

Earsham Parish Council Minutes

of a meeting of Earsham Parish Council held by way of video conferencing on Wednesday 30th September 2020 at 7.30pm

Present: Councillors: Stephen Wood (Chair), Karl Gunton, Keith Reeve, Jim Bennett, and Nick Meade

Also present: District Councillor Chris Brown, 2 members of the public (Geoff Hall and Peter Goodfellow) and Lynda Ling (Clerk)

- 1. Welcome** – Cllr. Wood welcomed everyone to the meeting and congratulated Cllr. Bennett on successfully gaining planning consent for gravel works, and also to Peter Goodfellow for successfully obtaining a grant from the FA for borehole and sprinkler installation for the football pitch
- 2. To receive and accept apologies from members unable to attend** – Apologies were received and accepted from District Councillor Brendan Bernard and Cllr. Leech.
- 3. To receive any declarations of interest, in particular matters to be raised at this meeting** – Cllr. Meade declared an interest in Item 7
- 4. Approval of minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 8th July 2020** - Agreement was proposed by Councillor Reeve and seconded by Councillor Bennett **ALL AGREED**

Standing Orders were suspended at 19.35 and reconvened at 19.39 for a member of public to comment on the following:-

A question was raised asking the play equipment is still checked, Cllr. Gunton confirmed that it was as this was a necessity for insurance purposes, and the second question was regarding the tree's on the playing field (reported at the last meeting) which had not recovered. Cllr. Meade suggested replacing them with beech tree's and as he was in the process of ordering tree's himself, he would include these in his order.

5. Reports

Police – None

District Councillor Report – District Cllr. Brown reported:-

- **Coronavirus recovery** – The council's attention is now on helping businesses and the local community to recover from the lockdown and no doubt you have seen some of the changes in market towns such as Harleston. This has caused some controversy. There is currently a consultation underway on the future of the Harleston changes.
- A new **"Norfolk Fighting Fund"** has been set up by the County Council, District Councils and the LEP with nearly £7m to support recovery for businesses and local authorities.
- **Planning White Paper** – The Government has issued a White Paper on the complete reorganisation of the Planning system. This could have huge impacts on planning and development in South Norfolk. There are potentially significant changes to how development sites are allocated and gain permission, including changes to public consultation, and there could be changes to the need for schemes to provide affordable housing. It is proposed that sites of less than 40 or 50 homes would not have to provide affordable homes, which would be a big change for our district. Of note, it could significantly impact the Greater Norwich Local Plan, which has been underway for several years, and it is possible this would have to be stopped and a new Local Plan process started.
- **South Norfolk / Broadland working together** – A new website is under development for the two Councils.
- **Housing Policy** – The Council has reviewed its housing policies and is updating them to be more focused on the needs of clients. The demands on the housing service has been increasing recently and is likely to increase further in the coming months, so it will be vital that we have policies in place to ensure those most in need get housed appropriately and quickly. Any increase in homelessness is a concern and it is hoped that the council can respond as needed and ensure we avoid this.

County Councillor Report – County Cllr. Margaret Stone’s report had been circulated to councillors prior to the meeting, and included the following information:-

- Margaret commented that she had sent a lengthy report which included up to date news on the footbridge, and thanked Geoff Hall for sending her photographs of the progress of the work, Margaret also commented that she was delighted that Earsham Gravels had been successful in gaining their planning consent.
- **White paper on Planning Reform in England open for Consultation**
That is what the paper proposes:-
 1. Radical reform and a whole new planning system for England.
 2. One that is simpler, clearer and quicker to navigate, delivering results in weeks and months rather than years and decades.
 3. That actively encourages sustainable, beautiful, safe and useful development rather than obstructing it
 4. That makes it harder for developers to dodge their obligations to improve infrastructure and opens up housebuilding to more than just the current handful of massive corporations.
 5. That gives you a greater say over what gets built in your community
- **NCC Budget** - Covid 19 has worsened the “extremely challenging” financial situation facing the county council, which is predicting a £129.7 million budget gap over the next four years. Norfolk County Council is calling for long-term, sustainable funding from the Government, predicting that, without it, the council will have to save £45.4 million next year alone.
- **COVID19** - Excluding the known Banham Poultry worker cases, the seven-day average incidence is 6.2 cases per 100,000 across Norfolk. The overall seven-day average daily number of cases, including Banham Poultry outbreak, in Norfolk is 9.3, which is steadily reducing from a peak of 18.3 at the height of the Banham outbreak. An outbreak at Bernard Mathews is being closely monitored
- **Highways and Pathways** - NCC subcontracts much of our Highways and Pathways maintenance and indeed has to subcontract some of the Highways work to Velocity to apply summer dressing. This process has just been completed but Margaret was made aware of some issues with 10 mph road signs not being removed for months in some cases or sides incorrectly placed about closed roads. She has raised this at the highest level and an investigation is being undertaken, issues regarding Pathways maintenance also being agreed and work not being carried out when planned has also come to light.
- **Success at last** – *‘Two bridges in Earsham, forming part of Angles Way, collapsed several years ago and as your very determined, if not stubborn Conservative County Councillor, I have been pursuing the Lead Officers at Norfolk County Council to remove and replace them. Several departments are involved including those responsible for Planning, Highways, Foot paths and Bridges as well as outside agencies. Budgets were tight and remain difficult, especially following Covid 19, but funding was agreed and allocated last year for this work and NCC has stuck to their commitment*

The initial costs to do this were grossly underestimated as the bridges were in an area which was difficult to access and were made from a mixture of reinforced concrete and wood. This required the use of a helicopter or crane to remove the structure and could only be undertaken at specific times of the year because of weather and ground conditions. Eventually, the funding and detailed planning between the various authorities agreed to do the work this year and are doing just that.’

It has been a long and difficult journey and Margaret has been determined and extremely tenacious from the start to ensure this happens, despite the estimated cost of over £300,000.

It is hoped when the work is completed a Grand Opening and Ribbon cutting will be organised so the entire Parish can share to pleasure of walking along the full stretch of Angles Way.

Chairman's Report – Cllr. Wood informed members that both he and Cllr. Bennett had installed some new posts on the playing field, after Peter Goodfellow had reported that a vehicle had been driven on to it. The posts are positioned in such a way to prevent this from happening again.

Parish Councillors reports –

Cllr Gunton reported that he has repaired the bandstand/covered seating area on the playing field which was vandalised a few months ago.

Cllr Reeve reported that the road drains on School Road and Kingsway were blocked and overflowing – the clerk will report to Highways

ACTION – CLERK

Clerk's Report – The clerk reported that the second half of the precept had been paid into the bank that day, £7,715.00.

6. Village Items – Update on all village items, including collapsed footbridge, sign on School Road, WW1 Commemorative Plaque, planters, and millennium film

Footbridge – Covered earlier in County Councillor's report.

Sign on The Street – Cllr. Meade commented that he was still trying to find a cast iron post, Cllr. Wood offered to contact a colleague of his to see if he could help with the construction of one which was agreed.

WW1 Commemorative Plaque – Cllr. Meade informed members that this was still with the stonemasons. An appropriate place to put the commemorative plaque would be near the Old Buck on the grass verge where it has some space around it and will be seen by walkers.

Planters – Cllr. Gunton suggested leaving this to next year but will speak with Cllr. Leech on some design idea's in the meantime.

Millennium Film – Cllr. Meade asked if everyone had received the first instalment of the film and if not, he would send again.

Parish Partnership Scheme – After some discussion, it was decided to find out the cost of another SAM2 machine and put this forward to the Parish Partnership Scheme for funding. The parish council will use some of the CIL monies available to purchase their half of the cost.

ACTION - CLERK

7. Planning Applications – 2020/1744 –

Proposal: Notification for Prior Approval for a proposed change of use and associated building works of an agricultural building to a dwellinghouse (QA and QB) Location: Agricultural Building At Church Farm Church Road Earsham Norfolk

Applicant: Mr M Freeman Application Type: Prior Notification - Agricultural to Residential

The clerk removed Cllr. Meade from the online meeting into the waiting room so discussion could take place. A brief conversation was held and all agreed that they had no comment or objections to make on the above planning application. Cllr. Meade was then allowed back into the meeting.

8. Streetlighting - The clerk informed members that the lighting replacement programme had now been completed and she was in touch with EON who were in the process of updating their records to reflect the information on the new lanterns. Once this has been done, the parish council should see savings of up to 70% on the streetlighting costs, which could mean savings of over £900 per year.

9. Finance –

- **Approval of items of expenditure invoiced since the July 2020 meeting and note balances -**

Payments already made – Parish Council - £6774.84 – Playing Field - £1225.06 and Allotments £138.83 (payments are excluding VAT)

Payments for approval at this meeting – Parish Council - £977.31. Agreement proposed by Cllr. Gunton and seconded by Cllr. Bennett

ALL AGREED

Balances in bank accounts as at 30th September 2020 – Parish Council £47,060.47, Playing Field £7616.40 and Allotments £536.17.

The Parish Council accounts include £6714.09 CIL monies (completion of LED lanterns paid since last meeting £5630.83) and the Playing Field accounts includes £2,140.29 ring-fenced money for the repair and replacement of play equipment.

- **Half yearly income and expenditure report** – The clerk reported the following:-

Half way into the financial year, there has been no abnormal or unexpected spend and the normal everyday accounts are as you would expect them to be.

You will note that there is still £6,714.09 remaining in the CIL monies after all the LED replacement lanterns have been paid.

Allotments –

- **Income** received so far is £213.00 (two more new tenants are yet to pay for their deposit and the half year rent). The tenant who was reported to council to be in arrears is now up to date.
- **Expenditure** so far is at 30.5% of budget for water (£274.00)

Playing Field –

- **Income** this year so far is £3282.27 which consists of £2172.80 bowls club rent and utilities and football club water and electricity from 2019/2020. The remaining £1109.47 is made up from £1000.00 precept from Parish Council, £106.77 VAT reclaimed from previous financial year, and £2.70 interest
- **Expenditure** is currently running at £1,903.56, which consists of water, electricity for pavilion, pest control for the playing field, half insurance cost to parish council and £700 donation to the Football Club towards their costs for the tractor/grass cutting.

Parish Council –

- **Income** this year is standing at £9,893.23 which includes precept of £7715.00, VAT reclaimed £1612.51, £11.72 interest and £500 Norfolk Community Fund grant. *(On the day of the parish council meeting, the second half of the precept was paid £7715.00 bringing the income at the time of writing the minutes to £17,608.23)*
- **Expenditure** is currently £11,910.30 which includes clerk's salary, HMRC, streetlighting energy and maintenance, £4692.36 for the completion of the replacement LED lanterns, audit, NALC subs, PPE (COVID19), Parish insurance, precept to playing field and dispersal of VAT reclaimed to both allotments and playing field.

The only additional expenditure is the 2.75% increase and backdated pay for the clerk's salary which equates to an extra 32p per hour.

The parish council should start to see some savings on the streetlighting electricity costs soon, as this is now with EON and UKPN for cost adjustment to accommodate the LED lanterns.

- **Agreement to renew membership of CPRE at a cost of £36.00** – Agreement proposed by Cllr. Wood and seconded by Cllr. Meade **ALL AGREED**
- **Resolution to agree to the setting up of Direct Debits for Allotment and Pavilion water charges** – Agreement proposed by Cllr. Bennett and seconded by Cllr. Gunton **ALL AGREED**
- **National Joint Council for Local Government Services** – to note pay increase for clerks of 2.75% backdated to 1st April 2020 (0.32p per hour) – Councillors noted the new pay scale.

10. Playing Field –

- **Football Club Update** – Peter Goodfellow was congratulated on getting the £25,000 grant he applied for from the FA. Peter thanked members and commented that Earsham Football Club had raised £11,000 themselves towards the project which will be started early next year by Prime Irrigation. Peter went on to say that in total over the last 10 years, £190,000 had been received in grants and thanked the council for their continued support for the club. Cllr. Reeve asked Peter if players could be asked to moderate their language when a match was due to be played. The problem occurs when the away team are warming up near his fence and the language is not appropriate, especially with children within earshot. Peter acknowledged this and Cllr. Bennett asked to be kept informed if it happens again.

11. Significant correspondence – The clerk commented that all correspondence had been forwarded to councillors, however a very recent email just received was from a resident complaining of fast-moving cars driven by youngsters, travelling along School Road apparently heading towards Earsham Mill which has new businesses within the building including a gym. A conversation took place on what could be done and further investigation was needed to look at the road markings and lighting. It was also felt that purchasing another SAM2 machine may help to deter speeding cars.

12. Business for next meeting – Planters, update on collapsed footbridge, sign on School Road, Commemorative Plaque, Millennium Film, Parish Partnerships Scheme

The meeting was adjourned at 20.59pm and reconvened at 21.06pm for public comment

A comment was made as follows:-

It was thought that a letter of thanks should be sent to those households who have been affected by disruption as a result of the repair of the footbridges. It was agreed that this would be done after the work has been completed.

Cllr. Wood suggested organising another litter pick and after some debate, the 15th November was decided upon, meeting outside the village hall at 10am. Cllr. Wood would organise some posters.

15. Date of the next meeting – The next meeting will be on Wednesday 25th November 2020.

Cllr. Wood thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 21.07pm.

Signed :

Date: