

**AUST PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF A COUNCIL MEETING**

Held on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023 @ 7:30pm at Elberton Village Hall

**Present:** Councillors Ian Jenkins (vice-chairman, in the chair), Heather Bayston, Julian Cooper, David Spratt, Jeremy Warren, Anne Wiseman

**In attendance:** Ward Councillor Tony Williams (SGC), no members of the public

**Clerk:** Emma Pattullo

Approved at the subsequent meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

Signed copy held by the Clerk.

**1 To receive apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Steve Meredith.

**2 To receive declarations of Interest and requests for dispensations**

There were no declarations of interest or dispensation requests.

**3 Public Forum**

No members of the public were present.

**4 To approve the minutes of the last meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2023 be approved as a correct record. The minutes were signed by the Vice Chairman.

**5 To review ongoing matters and agree action required, if any:**

**5.1 Recent works at Whale Wharf**

It was NOTED that there have been works carried out at Whale Wharf recently, including removal of some trees and dumping of spoil in the Long Pond. South Glos. Council have imposed a Tree Protection Order across the site and are investigating the other works. Other government agencies have also been asked to comment.

**5.2 Woodwell Meadows – possible formation of volunteer group**

Cllr. Bayston has discussed this with Caroline Gaze (SGC Biodiversity team) who welcomed the suggestion of a community volunteer group. Cllr. Bayston will now discuss with the SGC Open Spaces Volunteer Group Co-ordinator, Kirsty Newberry.

It was RESOLVED that Cllr. Bayston should continue discussions with SGC on behalf of the council, to establish whether the proposal is feasible and what costs and responsibilities might fall on the parish council should it go ahead. Cllr. Bayston will report to the next council meeting.

**6 New items of business**

**6.1 To consider adoption of a Biodiversity Policy**

Parish councils have a duty under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Environment Act 2021 to have regard to conserving biodiversity as part of their policy or decision making. To set out how this duty will be met by Aust PC, a draft Biodiversity Policy had been drawn up and circulated prior to the meeting. It was RESOLVED that the policy should be adopted with no amendments.

**7 Planning**

**7.1 To note applications received and resolve response**

The following applications were NOTED and responses RESOLVED as recorded:

- i.P23/02219/F - Beluga House Whale Wharf Lane Littleton Upon Severn - Change of use from a residential education activity centre with adventure and school courses (Class C2) to use as a detox / addiction centre (Class C2) with external alterations – reconsultation following submission of

additional information. RESOLVED: Objection, with same comment as before since the additional information was not felt to be substantial enough to alter the previous reasons for objection.

## 7.2 To note the following SGC planning decisions

The following planning decision was NOTED:

- i. P23/01339/F - May Barn Main Road Aust - Erection of single storey extension to south elevation to facilitate conversion of agricultural barn to form 1no. dwelling (Class C3). Erection of a single storey front extension and alterations to roofline to outbuilding to form indicated garage, workshop and office. (Amendment to PT17/2461/F) (Retrospective). *Approved with conditions*

## 8 Council administration

### 8.1 To note national pay award agreement

It was noted that the National Joint Committee (NJC) pay award for the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 has now been agreed. The award was for a flat rate of £1925, pro rata for part time employees. As the clerk is employed on NJC salary scale conditions, the new rate of salary is now payable including a back dated increase from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.

### 8.2 To consider purchase of EasyPC accounting software

The clerk reported that a trial of accounting software “EasyPC Accounts” has been undertaken over recent months and circulated a written report of the advantages to the council in using such software. It was RESOLVED that a subscription to EasyPC Accounts should be purchased for the remainder of the current financial year, at a cost of £20.

## 9 Finance

### 9.1 To note payments made under prior approval

The following payments, made under the given prior approval, were noted:

Item	Amount	Minute (where applicable)
Clerk's salary & home working allowance for month to 16 <sup>th</sup> October 2023	£287.12	May 2023 item 12.9
SGC Localism (emptying of waste bin) Q3	£45.78 +VAT	May 2023 item 12.9

### 9.2 To approve payments

It was RESOLVED that the following payments should be made. Payment will be made via bank transfer. Cllrs Spratt and Jenkins will authorise and a record of authorisation will be held by the Clerk.

Item	Amount
Clerk's back pay due to late pay award (1 <sup>st</sup> April – 16 <sup>th</sup> November 2023)	£193.98

### 9.3 To approve an increase in the clerk's salary standing order to reflect pay award

Following item 8.1 above, it was RESOLVED that the monthly standing order should be increased to £311.12.

### 9.4 To consider the draft council budget for financial year 2024/25

The clerk presented a proposed budget for the next financial year and gave a brief explanation of how the budget was put together and how it will be used to determine the precept request. Councillors asked questions about some elements but agreed that overall the draft budget looks acceptable.

It was NOTED that the draft budget will be firmed up as far as possible over the next few weeks and a final draft will be presented for adoption at the next council meeting in January.

**10 To review correspondence received and determine response**

**10.1 SGC – Local Plan phase 3 consultation process**

It was NOTED that Phase 3 consultation on the new Local Plan will open on 3rd December 2023 and run until end of January 2024. The clerk will circulate details once the consultation period opens and councillors were asked to consider it ready for a response to be agreed at the January council meeting.

**10.2 Various residents – firework displays causing distress to animals**

The clerk and Cllr. Warren had both received representation from local residents expressing concern at the distress caused to animals due to the high noise level of firework displays in the area.

It was NOTED that firework displays are a popular community event, that there is an obligation on organisers of firework displays to inform local farmers and landowners about their displays, and that it is now possible to purchase “lower noise” fireworks which residents may wish to consider in the future. However, the council has no powers to address this issue formally.

**11 To consider responses to consultations received**

**11.1 SGC 2024 Budget consultation**

RESOLVED: No response.

**11.2 SGC Library service savings**

RESOLVED: No response.

**12 Any other minor matters for discussion (no decision required) or items for next agenda**

Cllr. Bayston reported that a resident has asked if anything can be done about failure of a local farmer to leave a clear path through crops along a registered Right of Way. It was suggested that a personal approach to the landowner would be the first step. If this is not successful, the matter could be reported to the SGC rights of way team.

**13 Meeting closure**

The meeting closed at 8:58pm.

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

Items for the agenda should be with the Clerk by 2<sup>nd</sup> January.

**Signed (Chairman): .....**