to improve the Council's functioning, while bearing in mind the need to combat exclusion and ensure residents and councillors are fully able to participate in the democratic process.

Cllrs. Dawson, Woodvine and B. Lord agreed that a review was needed.

Cllr. Al-Hamdani thanked councillors for their contributions.

It was agreed that a Task and Finish group would be established and councillors would put themselves forward for membership of this group.

The motion was passed unanimously.

### **3006. Accounts payable October 2020**

Approved.

**Dates of next meetings: all Monday 19.30hrs**

**21 December 2020**

**25 January 2021**

**22 February 2021**

**22 March 2021**