

WEST DEEPING PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2020

PRESENT:

Parish Council

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

Mr Ian Coles – Clerk

Mr Iain Gowans (item 14 only)

Cllr Colin Blagrove welcomed everyone to this online meeting which is being held remotely due to the village hall being unavailable as a result of a second period of lockdown during the current pandemic.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Steve Snell
Mr Iain Stowe

2. OPEN FORUM

There were no matters raised at this meeting.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Mr Ian Coles declared an interest for agenda item 13 – Finance – where the subject of the clerk's contract of employment is being discussed.

4. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 26 AUGUST 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 August 2020, previously circulated, were agreed unanimously as a correct record. They were proposed by Cllr David Ward, seconded by Cllr Colin Blagrove and signed by the Chairperson.

5. ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT ON THE AGENDA

None this month.

6. REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE THE PARISH COUNCIL

No reports were received this month.

7. SEWAGE PROBLEMS

Since meeting with Anglian Water in the open forum during the Parish Council meeting in February, councillors have been pursuing answers to the questions raised through all possible channels. Cllr Colin Blagrove thanked Mr Ian Coles for his diligence in taking forward residents' concerns. Mr Ian Coles confirmed that he had been liaising with Rose Shisler at Anglian Water who has been very helpful and responsive in updating us on the issues that we have been experiencing in the village. A major cleaning operation has recently been carried out across the Deepings area on 12 pumping stations, including West Deeping. A large amount of unflushables have been removed which will help the pumps run more efficiently, particularly in times of heavy rainfall. They also ran two campaigns recently called 'Unblocktober' and 'Keep It Clear' and we have asked Anglian Water to share details of these with us. Their investigations have also highlighted the need to complete an 'Infiltration Reduction Plan' which should be completed in the first half of 2021. It was agreed that we will ask them to share details of this with us and invite them to our next Parish Council Meeting to update us on all the various matters that we have been discussing with them this year.

We have also been informed that an exercise is ongoing to investigate areas of high flow which directly affect West Deeping and we will request more details about this from them. Cllr Maggie Ashcroft mentioned that there has been a tanker present in King Street within the last week so we will also enquire if this is connected to this high flow issue.

Cllr Colin Blagrove confirmed that we had also been engaging in additional correspondence with our MP, Sir John Hayes who, in turn, has been corresponding with Peter Simpson, Anglian Water's Chief Executive. Copies of all relevant correspondence will be published on our website shortly.

Cllr Colin Blagrove also asked that we acknowledge the efforts of both Sir John Hayes and Cllr Ashley Baxter for liaising with Environmental Health at SKDC on the various issues we have been experiencing in the village.

We have also been in touch with Pete Rogers at Environmental Health at SKDC independently to see if they can assist us on these matters and Mr Ian Coles will contact him again regarding this.

Mr Ian Coles also confirmed that we had finally received the usual annual payment from Anglian Water for using the Boaty in order to provide access to the pumping station.

8. MINERAL EXTRACTION

At the last meeting, it was agreed that Mr Ian Coles should write to Mr Winkley at Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) to enquire to what extent our views on the planning application for mineral extraction for the area of land south of the King Street/A1175 junction (known as MS29) will be represented. After doing so, we were referred to Sarah Wells, their Business Manager, for her comments. A detailed e-mail was sent to her on 13th October 2020 but no response has been received yet so Mr Ian Coles will contact her again for her views. Cllr Maggie Ashcroft also confirmed that she and Cllr Colin Blagrove attended a meeting with Breedon on 5th November 2020 to discuss this further which was very productive and minutes of this are currently awaited. As agreed at the last meeting, Cllr David Ward confirmed that he had contacted Dawn Purves who may be able to provide us with a 'design plan' which could be useful and that she would be happy to help us if required. It was agreed that we will put this on hold at present and review in due course and Cllr David Ward will confirm this to her.

Cllr Maggie Ashcroft attended a meeting on 2nd September 2020, arranged by Cllr Rosemary Trollope-Bellew, in respect of the planned gravel extraction at Greatford (known as MS25). A detailed response was sent to LCC with views on this on 15th September 2020.

9. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

Cllr Sue Latham mentioned at the last meeting that there is a big pothole in the area in front of 10-13 King Street which needs attending to. In conjunction with Cllr Colin Blagrove, a 'Fix My Street' notification was sent to Highways at LCC for this and their response is awaited.

Cllr Rosemary Trollope-Bellew previously advised us that a LCC Highways Works Gang will be attending to village issues in September 2020 and we have provided them with a list of items for attention. It is not clear which, if any, of these issues have been dealt with so Mr Ian Coles will pursue this further.

10. CEMETERIES

The metal gates at the entrance to the cemetery have been made safe by Mr Dick Latham but there is still repair work to be done and Mr Ian Coles has been trying to obtain suitable quotations for this. After contacting 7 different companies, the original quotation from B & R Fabrications for £850 + VAT is still the most competitive. However, given other financial commitments in the current year, it was agreed that we would not proceed with this until our next financial year. Mr Ian Coles will confirm to B & R Fabrications that we would like them to undertake the repair around April 2021 and will contact the other companies who quoted to thank them and advise that they were unsuccessful. In the meantime, the current gates will be taken down and stored safely.

Mr Ian Coles confirmed that Woodcraft Tree Services will commence work to cut back the sycamore tree at the front of the cemetery, prune certain yew trees and arrange for 6 – 8 lime trees to be topped on 21st January 2021, as agreed at previous meetings.

There is a silver birch tree in the churchyard which needs attention and we have agreed that Gary's Gardens will deal with this for us. Mr Ian Coles confirmed that this will be done once planning permission has been received.

Mr Ian Coles also confirmed that he had contacted Helpston Masonry to confirm that we had decided to put the repair of the church wall on hold for the time being.

11. GARY'S GARDENS

We have received an e-mail from Jean Stowe expressing concern about the spread of nettles in the Tinsley Field. She has discussed this with Gary's Gardens and he has suggested applying either Grazon or glyphosate weedkiller in Spring 2021. It was agreed that he should use Grazon and Mr Ian Coles will confirm this to him in due course.

Mr Ian Coles also advised that he had been contacted by Environment SK, an independent company set up by SKDC to provide ground maintenance services. As suggested by our internal auditor, we will ask them to quote for our village contract in the New Year and in order to do so, we will endeavour to ascertain the exact work currently carried out by Gary's Gardens so that we have a suitable cost comparison for consideration.

12. PLANNING

There have been several applications since the last meeting:-

S20/1140 – A rear two storey extension and integrated garage at 1 King Street which councillors have considered and raised objections to, primarily based on height concerns. However, despite this, planning permission was granted by SKDC on 16th October 2020.

S20/1480 – Tree work at Penlea, Church Lane for which councillors had no comments or objections. Planning Permission was granted by SKDC on 16th October 2020.

S18/2146 – Construction of up to 260 dwellings off Millfield Road, Market Deeping. This is an updated planning application following previous refusals in January 2019 and April 2020 for which councillors had no additional comments or objections. Planning Permission was again refused by SKDC on 11th November 2020.

At the last meeting, application **S20/1078** had been received for tree work at 52 King Street for which councillors had no comments or objections. Planning permission was granted by SKDC on 9th September 2020.

13. FINANCE

The bank balances in our current and deposit accounts are £1,016.30 and £5,950.12 respectively. Since the last meeting, we have received £1.19 in bank interest, £425.00 from WD Charities in respect of charges related to the Tinsley Field and £100.00 from Anglian Water for the annual Boaty levy. We have paid £734.00 to Gary's Gardens (of which £305.00 relates to the Tinsley Field and has been reimbursed to us by WD Charities) and £1,583.22 for clerk fees, including adjustments backdated to 1st April 2020.

At the last meeting it was agreed that the clerk's terms of engagement should be reviewed with a contract of employment to be formalised and agreed. Cllr Colin Blagrove and Mr Ian Coles have been liaising regarding this and a draft contract will be issued to councillors for their comments shortly. Cllr Colin Blagrove also confirmed that, following further investigations, payments for holiday pay and monthly expenses should also be included. At the last meeting, an hourly rate of £10.16 was agreed to take effect from 1st April 2020, in accordance with the National Joint Council pay scales. Shortly afterwards, we were advised that these rates had been revised for 2020/21 and it has been agreed that we will increase the hourly rate to £10.44 with effect from 26th August 2020; the date of the last Parish Council Meeting when these new terms were agreed. In future years, the updated rates will be backdated to apply from 1st April.

Mr Ian Coles updated the meeting on the budget figures previously prepared and confirmed that these costs will be incorporated in projections for the 2021/22 year onwards. Following further discussions, it was agreed that Mr Ian Coles will make further adjustments to these and will supply councillors with new projected figures, including the repair of the cemetery gates in 2021/22, as soon as possible. As part of this exercise, the precept for 2021/22 will be agreed so that Mr Ian Coles can confirm this to SKDC by the January 2021 deadline.

Cllr Colin Blagrove also confirmed that we have set up a monthly payroll with HMRC and that we are dealing with the requirements of the Pensions Regulator in respect of auto enrolment.

Mr Ian Coles confirmed that he had been contacted by PKF Littlejohn, our external auditors, in respect of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2019/20 submitted earlier in the year to confirm that they had no further comments regarding this.

14. WEBSITE

Following discussions at the last meeting, we sought quotes from 3 companies and a further offer of support to assist us with the transfer of information across to our new parish council website. Councillors subsequently agreed by email to contract Iain Gowans, a resident in the village, of Consultig. Everything has been progressing to meet our requirements ahead of time and within budget and we have been meeting remotely with Iain who has been regularly updating us. We have initially agreed to 4 days work at the preferential rate of £200 a day and will review matters thereafter.

Mr Ian Coles confirmed that he had also written to all those in the village who own other pages on the current West Deeping website to advise them about the plans to migrate the website and to ask if they would like their pages transferred to the new website.

We are now compliant for the new website, as required by LCC and should be in a position to advise them that the old website can be switched off in 2 -3 weeks, ahead of the overall deadline of 31st December 2020. In conjunction with this, a Parish Council Facebook page has been set up and we hope that this will become active around the same time that the new website becomes live.

As part of our marketing strategy, Cllr Colin Blagrove and Mr Ian Coles agreed to write a short article for the next Towers & Spires to let everyone know about the new site.

15. CORRESPONDENCE

Mr Ian Coles advised that he had contacted Richard Astle of the Langdyke Countryside Trust regarding the development of parish nature recovery plans. As it was felt that this might be relevant to the MS29 gravel extraction project, it was previously agreed that we should invite him to a future working party meeting and we will let him know when it is planned for the next one to take place.

An e-mail has been received from Perry Burns at the Welland Rivers Trust who are running a new project aimed at reconnecting people with local rivers and allow communities to access and enjoy nature. This had been forwarded on to councillors and if anyone would like to pursue this, they will contact Perry directly.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was agreed that we will either obtain, or purchase, a Christmas tree for the village after comments from residents earlier in the year. Cllr Maggie Ashcroft mentioned that Graham Magee may have one that we could have and Cllr Colin Blagrove agreed to contact him to check. If not, we will purchase one and ask for contributions towards this from other village groups.

Cllr Maggie Ashcroft confirmed that the telephone box will be decorated again for Christmas as usual.

Cllr Maggie Ashcroft also mentioned that the bus shelter is in need of attention and it was agreed that we should put this on the agenda for further discussion at the next meeting.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Meeting will be held on Wednesday 3rd February 2021, starting at 7.30 p.m. (to be confirmed). A risk assessment will be conducted nearer the time to ascertain if this can be held in the village hall or if it will be an online meeting.

A date of Wednesday 5th May 2021 was agreed for both the Annual Parish Meeting and the Annual Parish Council Meeting, to be confirmed in due course.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.52 p.m.

Chairman: _____

Date: _____