

WEST DEEPING PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13 MAY 2020

PRESENT:

Parish Council

Cllr Colin Blagrove – Chair
Cllr Maggie Ashcroft
Cllr Sue Latham
Cllr Stephen Snell
Cllr David Ward

Mr Ian Coles – Clerk

Cllr Ashley Baxter, Mr Graham Magee

Cllr Colin Blagrove welcomed everyone and stated that, under the unique circumstances of these extraordinary times, we had been advised by the Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils (LALC) that legislation allows us to hold remote Parish Council meetings. However, legislation does not allow us to hold an Annual Parish Meeting so we have postponed this with a view to holding it later this year when it is deemed to be safe for residents to attend in person. At the Annual Parish Meeting, we would have presented both a Chairman's Report and a Financial Report which have both been prepared and are attached to these minutes. They are also available on our website.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Rosemary Trollope-Bellew, Cllr Virginia Moran

2. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON

Nominations were invited for the role of chairperson but nobody was prepared to stand for the whole of the forthcoming Parish Council year. However, Cllr Colin Blagrove and Cllr Maggie Ashcroft agreed to rotate this role, as they have done in the last year. It was proposed by Cllr David Ward that Cllr Colin Blagrove be chairperson for our first three meetings and seconded by Cllr Maggie Ashcroft. Cllr Colin Blagrove then proposed that Cllr Maggie Ashcroft be chairperson for the remaining two meetings and this was seconded by Cllr David Ward. It was also agreed that they will both act as vice chairperson to each other when not in office. The proposals were carried unanimously.

3. MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT

As we start another parish council year, Cllr Colin Blagrove emphasised to all councillors the importance of fulfilling our responsibilities to residents in the way that they would expect. He also reminded councillors of the Members Code of Conduct and the need to adhere to the Ten General Principles in the annex to this document, in particular ensuring that impartiality, openness and respect is shown amongst councillors at all times. Cllr Maggie Ashcroft also added that it is vital we share information amongst us in order to perform our duties as effectively as possible.

4. OPEN FORUM

There were no matters raised at this meeting.

5. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Cllr Maggie Ashcroft declared an interest for agenda item 13 – Gary's Gardens – where the cutting of grass in the cemetery is being discussed following the relocation of bee hives at her neighbour's property.

6. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 12 FEBRUARY 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2020, previously circulated, were agreed unanimously as a correct record. They were proposed by Cllr Maggie Ashcroft, seconded by Cllr David Ward and signed by the Chairperson.

7. ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT ON THE AGENDA

Cllr Maggie Ashcroft and Mr Ian Coles have discussed the purchase of additional dog bin bags and these will be ordered imminently. Cllr Stephen Snell and Mr Ian Coles will liaise regarding risk assessments for tasks carried out by residents on behalf of the Parish Council.

8. REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE THE PARISH COUNCIL

Cllr Ashley Baxter provided a verbal report on various local matters. He confirmed that the local recycling centre has reopened for three days a week and that there has been great support for food banks and Neighbourhood Help. The use of technology in the current environment has been very encouraging with a record online attendance for a planning meeting and this will be borne in mind when arranging future meetings and events. He also confirmed that each councillor has been given a grant of £1,000 which is available to good causes and would welcome any suggestions from councillors as to organisations who could benefit from it. Cllr Rosemary Trollope-Bellew has also contacted us to advise that she has a fund of £3,000 available for charities / groups / committees in need of financial help and that we should contact her if we have any suggestions for her consideration.

A residents meeting was held in the village hall on Friday 13th March 2020. This was primarily to obtain views about the junction at King Street and the A1175, particularly following a number of accidents there recently. Sir John Hayes, our local MP, was present at the meeting and has subsequently contacted Cllr Colin Blagrove confirming that he has taken action in respect of the issues discussed. Prior to this meeting, the Parish Council had issued a statement confirming the actions that they had taken in respect of this junction which has also been put on both our website and notice board. Cllr David Ward confirmed that this had not been read out at the meeting although Cllr Steve Snell, who was in attendance, confirmed that Sir John Hayes had seen this in advance.

9. SEWAGE PROBLEMS

At the last meeting, we had an open forum to raise concerns and issues with Matthew Moore, Customer Liaison Manager of Anglian Water. Following the meeting, we drafted a summary in the form of Action Points which was circulated to councillors and all those who attended the meeting for comment. These Action Points are attached to the minutes and will be uploaded on our website. Given the current restrictions due to the coronavirus pandemic, no further progress has been made but Matthew confirmed that this was a priority as soon as the current 'lockdown' situation is eased.

Cllr Colin Blagrove stated that he had received a letter from our MP, Sir John Hayes, to let us know that he was keen to work with the Parish Council to address the important issues of sewage and waste management. He had written to Peter Simpson, the Chief Executive of Anglian Water about this and provided us with a copy of the reply to him confirming that as soon as COVID-19 restrictions permit, Anglian Water will undertake a detailed review of the operation of the sewage network in the area. Copies of these letters are attached to these minutes and will also be put on our website.

In discussion with Cllr Maggie Ashcroft, the Quarry Manager at Breedon had commented that gravel extraction causes a reduction, not an increase, in the level of the water table.

10. MINERAL EXTRACTION

Cllr Maggie Ashcroft confirmed that she had attended a recent meeting regarding the mineral extraction by Breedon on land south of the King Street / A1175 junction of which two-thirds is owned by Tinsley Estates and one-third by Lincolnshire County Council. We have the opportunity to influence how this land is redeveloped once the extraction has been completed and it was proposed by Cllr Sue Latham that a working party should be set up to discuss this further. This was seconded by Cllr Maggie Ashcroft. Mr Ian Coles mentioned that Cllr Sue Latham had provided him with correspondence from Amanda Jenkins of the Lincolnshire Fenlands Partnership and that she would be keen to be involved in this. Mr Graham Magee also confirmed that he would like to be part of the working party. An initial online meeting to take matters further was arranged for Wednesday 27th May 2020 at 7.30 p.m.

Mr Ian Coles mentioned that a resident had asked him about an additional site for mineral extraction north of the existing Breedon and Cemex sites on King Street, towards Greatford. He has been in touch with Cllr Rosemary Trollope-Bellew who has advised that she is monitoring this and has suggested that we deal with this jointly when the application is submitted.

11. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

Following discussions at previous meetings, Cllr Colin Blagrove confirmed that he had spoken to Graeme Butler at Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership (LRSP) again regarding the A1175 junction with King Street. Following the intervention of Sir John Hayes and Cllr Rosemary Trollope-Bellew, the damage to signage and lighting following previous accidents has now been repaired. Cllr Sue Latham confirmed that our village sign had also been repaired.

Mrs Ruth Hutchinson had previously contacted us to express her dissatisfaction with the potholes at the entrance to the Boaty near her home. She has reported this to Highways at Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) but, despite the intervention of Mr Ian Coles, they have not dealt with this. Cllr David Ward discussed the problem with Paul Geeves at Breedon who agreed to put down gravel to fill them in and this has now been done. Cllr David Ward has thanked him and Mr Ian Coles will now contact LCC to confirm that we have arranged the repair ourselves.

12. CEMETERIES

We have previously been provided with two quotations to cut back the sycamore tree at the front of the cemetery, prune certain yew trees and for 6 – 8 lime trees to be topped at a total cost of around £2,000 - £2,500. It was confirmed that we would like this work to be carried out in Autumn / Winter 2020 with our preferred contractor being Woodcraft Tree Services Limited based on their previous visits to us. Mr Ian Coles will liaise with them to ask for an updated quotation and to try and arrange a date for when this can be done.

Cllr Colin Blagrove has previously raised the issue of the church wall which needs to be repaired for which we have obtained 3 quotations from separate sources for consideration. The most competitive one received is from Helpston Masonry who has quoted £2,810 for repairing both sides of the main entrance and £1,730 for work on the wall to the west of the side gate. Cllr Colin Blagrove confirmed that we have now received Church of England approval for the work to be carried out and that he is liaising with Helpston Masonry for the work to commence.

The metal gate at the entrance to the cemetery has been made safe by Mr Dick Latham. There is still repair work to be done and Cllr Sue Latham agreed to ask him if he is able to carry this out for us and / or provide us with a quotation of the cost of doing so. Cllr Colin Blagrove asked that our thanks be passed on to him for his help in dealing with these matters.

13. GARY'S GARDENS

Mr Ian Coles confirmed that he had been advised by the owners of 36 King Street that the bee hives which were situated close to the cemetery have now been moved. We had previously agreed that this area of the cemetery should be left as a 'wild area' as cutting the grass there was hazardous. However, now that the bees have been relocated, it was agreed that Mr Ian Coles should confirm to Gary's Gardens that the grass should now be able to be cut without fear of their operatives being stung by the bees.

14. PLANNING

There have been two applications since the last meeting:-

S20/0535 – A proposed two storey extension and integrated garage at 1 King Street which councillors are currently considering. Cllr Maggie Ashcroft mentioned that she had one or two concerns from a heritage point of view and will advise Mr Ian Coles of her concerns for comments to be passed on to SKDC.

S18/2146 – An amended application by Lincolnshire County Council for the construction of up to 260 dwellings on land off Millfield Road in Market Deeping. Councillors considered the original application in January 2019 and comments were made to SKDC at that time. This has been reviewed by councillors who have no further comments to make.

15. FINANCE

The bank balances in our current and deposit accounts at our year end at 31st March 2020 were £555 and £5,447 respectively. Our current balances are £252 and £9,446 respectively. Since the last meeting, we have received £2 in bank interest, £110 from the Village Hall Committee as reimbursement for charges levied to us by Gary's Gardens for cutting grass at the village hall since 1st April 2019 and £4,200 from SKDC in respect of our annual precept. We have paid £47 to SKDC in non-domestic rates for the cemetery, £80 for our annual membership of the Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils (LALC), £113 for hire of the village hall for our meetings since 1st April 2019 and £258 for clerk fees and expenses.

Mr Ian Coles confirmed that he had completed the usual requirements in respect of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) on behalf of the parish council and that our income and expenditure had been internally audited by Louise Cooke for year ended 31st March 2020. Councillors had been provided with details of all the information prior to the meeting and all were approved. They will now be signed by both Cllr Colin Blagrove and Mr Ian Coles and published on our website. As we have income and expenditure of less than £25,000 per annum we are exempt from the more detailed requirements of the AGAR and need only to submit the signed Certificate of Exemption and the Contact Details to the external auditor, PKF Littlejohn. Mr Ian Coles will arrange for this to be done shortly. The usual Notice of Public Rights, allowing inspection of our accounting records during certain forthcoming periods, will be put on both the website and notice board in the near future. It was also agreed that Mr Ian Coles should arrange for the purchase of a £25 voucher for Louise as a token of our appreciation for conducting the internal audit.

16. INSURANCE

Mr Ian Coles advised that our annual insurance premium is due on 1st June 2020. Cover is on the same basis as last year and there have been inflationary increases in both the premium and cover for certain items. It was agreed that we do not require any further changes at this renewal.

17. CORRESPONDENCE TO BE NOTED

None.

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cllr Maggie Ashcroft advised that the training sessions planned in respect of the upgrade to both LCC and parish council websites had been postponed and we await their further advice in due course. In the meantime, there will be no change to our present website.

Cllr Maggie Ashcroft referred to the request by local residents to decorate the King Street telephone box with tributes to the NHS during the current pandemic and for the 75th anniversary of VE Day. She confirmed that that the Parish Council officially owns the phone box and that, as previously agreed with the West Deeping Heritage Group, there are plans for its refurbishment in the near future, after which it will be used as a village heritage display. Use of the phone box for any other purpose needs to be cleared with the Parish Council to avoid misuse.

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Meeting will be held on Wednesday 22nd July 2020, starting at 7.30 p.m. This is likely to be held online and details will be provided to all residents in due course.

The remaining Meeting dates for 2020 are as follows:-

Wednesday 23rd September

Wednesday 18th November

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.35 p.m.

Chairman: _____

Date: _____