

Earsham Parish Council

Minutes

of a meeting of Earsham Parish Council held at
Earsham Church Room on Tuesday 6th November 2012 at 7.30pm

Present: Councillors Lynda Hamps (Chair), Keith Reeve (Vice Chair), Jim Bennett, Scott Bone, Karl Gunton, Nick Meade and Stephen Wood, District Councillor Murray Gray, Lynda Ling (Clerk) and 3 members of the public

1. **Welcome** – The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

2. **Apologies** - None

3. **Declarations of interest** – In the last few days, information has been received regarding councillors disclosable pecuniary interests and the impact that has on budget and precept setting and it has therefore led to the opinion that councillors who live in the parish have a DPI on the parish councils budget as it relates to the council tax for their property which is listed on the register of interests. It has been suggested by SNC to grant all councillors a dispensation on the setting of budgets up to the date of the next election (May 2015). As the agenda had already been circulated for this meeting, there was no opportunity to include this as a separate agenda item, so the council were asked to agree to this course of action for this meeting under the declarations of interest item and it will be formally proposed and agreed at the next meeting. The dispensation forms have been signed by the councillors and received by the clerk. **ALL AGREED**
Councillor Meade declared a pecuniary interest in Item 6

4. **Previous Minutes** - The Minutes from the meeting held on Tuesday 4th September 2012 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record pending the addition of two amendments. Item 2 – apologies were received from Dr. Murray Gray and Item 6 should read 'Councillor Meade suggested that Earsham Estate could fell the tree as a donation to the Bowls Club *if the Club weren't able to do it*, and Councillor Reeve commented that if a tree is removed then another must be planted although not necessarily in the same place'. Agreement was proposed by Councillor Hamps and seconded by Councillor Wood.

ALL AGREED

5. **District and County Council Reports and crime statistics** –

District Council News – Councillor Gray reported:-

- Eleven thousand comments had been received by South Norfolk Council on the Site Specifics Policies and Documents Consultation which would take some time to go through
- A revised plan based on the consultation, would be produced for the South Norfolk area which would then go to an independent inspector for consideration
- This would take approximately one year to adopt

A resident had contacted Cllr Gray with regard to Marston Moor and the vegetation which is encroaching onto the road and asked who was responsible for the verges. The footpath itself was also in a bad way. It was agreed to write to the person responsible for the left side of the verges and ask them to cut it back, and also to contact Highways regarding the overgrown vegetation.

The Chairman commented that she had received a complaint from a resident about cars driving too fast down Marston Moor on their way to Scouts and that she would ask Tim Saville to have a word with drivers about their speed.

Action – Clerk
Action - Chair

Parish Crime Statistics - Cllr Hamps read out the parish crime statistics for the months of September and October 2012 which included :-

September 2012 – 1 x drugs offence and 2 x burglaries – total of 3

October 2012 – 1 x violence against a person, 1 x other theft and 3 x other – total of 5

County Council News - None

6. Discussion on the informal meeting held with regard to the proposed relocation of the village hall and playing field and any agreed action – The Chairman informed the members after long debates on this subject, three choices were available to them and a decision had to be made in order to make progress. The first option was to pursue the relocation of the village hall and playing field, the second option was to upgrade the present village hall, or the third option was to do nothing at all and asked the members for their thoughts and comments.

The members agreed that it would be a huge project and questioned whether one or two people would be able to dedicate the time and knowledge to project manage such a large undertaking, and the feeling was that no-one on the council would be able to commit to the work involved due to their own commitments. The Chairman commented that the groups and organisations that use the facilities, do have alternative options, e.g. the football club could apply for funding to build a new pavilion at the current location, the Bowls Club are happy with their present facilities and the Playground Committee can buy new play equipment to replace the old once a decision has been made. The Chair also commented that there hadn't been a great response to the whole relocation proposal from the community. Councillor Bennett commented that there would be a need to employ a caretaker for a new larger village hall, and the costs would be greater all round. After much discussion, a proposal not to proceed with a new build village hall at this time was received from Councillor Hamps and seconded by Councillor Reeve. Councillor Hamps then proposed agreement to a major refurbishment and revamp of the current village hall which would include looking into extending the current building. Councillor Gunton seconded this proposal.

ALL AGREED

7. The parking of vehicles on land near the village hall by the owners of a property nearby and any agreed action – After the last meeting the clerk had found a letter dating back to 1984 from the Earsham Estate Office which stated that *'the tenant of the Old Police House would have the right to park up to two cars on the Village Hall forecourt subject to certain conditions, however, the right would attach to the Earsham Hall Estate and would not pass with the property if the house was separated from the Estate'*. The Chairman told the members that the property now had new tenants and the owners were no longer concerned about a letter from the council.

8. Flooding on the village hall car park and any agreed action – The Chairman informed the members that she had met with Simon Clayton from South Norfolk Council, and read out the feedback the clerk had received from him, which basically stated that the blocked drain was the Parish Council's responsibility. It was agreed to write to Mr. Clayton again asking if there was a plan in existence showing the route of the pipework and asking if the brambles can be cleared from the intenuation lagoon which is SNC's responsibility.

Action – Clerk

9. Half year finance report for 2012/2013 and any agreed action – The Chairman read out the report which had been prepared by the clerk:-

- The only unforeseen costs so far was for the seating area which was created to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, this was not included in the budget for this financial year. Actual spend was £749 excluding VAT
- Streetlighting maintenance and repair costs are currently at 60% of budget which is due to work on two lighting columns which had to be straightened and re-concreted
- Anglian Water bills for the whole financial year (pavilion) will be below the budgeted figure as there is a credit on the water account. This is due to Anglian Water overcharging the parish council last year.
- All costs are on target, give or take a percentage or two, and there is nothing so far this year giving cause for concern.

10. Resolution to agree a budget and set the annual precept for year ending 31st March 2014 and any agreed action – The Chairman told the members that due to the abolition of the Council Tax Benefit and introduction of the Council Tax Support Scheme, parishes had been advised not to set their precepts until January 2013 as there is still no clear guidance from government on their final decision as to how the tax base for parishes will be calculated and whether there will be any changes to how precepts are to be set. Based on this information, the members decided to postpone this item until the January 2013 meeting.

11. Update on the proposed works on the lane leading to the playing field and bowls club and any agreed action – No update. Councillor Bennett reported that as the weather had changed and was wet and damp, it wasn't a good time of year to do this type of work.

Action – Cllr Bennett

12. To be informed of any Planning Applications and Report of Decisions received since the last meeting:-

Report of Decisions

2012/1117 – 33 The Green, Earsham – Single storey side and front extension – Craig Leggett - Approved with conditions - Delegated

2012/1209 – Spring Cottage, The Street, Earsham – Two storey side extension and woodburner flue on gable end – Mrs. Helen Hart - Approved with conditions – Delegated

Planning Applications

2012/1426 – The Cottage, 20 Church Road, Earsham – Mr. John Meade – Replace 13 windows, 2 doors and frames – Approved by Earsham Council Planning Working Group

2012/1575 – 8 Valley Close, Earsham – Mrs. Victoria Richards – Single storey extension to north elevation and other internal alterations – Approved by Earsham Council Planning Working Group

2012/1807 – 2 and 8 The Street, Earsham – To fit insulated rendering system to the external envelope of the properties – Mr. Jason McCormick

The above was noted

13. Chairman's report – None

14. Parish Councillor reports –

Councillor Gunton – reported the following :- The bin had been emptied on the playing field (reported at the last meeting as not having been done) – (Item 19 September meeting)

Councillor Meade – reported the following:-

- A contractor will cut back the hedge at the allotments to approximately 3 feet (item 14 September meeting)
- A resident of the village has written a history of Earsham giving his own insights and memories, and has given one copy to the school and another copy to the parish council. A short discussion took place on whether the book could be reproduced and the costs involved and copyright legalities. The Chairman suggested writing a letter of thanks to Ron Page which was agreed by the members.
- The issue of footpath responsibility was also discussed

15. Clerk's report and any agreed action –

- We have had the annual return back from Mazaars, no comments regarding the accounting practices were made.
- The annual renewal for CPRE has been received since the agenda went out last week, and the members were asked if they would like to renew this at a cost of £29.00, in addition the SLCC annual renewal has come in at a cost of £83.00. Agreement to renew both these memberships was proposed by Councillor Reeve and seconded by Councillor Hamps.

ALL AGREED

- I have received a complaint about 3 new columns and lanterns that have been installed recently on Princess Way, the complaint being that the columns are too tall and the lights too bright. I have contacted Norfolk County Council as these columns have been replaced by them and passed on the resident's concerns. I am awaiting a response.
- I have had information from NALC regarding the issue of councillors' disclosable pecuniary interest pursuant to s.31 of the Localism Act 2011 in respect of agreeing a budget and setting a precept if they are residents of the parish they represent and who pay the precept. NALC have taken advice from a lawyer and the advice is, in short, that a dispensation can be granted to all councillors – this must be in writing and agreed at the parish meeting.
- I have been trying to get the signatories sorted out for the Barclays accounts, after failed attempts to change the parish accounts, however, I am finding it increasingly difficult to keep track of the parish bank accounts for a variety of reasons, one being that Barclays do not recognise me as being a responsible financial officer and will not give me any information, and two, I cannot transfer monies over to the current accounts from the savings accounts to pay invoices etc. I would like to ask the members if they would to agree to my becoming a signatory on the accounts in order for me to have online access, this is normal practice in some other parishes who have complied with Barclays recent changes for their security policies and procedures. Agreement was proposed by Councillor Gunton and seconded by Councillor Meade.

6 AGREED 1 ABSTAINED

16. Payment of accounts - Payments for September and October 2012 were agreed. (See list on final page). Parish council payments already made since last meeting £1082.96, playing field payments £656.62 – cheques for signature £1206.32 (PC) £87.00 (PF). Agreement was proposed by Councillor Bone and seconded by Councillor Wood.

ALL AGREED

22. To be informed of significant correspondence and any agreed action (list as circulated)
– None

23. Business for January 2013 meeting – The refurbishment of the village hall, precept and budget setting

Meeting adjourned at 8.35pm and reconvened at 8.45pm

One of the residents present at the meeting asked if Norfolk County Council could be contacted to get the footpath cleared across the bridge at Marston Moor, especially the tree which was encroaching the footway. The council was also asked if more information on parish meetings could be put in the parish magazine as not everyone could visit the website to read the minutes. The Chair explained that as the parish council only have one A5 sized page in the magazine, it is impossible to get all the information in, although relevant items are bullet pointed. After a brief discussion, it was agreed to ask the editor of the magazine if the parish council could have their allocation increased from one to two pages.

Action - Clerk

A second resident expressed concerns about the parking outside the school and the obstacles which the vehicles caused when large vehicles turn into that particular road, in some cases mounting the pavement. The need for some railings was also mentioned. Councillor Reeve suggested writing to the Headmistress for her opinion on the situation and discussing the situation again once a response has been received.

Action - Clerk

24. The date and time of the next meeting – Tuesday, 8th January 2013 at 7.30pm at the Earsham Church Room.

Signed

Date

The meeting ended at 8.47pm

Accounts for 6th November 2012 meeting			
<u>Payments already made since last meeting</u>			
	<u>Earsham PC</u>	<u>Playing Field</u>	<u>Allotments</u>
EON - streetlighting for September (DD)	£ 50.10		
EON - streetlighting for October (DD)	£ 48.48		
Mazars - External auditors	£ 162.00		
Eon - Pavillion electricity		£ 41.66	
S. Bone - reimbursement for materials - Jubilee area	£ 130.90		
Norse Commercial Services - grounds maintenance		£ 614.96	
Parish Magazine - annual contribution	£ 106.00		
Clerk's salary and allowance for October 2012	£ 295.72		
TT Jones - Maintenance for streetlights	£ 289.76		
	£ 1,082.96	£ 656.62	£ -
<u>Cheques to be signed at the meeting on 6th Nov 2012</u>			
Playing Field Account - recycling centre payment	£ 100.00		
Playing Field Account - 2nd precept	£ 500.00		
Clerk's salary and allowance for November 2012	£ 295.72		
Command Pest Control Ltd - Annual contract fee		£ 87.00	
HMRC - Aug, Sept and October	£ 198.60		
SLCC - Annual renewal of membership (if agreed)	£ 83.00		
CPRE - Annual renewal of membership (if agreed)	£ 29.00		
	£ 1,206.32	£ 87.00	£ -
<u>Balances as at 31st October 2012</u>			
Parish Council current account	£ 9,809.69		
Parish Council savings account	£ 14,417.98		
Playing Field current account		£ 684.63	
Playing Field savings account		£ 2,562.09	
Allotment current account			£ 515.65
Allotment savings account			£ 535.93