

STRETTON GRANDISON GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk: Mrs Emma Thomas, Hadleigh, Bishops Frome, Worcester, WR6 5AP. Tel: 01885 490414
email: pcgroupclerk@gmail.com website: www.strettongrandisongpc.org.uk

**Minutes of The Annual Meeting of the Parish Council
held at St James Church – Canon Frome
on Monday 13th May 2024 at 7.30pm**

Present: Cllrs: Helen Heathfield (Chair), Richard Crompton, Charles Pudge and Ed Godsall.

In attendance: Emma Thomas – Parish Clerk

Public: 3

1. To elect the Chairman of the Council and to receive Chairman's signature on Declaration of Acceptance of Office

It was RESOLVED that Cllr Helen Heathfield should continue as Chair for a further year and she signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

2. To elect the Vice-Chairman of the Council

It was RESOLVED that Cllr Charles Pudge be Vice-Chair of the Group Parish Council for the coming year.

3. To accept any Apologies for Absence and Note the Reason

Apologies were RECEIVED and ACCEPTED from Cllrs Andy Towers, Rebecca Tully and Charlotte Phillips

Cllr Olivia Manning joined the meeting

4. To record any Declarations of Interest and Consider any Requests for Dispensations

Cllr Helen Heathfield DECLARED a NPI against item 12 and signed the Register of Interest Book

5. To remind Councillors to update their Register of Interest form with Herefordshire Council if necessary

All Cllrs were REMINDED to update their RoI forms if necessary.

6. To consider Approval of Minutes of Parish Council meeting held Monday 18th March 2024

The minutes were APPROVED and duly signed by the Chair.

7. To receive a brief Report from Three Crosses Ward Councillor Jonathan Lester

Cllr Lester had emailed his apologies along with a written report which included the following items:

- BBLP contract will end on 31st May 2026
- The Local Plan Consultation ends of 20th May 2024
- There is forecasted overspend of £8.7 million on this year's budget. This will be covered by reserves.
- Herefordshire Council's four year plan will go to Full Council on 24th May 2024
- £38 million will be spent this year on road repairs.

8. Public Participation Session for Local Residents to raise matters relevant to the Parish Council

None

9. To Review Stretton Grandison Group Parish Council policies and (re)adopt

a) **Standing Orders – Appendix 1**

b) **Code of Conduct – Appendix 2**

c) **Financial Regulations – Appendix 3**

d) **Donations / Grants Policy – Appendix 4**

e) **Risk Schedule Assessment and Finance Controls – Appendix 5**

f) **Risk Management Policy – Appendix 6**

g) **Publication Scheme – Appendix 7**

h) **Complaints Procedure – Appendix 8**

i) **Asset Register – Appendix 9**

j) **Media Policy – Appendix 10**

k) **Equality Policy – Appendix 11**

l) **Data Protection Policy, General Privacy Notice, Staff Privacy Notice, Subject Access Request Form, Security Incident Procedure, Retention Schedule and Privacy Consent Form – Appendix 12 and 12a – 12f incl**

m) **Bullying and Harassment Policy – Appendix 13**

n) **Policy for dealing with Planning Applications received between meetings – Appendix 14**

o) **Communications Policy – Appendix 15**

- p) Discipline and Grievance Policy – Appendix 16
- q) Health and Safety Policy – Appendix 17
- r) **Training and Development Policy** – Appendix 18
- s) Unacceptable Behaviour Policy – Appendix 19
- t) Urgent Business Between Meetings Policy – Appendix 20
- u) **Reserves Policy** – Appendix 21

It was RESOLVED to re-adopt all of the above policies not in bold as there had been no changes and they are still relevant to the workings of the Parish Council.

It was RESOLVED to adopt the updated Standing Orders to reflect the change that the annual accounts will be presented to Cllrs along with the agenda and not 14 clear working days as previously stated. It was NOTED that the clerk needed to adjust the contents page.

It was RESOLVED to continue to comply with the Code of Conduct.

It was RESOLVED to adopt the updated Financial Regulations from NALC – It was NOTED that the contents page needs adjusting.

It was RESOLVED to adopt the updated Donations and Grants Policy updated in line with current practice.

The Risk Schedule and Finance Controls were considered. It was AGREED that the risks faced by the Parish Council had been adequately considered and mitigations put in place. It was NOTED that the timings of payments made to HMRC had been updated to monthly from quarterly.

It was RESOLVED that the Risk Management Policy was suitable for the risks faced by the Parish Council and it was re-adopted.

The Publication Scheme was updated to include everything that is now held on the website and was adopted.

It was AGREED that the Asset Register was an accurate reflection of the assets owned by the Parish Council.

It was NOTED that the new noticeboard has been added.

It was NOTED that the Press and Media Policy had been updated to remove the paragraph about Cllrs making personal comments to the media. Cllrs cannot take their Cllr hats off to make personal comments. The policy was APPROVED and adopted.

It was RESOLVED to re-adopt the Planning between Meetings Policy. It was NOTED that a Planning Working Group needed to be set up. It was RESOLVED Cllrs: Helen Heathfield, Richard Crompton, Olivia Manning, Charlotte Philips and Andy Towers should form this group.

The Training and Development Policy has been updated and the Cllr handbook removed. The policy was APPROVED and adopted.

The Reserves Policy had been updated to include final figures for all reserve pots. The policy was APPROVED and adopted.

One member of the public joined the meeting

v) To consider agreement to continue to comply with the Transparency Code

It was RESOLVED to continue to comply with the Transparency Code

w) To remind councillors of self-disqualification law

Cllrs were REMINDED of the need to attend at least one meeting every six months to remain as a Councillor.

x) To confirm eligibility to act under the General Power of Competence

The clerk CONFIRMED that the Council remained eligible to act under the General Power of Competence. It was RESOLVED to do so.

y) To note the attendance record of councillors at meetings during 2023-24

NOTED

10. Finance:

a) To consider the End of Year 2023-24 bank reconciliation and bank statements. – Appendix 22

The EOY bank reconciliation and bank statement were APPROVED and signed as evidence of bank reconciliation and budget monitoring

b) To consider and approve Internal Audit Report – Appendix 23

The internal audit report was APPROVED. There were no issues raised therein.

c) To consider and approve the Annual Return Governance Statement – Appendix 24

The Annual Governance Statements were considered, agreed and APPROVED. The statements were signed by the Chair and the Clerk.

d) To consider and approve the Annual Return Accounting Statements – Appendix 25

The Accounting Statements were considered and APPROVED. They were signed by the Chair.

e) To consider eligibility to sign the Certificate of Exemption from External Audit – Appendix 26

The Clerk REPORTED that the Council did meet the eligibility criteria to be exempt from an external audit. The Certificate of Exemption was signed by the RFO and the Chair.

f) To review the parish council insurance policy and decide on any amendments required

It was AGREED that the insurance still adequately covered the needs of the Group Parish Council.

g) To consider the internal auditor for 2024-25

It was RESOLVED to continue to use Mr Philip Brough as internal auditor for 2024-25. He was thanked for his hard work with this.

h) To consider continuing to use the “payments and receipts” accounting method for 2024-25 and make payment by BACS

It was RESOLVED to continue to use the receipts and payments accounting method for the coming year, as well as BACS for payments.

i) To note the VAT return for 2023-24

It was NOTED that the 2023-24 VAT claim for £293.83 had been submitted and already received.

j) To receive update on Poorlands Meadow Trust

It was REPORTED that The Poorlands Meadow Trust had been unable to meet in 2023 due to issues with the number of Cllrs. It was NOTED that the bank balance was £4722.91 at the 31st March 2024

k) To re-confirm Clerk’s delegated authority to make payments between meetings when necessary

It was RESOLVED that the clerk continue to have delegated authority to make payments between meetings up to £750 should the need arise.

l) To note the following payments made between meetings under Clerks Delegated Authority (Finance Regulations item 5.5)

- a) Clerks April Salary
- b) HMRC PAYE £109.80

NOTED

m) To consider the following invoices for payment

- a) Clerks May Salary
 - b) Clerks May expenses £141.06 – previously circulated
 - c) HMRC PAYE - £109.80
 - d) St James Church Canon Frome – Meeting Hire - £15.00
 - e) Autela Payroll Services £73.73
- The above invoices were APPROVED for payment by BACS

n) To note receipt of precept payment one - £7250.00

NOTED

11. Planning:

a) 240773 - Middlefields, Castle Frome, Ledbury, Herefordshire HR8 1HJ

Partial demolition of single-storey elements and conversion of retained Dutch barn structure as accommodation ancillary to Middlefields with associated change of use of land to form part of the residential planning unit

It was RESOLVED to support this application.

b) 241071 - The Old Forge, Stretton Grange, Stretton Grandison, Ledbury, Herefordshire HR8 2TS

240704 Proposed installation of 10 modules of roof-mounted solar PV arrays.

It was RESOLVED to support this application.

12. To consider the Woodland Management Plan (Childer Wood and Meephill Coppice) Consultation

It was RESOLVED to thank the organisation for their hard work on this and to support the plan.

13. Highways/Footpaths:

a) To consider any highway or footpaths issues for reporting to Balfour Beatty

The following items were NOTED for reporting:

- The ditch by the Homend Estate road has still not been filled in – the clerk will chase this up.
- The flood is still outside properties on the Canon Frome road following works by Balfour Beatty – the clerk will follow up.
- Trees are leaning near the highway by Blackways.

b) To consider the cycle access and safety along the A4103

This item was DEFERRED until Cllr Rebecca Tully is present.

c) To consider an update on the A417 highways project with Ashperton and Pixley Parish Councils and next steps

The clerk REPORTED that Pixley did not want to be part of this project. She further REPORTED that Ashperton Parish Council had confirmed they would like 10 40mph, and 17 30mph stickers. It was AGREED that Cllrs should let the clerk know how many would be useful for their parishioners to have and she would then order them.

14. To consider a project to help combat loneliness in the parishes.

The clerk REPORTED that she was waiting to hear back regarding the possible use of Stretton Grandison Church.

15. To consider a newsletter for the parishes

It was RESOLVED to hold this suggestion until a meeting place for item 14 has been found.

04/24

16. To consider any correspondence received by the Clerk

- Update on the Code of Conduct – Herefordshire Council - *NOTED*

17. To consider any items for the next agenda (no discussion)

Update on the installation of the SID panel and new noticeboard; the future of the Group Parish Council

18. To note the date of the next meeting – 15th July 2024 – St James Church - Canon Frome

NOTED

The meeting closed at 20.07

Signed: _____ Dated: _____