

## ***A. Minutes of extraordinary meeting of Singleton and Charlton Parish Council 3 Feb 2015***

### **1. Chairman's Welcome**

The meeting was held at St Francis Cottage, Singleton on 3 Feb 2015.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting:

Danny Sole (DS)

Ian Michael (IM)

Jon Ward (JW)

Judy Fathers (JF)

Neil Hedger (NH)

Nick Conway (NC)

Keith Hope-Lang (KHL), Chairman and secretary

### **2. Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Liz Jasper and Sam Axtell

### **3. Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations.

### **4. Visitors' questions**

There were no visitors.

### **5. Discussion of the budget**

A draft budget had been prepared and circulated to the councillors.

After some discussion JW proposed that the Parish Council (PC) should approve the 2015/2016 budget which had been submitted as a draft. DS seconded this and the motion was passed without dissent. A copy of the budget is attached as appendix A.

The Chairman reminded the PC that a Watershed grant given to the Flood Action Group (FAG) had been paid into the PC account since the FAG had no appropriate bank account. However the day would come when the FAG would want the money.

IM proposed that the PC should transfer, when feasible, the Watershed money now in its account into an established bank account nominated by the FAG. JF seconded this and it was agreed without dissent.

### **6. Review of Parish Correspondence**

#### ***a) Cathryn Woolley***

The Chairman told the PC since 11 Jan he had made repeated attempts to contact Cathryn with negligible success. He had only heard from Cathryn three times.

- On Sun 11 Jan Cathryn said in an email that she would come over to the Chairman's house that evening – she did not.

- On 21 Jan Cathryn sent an email to a contact in Arundel Town Council telling her that she had to leave home for Scotland in a hurry on Mon 12 Jan. She said that she was sorting so much stuff there between childcare that time was very limited. Her mobile had limited reception, no voice mail and she did not have caller id so it was probably best to text. She added that the situation could take 'a few weeks' to resolve - Arundel Town Council forwarded this to the Chairman.
- On Fri 23 Jan Cathryn texted the Chairman to say that things were uncertain at that moment and that he should use email for any questions.

The Chairman said he had discussed the situation with the Chief Executive, Trevor Leggo, of the Sussex and Surrey Association of Local Councils. Trevor advised us that we should operate on the defensive assumption that Cathryn would not return. Trevor recommended that we should immediately advertise for a locum Clerk and for the recruitment of a replacement for Cathryn. The Chairman asked him to do both.

Trevor Leggo drafted a letter, from the Chairman to Cathryn, and the PC discussed the draft. It was agreed to adjust the text to make it clear that if we heard no response from Cathryn then we would have to assume that she had resigned so the PC would then have to take further action. The PC agreed to put aside the possibility of Cathryn returning until such time as she declared that to be her wish. The PC also wanted to emphasise the importance of immediate access to the PC's property and records. NC proposed that the draft letter should be amended to take in these points and that it should then be sent to Cathryn. JF seconded this and the motion was carried without dissent. A copy of the final letter is attached as appendix B.

The PC agreed that this letter to Cathryn was not intended to have any formal legal standing – it could best be described as a 'shot across the bows'.

**b) Kate Bain**

The Chairman reported that at £10/hr there were no takers for the post of locum but at £25/hr, as suggested by Trevor Leggo, there was an immediate application from Kate Bain.

The Chairman reported that he had spoken to Kate and there seemed to be agreement between what the PC wanted of a locum and what Kate saw as her task.

The PC discussed the cost of a locum. It was agreed that our need was so great that, initially, we must pay the high rate. However we would engage Kate on a rolling 1-month contract so this could be reviewed at any time (Secretary: at the meeting we agreed on two week rolling contract but since we would pay monthly it would be best not to work with weeks and months in the same agreement).

DS proposed that a memo of understanding should be offered to Kate Bain as follows subject to a positive report from the Chairman following his next meeting with her:

- The PC will employ Kate Bain as a locum Clerk on a rolling monthly contract subject to a two week notice period until either Cathryn Woolley returns or a replacement is found.
- Kate Bain will contact Cathryn and arrange to visit her house to collect all material related to Cathryn's role as Clerk.
- Kate Bain will work to return the Parish Council to a fully functioning state.
- Kate Bain will be employed on a monthly basis for up to 30hr/month at £25/hr.

This was seconded by NH with no dissent and the motion was carried.

**c) *Standing Regulations***

The Chairman said that in view of the fluid state over the post of Clerk he thought it likely that the PC would be faced with some urgent decisions. He asked for the PC's agreement to making a change in the Standing Regulations to authorise such decisions to be taken in a democratic fashion without the need to actually bring councillors together in a formal PC meeting.

IM proposed that the Standing Regulations should be amended so as to allow decisions to be taken by using emails to reach a consensus. NC seconded this. There was no dissent and the motion was carried.

**7. Information for Council**

There was no information.

**8. Date of forthcoming meeting**

It was confirmed that the next meeting would be on 18 Mar 2015 in the Singleton Village Hall at 7pm.

PK Hope-Lang  
Secretary  
4 Feb 2015

**Estimate of the 2015/2016 budget**

	<b>2015-2016 draft</b>		
Precept	10893		Same as last year
Interest received	1		
Other	0		
Grants	0		
VAT recovered	0	10894	Money ready to be spent £10894
Balance B/F*		10844	Expected from 2014/2015 forecast
Henry Smith's		3300	Held before distribution
<b>Total Receipts</b>		<b>25038</b>	

Employee costs	3817		£10.6/hr 30hr/month
Office Allowances	360		Clerk's 360 seems bit high so 300
Admin/Stationery/Postage	400		Clerk's 400 ignores last year's spike
Training	175		Clerk's estimate 200 bt might save a little
Subscriptions	100		Reference subs for Clerk
Audit fees	100		Clerk's estimate
Insurance	600		Clerk's estimate
Notice Board	0		
Village general Sect 137	350		Clerk's estimate, general village expenses
Village pond info Sect142	50		Clerk's 50 not needed
Churchyard Grant	800		Clerk's estimate 810, we agreed a rise
Village Hall rent Sect133	300		Clerk's estimate, fees for use of Hall
Village Pond	0		Clerk's 50 but no anticipated expense
Flag & Flagpole	0		Clerk's 50 not needed
Dog Bins	150		Clerk's estimate, we pay for emptying one
Glebe Field maintain/rent	150		Clerk's estimate for rent
Grass Cutting	1500		Contract
Tree Surgery	250		Clerk's estimate
Playground maintain	500		Clerk's estimate
Bus Shelters	0		
Village Design Statement	0		
Jubilee gardens	0		Will be part of grass cutting contract
Election expenses	500		We expect this charge will be avoided.
VAT	750	<b>10852</b>	Clerk's VAT estimate
Henry Smith		3300	Held then paid out for Charity
<b>Total out goings</b>		<b>14152</b>	

<b>Profit for year</b>		<b>42</b>	
<b>Carried forward</b>		<b>10886</b>	

*Singleton & Charlton Parish Council*

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St Francis Cottage  
Singleton  
Chichester  
W Sussex PO18 0EZ  
01 243 811 388  
4 Feb 2015

Dear

I am writing to you on behalf of the Singleton and Charlton Parish Council. It is clear from what little I have gleaned that there has been a serious crisis that has caused you to depart for Scotland at short notice; I hope that whatever the cause this may be resolved in the best way possible. Whilst your departure was sudden, I do not believe there is any excuse for failing to keep in touch or respond to my emails before you left. This has put the Council in considerable difficulty, for example not having the draft budget meant that at the Council Meeting last week we could not set the precept putting us in some jeopardy with CDC's timescale. I have no access to the Council's records or its cheque book so we cannot make any payments that may arise during your absence.

I am really surprised that you emailed someone at Arundel Town Council rather than direct to me – I would have thought that after nearly a year as our Clerk you would have remembered my email address or at least phoned your husband to check it from the records at your home. At best this is discourteous, at worst it is highly unprofessional.

We have no idea when or if you plan to return and having been left with no support I have instructed SSALC to source a locum Clerk as a matter of urgency. Your job is still there if you want it and, subject to some discussion to take account of your circumstance, I would be pleased to see you back. However, if I do not hear from you within 5 days of the date of this letter we shall have to take further action on the assumption that you have chosen to resign. Meanwhile I must stress the importance to us of having immediate access to the property and records of the Parish Council

I really look forward to hearing from you.

Yours,

PK Hope-Lang  
Chairman Parish Council