

## ASHFORD PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES AND ACTION REMINDER

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING - 6 JUNE 2023

Chairman: Councillor Philip Hughes Tel: 1271 345378

Acting Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer:

Councillor Brian Kettle DMA FIPM FMS Tel 1271 378579

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Present: Initials in text of Minutes indicate Councillor/Officer responsible for Action

JB Jane Bosley KF Kitty Furse GH Geoff Holder PH Philip Hughes

BK Brian Kettle VL Vaughan Lawson MW Mary Withey

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**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** The Chairman welcomed Councillors to the meeting and reminded them to make any Declarations of Interest in accordance with the Local Government Councillor Code of Conduct 2020. None were declared.

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PROPER OFFICER & RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

The Chairman advised the Council that, in accordance with Standing Orders, it was necessary to appoint an Acting Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer pending the recruitment of a new Clerk which it was hoped would be achieved shortly. Councillor Kettle had indicated that he was prepared to fulfil this role until a new Clerk took office as he was professionally qualified to do so. This would enable the Council to meet so as to transact parish business without further delay. The Monitoring Officer had been contacted and raised no objection to this arrangement.

PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED

That Councillor Brian Michael Kettle DMA be appointed Acting Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer with immediate effect and remain in office until a new Clerk takes up office.

Councillor Kettle responded in suitable terms and stated that he hoped to continue to help with the work of rebuilding trust and confidence in the Council after a difficult time. It was essential that this should not be undermined by the negativity which had done so much harm to the Council and to the village which most of us love and respect.

The Acting Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer informed the Council that each member should have a copy of the NALC Model Standing Orders adopted by the Council in 2017. In accordance with good management practice, each member should check that he/she still had a copy of this document which is essential to the efficient running of the Council. If not, he/she should request a replacement from the Acting Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer (JB KF GH PH VL) (BK)

He also informed the Council that the new members had been issued with a copy of the Local Government Councillors Code of Conduct by The Chairman. Re-elected members should check that they still had a copy. If not, they should request a replacement from the Acting Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer (JB GH PH VL) (BK)

**ACCOUNTS 2021/22 and 2022/23**

The Chairman introduced Jon Triggs, Deputy Chief Executive of the North Devon District Council and expressed the appreciation of the Council and, indeed, the village for all the extra work that the Temporary Council (Councillors Davis (Chairman) Maskell and Roome) and the officers had done on their behalf.

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the Accounts to the Council and answered questions on a number of matters arising on them.

PROPOSED, SECONDED AND RESOLVED

That the Accounts for 2021/22 be approved.

That the Accounts for 2022/23 be approved subject to the investigation by the Deputy Chief Executive of one minor matter relating to a bench.

(Copies of these Accounts are attached to the signed copy of these Minutes)

**BUDGET 2023 /24**

The Chairman introduced the Draft Budget for the current financial year and he and the Deputy Chief Executive answered questions on the assumptions made. Concern was expressed on the substantial increase in the cost of Insurance and the impact this would have on the precept and thus on the Council Tax payers in the village. The Chairman explained that the Insurers who had covered the Council up to 31 May had declined to offer cover again and it had been necessary to obtain cover from another company through Gallaghers, the local brokers.

PROPOSED, SECONDED AND RESOLVED

That the Budget for 2023/24 be agreed. (A copy of the Budget is attached to the signed copy of these Minutes)

**ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTANCY RETURN**

The Chairman informed members that the necessary work on completing this Return was ongoing and a further short meeting to approve the completed Return would be necessary in due course.

**IMPORTANT NOTE – IF YOU DO NOT AGREE WITH ANYTHING PLEASE CONTACT THE ACTING PROPER OFFICER AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND NOT LATER THAN 7 DAYS BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING. IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO AGREE ANY CHANGES, YOU SHOULD CONTACT THE CHAIRMAN WHO WILL DETERMINE ANY CHANGES AND INFORM THE COUNCIL PRIOR TO THEIR FINAL APPROVAL**

I hereby approve the above Minutes on behalf of the Council.

(Signed).....Date.....