



Darnhall Parish Council



To: **The Members of Darnhall Parish Council**

Dear Councillor

You are summoned to attend the Annual Meeting of the Darnhall Parish Council to be held on Tuesday 30th May 2023 at 7.30pm at Darnhall Village Hall.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND THIS MEETING.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M/B' followed by a stylized flourish.

Dr Mark Bailey
Parish Clerk

AGENDA

- At the elections for the Darnhall Parish Council which took place on 4th May 2023, a total of four candidates were nominated and returned to the Parish Council.
- This leaves a total of three vacancies on the Parish Council. These will be advertised and any candidates will be considered at the July 2023 meeting for co-option.
- Each parish councillor is required to sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office either before the meeting or at the meeting. Each councillor must also fill in a registration of interests form which has to go to the Monitoring Officer at Cheshire West Council.
- Part 1 of the agenda represents the business of the annual meeting of the Parish Council
- Part 2 represents ordinary business of the Parish Council

PART ONE – ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL BUSINESS

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

The Parish Council is to elect a Chairman to serve until the Annual Meeting in 2024. The current Chairman (if present) will call for nominations. If the current Chairman is not present, the current Vice Chairman will call for nominations. If neither are present, then the Council will appoint a Chairman for this purpose. The new Chairman will sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office, following which the newly elected Chairman will chair the meeting.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

The Parish Council is to elect a Vice-Chairman to serve until the Annual Meeting in 2024. The Chairman will call for nominations. The new Vice-Chairman will sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence should be notified to the Clerk before 6.00 pm on the day of the meeting, if possible.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest or non-pecuniary interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, the nature of that interest, and in respect of disclosable interests, to leave the meeting prior to the discussion of that item. If declarations are not made at this point in the proceedings, they should be made as soon as the Member becomes aware of an interest. Whilst the Clerk can advise on the Code of Conduct and its interpretation, the decision to declare (or not) is the responsibility of the Parish Councillor, based on the circumstances of the matter in hand.

5. MINUTES – TUESDAY 23rd MARCH 2023

To resolve that the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 23rd March 2023 be signed as a correct record.

<https://darnhall.nwclients.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Minutes-of-Meeting-on-23-March-2023.pdf>

6. MATTERS ARISING

To raise any matters from the above minutes.

7. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman of the Parish Council can provide a report to the Council under this item.

8. ELECTIONS – 4th MAY 2023

Members are asked to note the following.

8.1 Local Election Results and Vacancies

Following the elections on 4th May 2023, a total of four candidates were nominated and returned to the Parish Council There are three vacancies on the Parish Council.

8.2 Borough Council Elections

The Parish Council is asked to note that Simon Boone was elected as the Borough Councillor for the ward of Winsford Swanlow on Cheshire West and Chester Council.

9. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES/OUTSIDE BODIES

The Council is asked to appoint Members to the following committees/outside bodies.

Committees

- Finance Committee (three Members)
- Village Hall Committee (three Members)

Outside Bodies

- Cheshire Association of Local Councils (two Members)
- Police Cluster (one Member)

10. STANDING ORDERS/FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Council is asked to **APPROVE** the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations for the 2023-24 year.

<https://darnhall.nwclients.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/DPC-Standing-Orders-24.5.23.pdf> (Standing Orders)

<https://darnhall.nwclients.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Financial-standing-orders-2023-24-24.05.23.pdf> (Financial Regulations)

11. CODE OF CONDUCT

Members are asked to note and **APPROVE** the attached Code of Conduct.

<https://darnhall.nwclients.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/mj-20120726CodeOfConductCWaCAApproved.pdf>

12. FINANCIAL MATTERS

The following financial matters will be considered at the meeting.

12.1 Ledger/Bank Reconciliation Statement (1.4.22-31.03.23)

The ledger/bank reconciliation statement for the period 1st April 2022-31st March 2023 is presented to Members for note.

<https://darnhall.nwclients.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Darnhall-Parish-Council-Ledger-01.04.21-31.03.23-updated.pdf>

12.2 Budget Monitoring Report and Receipts and Payments Summary (Quarter 4 – 2022/23) (Apr 2022-March 2023)

The budget monitoring report/receipts and payment summary to the end of quarter four (2022/23) (Apr 2022-March 2023) is presented to Members for note.

<https://darnhall.nwclients.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Budget-Mon-Mar-2023-24.05.23-updated-BM.pdf> (Budget Monitoring Report)

<https://darnhall.nwclients.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Budget-Mon-Mar-2023-24.05.23-updated-RP.pdf> (Receipts and Payments Summary)

12.3 Asset Register 2022/23

The Asset Register for the Parish Council up to 31st March 2023 is attached for note.

<https://darnhall.nwclients.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Fixed-Assets-and-Long-Term-Investments-2023-30.05.23.pdf>

12.4 Risk Assessment 2023-24

To approve the annual risk assessment for the Parish Council for 2023-24 (attached).

<https://darnhall.nwclients.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Draft-Risk-Assessment-2023-24-30.5.23.pdf>

12.5 Responsible Financial Officer

The Parish Council is asked to **APPROVE** the Parish Clerk as the Council's Responsible Financial Officer for the 2023/24 financial year.

12.6 Appointment of Internal Auditor

It is a requirement that the Internal Auditor be appointed annually. Members are asked to approve the appointment of JDH Business Services for the year 2023-2024. It is proposed that, if appointed, an approach to JDH Business Services will be made as soon as possible following this meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to **APPROVE** the appointment of an internal auditor as set out above

12.7 External Audit 2022/23

The 2022-23 Annual Governance and Accounting Return (AGAR) is attached.

https://darnhall.nwclients.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/AnnualReturnForm2_2022-23_e-updated-1.pdf

Members are asked to go through the Governance Statement point by point.

The Clerk recommends that questions 1-8 are answered 'yes' and that question 9 is answered 'n/a'.

Members will note that the Accounting Return has been completed by the Parish Clerk.

The Clerk recommends that the Accounting Statement is approved by the Council.

The external auditor covering the 2022-23 financial year is PFK Littlejohn.

Parish councils whose gross income/expenditure was £25,000 or less in the financial year in question (and who meet the qualifying criteria) may certify themselves as exempt from a 'limited assurance' review. In other words, a parish council who is exempt does not need to submit the usual forms to the external auditor. Despite this exemption, the council must still complete and agree the annual return form in common with previous years as well as providing narrative support for the figures and information provided. An exempt parish council must also, as per previous years, set dates for the exercise of public rights, where members of the public can examine the accounts.

It would appear that Darnhall Parish Council can declare itself exempt from an external audit for 2022-23. To do this, the Council must agree to complete a Certificate of Exemption stating the annual gross income/expenditure for the 2022-23 financial year. This is presented to the Council for agreement/otherwise.

The Clerk recommends that the Certificate is approved. It should be noted that a so-called 'voluntary' assurance review by the external auditors would cost the Council £200.00 plus VAT. It should also be noted that the external auditors will carry out assurance reviews on a sample of 5% of parish councils whether they have declared themselves exempt or not. If the parish council is selected as part of this process, there is no charge.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are asked to note the points set out above and approve the AGAR as set out above for 2022-23

12.8 Bank Signatories

Members are asked to nominate Members to be signatories for the following bank accounts.

- NatWest Current Account – at least one signatory required (plus Clerk) – currently Cllrs Sherry and Strachan
- Barclays Current Account – at least one signatory required (plus Clerk) – currently Cllr Sherry
- Barclays 200 Club Account – at least two signatories required (plus Clerk) – no current Cllrs

- Barclays Savings Account – at least one signatory required (plus Clerk) – current Cllrs Sherry and Strachan

Members are asked to **APPROVE** signatories for the above accounts and instruct the Clerk to make the necessary changes to the bank account mandates.

12.9 Authorisation of Payments

£360.53	Clerk Pay (Dr M Bailey) (April-May 2023)
£1,250.00	Caretaker Pay (DVH – April-September 2023)
£68.45	ChALC (Annual Membership 2023-24)
£446.51	BHIB Ltd (Insurance 2023/24)
£110.00	Dr M Bailey (Reimbursement – Renewal of G Suite)
£126.00	Ms A Hancock (Reimbursement – Travel Costs)
£6.99	Cheshire West and Chester Council (Business Rates – DVH)
£177.60	Shires Accountants (M1 – M6 2023/24 Payroll)

The following payments are being paid on monthly direct debit and all cover the Village Hall.

£236.91	Scottish Power (Electricity – DVH – monthly amount)
£64.61	NFU Mutual (Insurance – DVH – monthly amount)
£41.94	BT Group (Broadband/Telephone – DVH – monthly amount)
£22.77	WaterPlus (Water – DVH – monthly amount)
£46.22	Biffa Waste Services (Waste Collection – DVH – monthly)

RECOMMENDATION Members are asked to approve the above payments.

13. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2023-24

The Parish Council is asked to approve the following dates for meetings (usually third Tuesday of every other month).

18th July 2023
 19th September
 21st November
 16th January 2024
 19th March
 21st May (Annual Meeting)

Members are asked to agree dates for the committees to meet.

RECOMMENDATION Members are asked to approve the above dates.

PART TWO – ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL BUSINESS

PART A

14. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A period for members of the public to raise comments on matters being discussed at the meeting (15 mins max).

15. FINANCE COMMITTEE

Members are asked to **APPROVE** the minutes of the Finance Committee held on 21st March 2023.

<https://darnhall.nwclients.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Minutes-FC-21.3.23.pdf>

16. PLANNING MATTERS

To consider any planning matters affecting the parish.

16.1 Darnhall Neighbourhood Plan

For Members to consider any updates the Darnhall Neighbourhood Plan.

16.2 Planning Applications

The Parish Council has received the following planning applications from Cheshire West Council.

23/01490/FUL	<u>8 Beauty Bank, Darnhall CW7 4DF</u> Front porch extension, single storey side extension, single storey rear.
--------------	---

Closing Date for Comments: 13th June 2023

23/00281/FUL	<u>36 Redshank Avenue, Winsford CW7 1SP</u> Construction of a garden outbuilding (retrospective)
--------------	---

Closing Date for comments – 6th June 2023

17. DARNHALL VILLAGE HALL

Members are asked to consider any other issues relating to the Village Hall:

18. CLERKS REPORT

To consider any updates from the Clerk.

19. COMMUNICATION/SHARED INFORMATION

Members may share any other information, but formal decisions cannot be taken under this item.

20. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 18th July 2023 – 7.30pm – Darnhall Village Hall (subject to agreement of agenda item 13 above).