**WOODLAND PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Extraordinary Meeting held on**

**Thursday 12 June 2025**

**at**

**Woodland Village Hall**

**Present**

Cllr Peckett, Cllr Timms, Cllr Snowdon, Cllr Blackwood, Cllr Gardner, Cllr Abbott, David Buckee (Parish Clerk)

No members of the public were present

**1. Apologies**

Apologies received from Cllr Hall.

In the absence of the Cllr Hall, the meeting was chaired by the Vice Chair, Cllr Peckett.

**2. Declaration of Interest**

None

**3. Approval of Updated Policies**

Proposed amended policies had already been circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting. The Clerk said that some of the policies have been updated to reflect current NALC model templates, some that are currently published on the Parish Council website have been amended to remove references to other Parish Councils, some were due for review anyway, and there are some new ones which should probably be published on the website.

Councillors present approved the following policies, which the Clerk will publish on the website. Proposed by Cllr Gardner, seconded by Cllr Peckett. **Policies approved**.

Standing Orders (previously approved at the meeting on 15th May 2025)

Model Officer Protocol

Code of Conduct

Financial Regulations

Complaints Procedure

Health & Safety Policy

Scheme of Delegation

Anti-Harassment & Bullying Policy

Freedom of Information Policy

Data Protection Policy

Data Retention Policy

Grievance Policy

Expenses Policy

Safeguarding Policy

Agreed to review the policies on an annual basis.

**4. Approval of AGAR**

All Councillors had been sent copies of the AGAR prior to the meeting.

The Clerk said that the AGAR this year is more detailed. The main difference is that in previous years the AGAR was subject to internal audit only, and this year as well as the internal audit it will also be subject to an external audit by Mazars as income/payments in total have been over £25k this year, due to the grants and payment for the playground equipment. This will be the same again next year.

**Councillors approved that Tanya Roberts be appointed again as Internal Auditor for the Parish Council.**

**Councillors fully discussed and formally approved the following AGAR** **items:**

1. Review & Approval of Bank Reconciliation (reference Finance 01)

2. Review & Approval of Receipts Register (reference Finance 02)

3. Review & Approval of Payments Register (reference Finance 03)

4. Review & Approval of Annual Governance Statement (reference Finance 04)

5. Review & Approval of Accounting Statement (reference Finance 05)

6. Review & Approval of Asset Register (reference Finance 06)

7. Review & Approval of General Reserves (reference Finance 07)

8. Review & Approval of Woodland P.C. Risk Assessment (reference Finance 08)

9. Internal Audit Procedure (reference Finance 09)

With regard to the Asset Register, the Clerk said that there was an anomaly in last year’s AGAR, with the figure for assets quoted as £19,999 but the asset register published on the website showed a figure of £31,352. This is due to the asset figure in the AGAR 2023/24 incorrectly being written down to allow for depreciation and to reflect a value based on what it may currently be worth. As the new playground equipment will not be reflected until next year, there has been no change to assets between 2023/24 and 2024/25.

**Councillors** **approved to restate the fixed asset figure from £19,999 in 2023/24 to £31,352 in 2024/25, to remove the depreciation previously applied in line with current AGAR practices.**

Exercise of Public Rights - Once the Internal Audit has been completed, the PC will need to publish the AGAR on the PC website, and one day later the Exercise of Public Rights starts, lasting an exact 30 working day period. This gives anyone who wishes to inspect the Parish Council books the ability to do so. The timing of the start of the Exercise of Public Rights will be depend on when the Internal Audit is completed, but the latest period is Tuesday 1 July to Monday 11 August as the AGAR needs to have been returned to Mazars by 30 June. Councillors will decide the date as soon as the internal audit is complete. Once Mazars have undertaken the external audit, their audit will also need to be published on the website.

**5**. **Approval of invoices**

The following invoices were approved by Councillors:

Woodland Village Hall – room hire £22.50 for council meeting 13 March 2025 and £22.50 for council meeting 15 May 2025

Richard Toward - £125 for first grass cut

**Other matters**

Cllr Abbott raised a couple of questions mainly to understand and familiarise himself with Parish Council matters:

VAT – It was confirmed that the Parish Council is not registered for VAT, but is able to claim VAT back from HMRC as it is exempt as a local authority.

Rent received on cemetery chapel – it was confirmed that this was subsequently repaid to Woodland Community Group. As ownership of the chapel is uncertain, the Parish Council cannot charge rent on something it is not certain that it owns.

The asset register shows a number of litter bins owned by the PC, and Cllr Abbott asked whose responsibility it is to empty them and whether there is a cost. It was confirmed that whilst the PC is not aware of any specific arrangements for them being emptied, this is done by Durham County Council, and there is currently no cost to the Parish Council.

Website hosting – Cllr Peckett clarified that TEEC who host the website are approved for hosting gov.uk and whilst they are expensive, the PC is limited in what if anything it can do to move away from them. All Parish Councils will have to move to gov.uk so we are ahead of the game.

Banking arrangements – these will need to be reviewed following Cllr Hall’s appointment as Chair, with changes required to the bank mandate, correspondence address, and change of internet users. All signatories also need to have access to online banking to view the Bank account. ACTION: Clerk to review and organise

Change to Chair email – ACTION: Cllr Peckett and Cllr Hall to arrange

**Date of next meeting**

Next meeting provisionally agreed for Thursday 10th July 2025 at Woodland Village Hall, with anything urgent in the meantime being communicated by email.

*These are true and accurate minutes of the meeting as agreed by the council*

**Date ………………………………………..**

**Signed ……………………………………..**

**Minutes for all Parish Council meetings are available to view once agreed and signed by the council. These are available on the council website woodlandparishcouncil.gov.uk. The minutes will normally be available no later than 4 weeks after the date of the council meeting.**

**Please note, all parish council meetings will be audio recorded for the purposes of accurately producing the minutes. The recording will be retained by Woodland Parish Council until the minutes have been agreed and signed. The recording will then be deleted unless the retention is requested by a lawful authority.**