

Earsham Parish Council Minutes

of a meeting of Earsham Parish Council held by way of video conferencing on Wednesday 27th January 2021 at 7.30pm

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

Also present: District Councillors Brendon Bernard and Chris Brown, 5 members of the public (Geoff Hall, Peter Goodfellow, Gill Stone, Richard Randlesome and John Gore) and Lynda Ling (Clerk)

1. Welcome – Cllr. Wood welcomed everyone to the meeting and wished all those present a Happy New Year. Cllr. Wood also announced that Scott Bone had resigned from the parish council and a vacancy would be advertised on the noticeboard and website. Cllr. Wood thanked Scott for all his work and service to the parish council over the last decade and wished him well for the future.

2. To receive and accept apologies from members unable to attend – None

3. To receive any declarations of interest, in particular matters to be raised at this meeting – Councillor Gunton declared an interest in Item 7 – Parish Magazine.

4. Resolution to approve the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 25th November 2020 - Agreement was proposed by Councillor Leech and seconded by Councillor Bennett subject to a minor change from on a comment made during Parish Councillor reports – Cllr Wood suggested the change of height to the allotment hedge, not Cllr Meade **ALL AGREED**

Standing Orders were suspended at 19.46 and reconvened at 19.57 for comments from members of public:-

Geoff Hall said that he didn't think the minutes were correct as he didn't say what was written in them. Cllr. Meade commented that perhaps what was meant to come across didn't translate as well as was supposed to. Geoff said that he wanted it noted during this session that he did not say that a member of the public was asked to leave the playing field, he said words to the effect *'what was the protocol if the football club wants to do something the pitch with the mini tractor but someone else is already using the pitch. I saw 2 people exercising on the pitch when tractor came on pitch started doing pitch maintenance going up and down they moved over until eventually they had no choice but to leave'*

Peter Goodfellow gave a brief update on the sprinkler system for which the works will start next month. There will be no need to close the playing field to users as the machine moves at less than 1 mile per hour.

The borehole works will commence in the first week of March.

Mole activity was reported to the Clerk which is now being attended to.

Permission was requested for a small fence to be erected on the garden area near the Village Hall to protect the area where bulbs are planted. Councillors all agreed to this request.

Richard Randlesome commented that he was not happy with the structures on the allotments nor the letting the hedge grow higher. Were councillors aware that there was a greenhouse now in place. Cllr. Gunton commented that structures were allowed on the allotments but not above a certain height. Richard said that he objected to having his view from his home blocked by this.

5. Reports

Police – No report

County Councillor Report – Councillor Stone's reports had been forwarded to councillors prior to the meeting.

District Councillor Report – District Cllr. Brown reported:-

- **COVID19 Update** – Grants are being given to local businesses to help support them during the lockdown
- **SNC Scrutiny Committee** – are looking at flooding issues together with Norfolk County Council's Scrutiny Committee. One of the issues raised during the flooding at Christmas was that there were no sandbags available.
- **Member Ward Grants** – applications have been extended to the end of March so if any local groups wish to apply for a project, they can do so.

District Councillor Bernard commented that he would send his report to the Council.

The Chairman commented that he had attended the Bungay Emergency Group meeting to discuss ways of trying to find ways to alleviate any future flooding for residents.

Chairman's and Parish Councillor Reports– The Chairman reported that some of the arches on the 2nd bridge in the village are completely blocked, Cllr Meade reported a similar case elsewhere.

The remedial work on the Village Hall which was discussed at the last meeting is to be done and the Village Hall Management Committee have agreed to pay for it. Scott Bone will undertake the work.

Flooded car park – The Chairman commented that he would try and find out which company had done some work in the area, whereby a machine was introduced to the drain and cut through roots of tree's which were causing the blockage. Some quotes could be asked for to get this work done.

Cllr. Reeve said that there were two broken/bent posts behind the War Memorial which need replacing, it was agreed to ask Scott Bone to undertake the work.

An email had been received from someone asking about a stone set into the pavement which has writing on it. The writer asked what the stone says, why it was put there and when it was laid. The Clerk sent the email to Councillors asking if anyone had any information. Cllr. Meade said that he would ask his father and possibly John Archer may know.

Rubbish on Pheasants Walk – Comments were made about the amount of litter along Pheasants Walk and Cllr. Gunton suggested a litter pick in the area. Peter Goodfellow commented that Chris Farrow was out with a bag and picked up lager cans and wine bottles.

Cllr. Meade mentioned the memorial bench that went missing and had made enquiries with the Gamekeeper as to its whereabouts, but it sounds like the bench has been stolen. The clerk was asked to get some prices on how much it would cost to replace.

Clerk's Report – None

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

Sign on The Street – Cllr. Meade said that he has draft drawings and a quote for the post including the dimensions which are similar to the original. The cost, including lettering on aluminium fingers, painting and delivery was £1752 including VAT. A polo mint finial could be included at an extra £90. At the last meeting, it was thought that this was possible and Gary Overland from NCC may be able to supply a finial. Cllr. Bennett commented that it sounded like a lot of money for one fingerpost. Cllr. Meade said that a timber post/fingerpost from Black Dog Signs was around £400 and that an aluminium post wouldn't corrode as much as a cast iron post. The Chairman said they should think about this and discuss again at the next meeting.

District Councillor Bernard asked if recycled plastic posts had been considered, more eco friendly and won't rot. This option will be looked into.

WW1 Commemorative Plaque – Cllr. Meade said that this is still with the stonemasons and it was agreed at the last meeting that it didn't have to be exactly the same stone as it is on the opposite side so not viewable. The WW1 stone has fixing holes in the corners so are these required in the second stone? It was agreed that they were not necessary.

Planters – Deferred.

Millennium Film – Copies are £12 per disc which is very expensive, however Cllr. Meade has downloaded an app and managed to copy onto a DVD, it is work in progress and the aim is to get more copied then sent out to those that should have a copy.

Speeding in the village including increased traffic on Church and School Roads – A long conversation was held on this subject with ideas being put forward on ways to combat it. Most drivers are heading towards the Mill. Cllr. Gunton commented that the council are aware and is the reason why another SAM2 machine is being considered, the clerk confirmed that funding has been applied for and we will know the outcome hopefully in March. Some of the suggestions put forward was to get the police to monitor the speeding which normally occurs between 7am and 8am.

Recent flooding in the village and actions going forward – A long conversation was held on the devastation that many people suffered in the area with the flooding just before Christmas. The Chairman said that Bungay TC are setting up a group to organise help and sandbags for when this happens again, and it was agreed by all that a plan needs to be formulated to try and prevent this happening again. It was suggested that if everyone signs up to Floodline, they will get notifications/warnings for their area. Thanks were given to Dan Chater and Cllr. Gunton for their help during that difficult time when people were trying to cope with flooding in their homes and gardens. The work to help those in need by various groups is ongoing and will be discussed when further information becomes available.

Best Decorated House Competition – Agreement for the property on the corner of Church Road (Mr & Mrs. Stone) to win this year's competition was proposed by Cllr. Wood and seconded by Cllr. Bennett. Mr. & Mrs. Stone decided that the £20 winnings should go locally to The Moorings.

ALL AGREED

Defibrillator – This was on the agenda for discussion as Mrs. Stone had raised concerns about it and that the number to open the box was not displayed on the cabinet. She also was concerned that the battery and pads had not been checked. The Chairman replied that he was the person that checked it regularly, he had spoken to a Steve Hammond, First Aider for St. John's Ambulance regarding the code for the cabinet and was told that you shouldn't display the code number to open the cabinet but to call for the ambulance service who then supply the number, once the call is logged, the ambulance service are aware someone needs to use the defibrillator and a vehicle can be dispatched. The emergency number for the ambulance service is displayed on the cabinet. It was also mentioned that an area of the cabinet needs some attention where the paint has come off. The Chairman said he will contact Scott Bone to ask if the rusty corner to the cabinet can be painted.

7. Planning Applications - None

8. Streetlighting – The clerk gave members a comparison on the recent invoices for the streetlighting electricity:-

On a monthly basis it was costing around £116.780 per month and in 2019/20 the annual cost for the electricity was £1420.91. In December 2020 the invoice for the electricity was £48.00 and £50.61 for January 2021. Huge savings for the parish council.

9. Finance –

• To resolve to agree the 2021-22 precept request to South Norfolk Council –

It was agreed to keep the precept the same at £53.21 per annum to the taxpayer which gives a total precept income of £15,590. Agreement proposed by Cllr. Wood and seconded by Cllr. Bennett

ALL AGREED

• Second draft of 21-22 budget for approval at this meeting – The clerk informed members that she had amended the budget adding in the 50% cost for the SAM2 machine which was £1676. Agreement proposed by Cllr Wood and seconded by Cllr. Leech

ALL AGREED

- **Approval of items of expenditure invoiced since the September 2020 meeting and note balances -**
Payments already made – Parish Council - £98.61 – Playing Field - £97.36 (payments are excluding VAT)
Payments for approval at this meeting – Parish Council - £964.82 (excluding payment to Parish Magazine to be agreed at this meeting and VAT). Agreement proposed by Cllr. Wood and seconded by Cllr. Bennett **ALL AGREED**
Balances in bank accounts as at 27th January 2021 – Parish Council £43,931.94, Playing Field £6,761.76 and Allotments £174.91.

The Parish Council accounts include £6714.09 CIL monies and the Playing Field accounts includes £2,087.13 ring-fenced money for the repair and replacement of play equipment.

- **Agreement on Parish Magazine grant for this financial year** – Cllr. Gunton informed members of the costs in running the parish magazine and explained the breakdown in costs for the parish council's pages alone which amounted to £189 per annum. The clerk confirmed that there was £200 in the budget for this purpose, so after a short discussion it was proposed by Cllr. Wood to donate £200 to the parish magazine which was seconded by Cllr. Meade. An expression of thanks was extended to Rachael for all her hard work on the magazine. **ALL AGREED**

10. Playing Field/Play Equipment/Bowls Club/Allotments – The clerk brought to the parish council's attention the fact that the allotment accounts were looking particularly low which was primarily due to the high-water costs which have been incurred over the last couple of years (£869.03 for 2018/19 and so far this financial year the cost has been £448.09 with one more invoice to come through in March). The extra costs for compliance with the Water Regulations and purchasing a new gate and post has taken the surplus down very low. Councillors agreed to review this again after the next water bill has come in to see where the accounts are at that point and may have to increase the rent again if thought necessary.

- **Discussion on structures on the allotments** – This item was discussed during the public session earlier, however the Chairman commented that he would visit the allotments to view the structures and contact the tenant to arrange a meeting to discuss the structures. Councillors thought that the tenancy agreements may need revisiting to tighten up on the rules if required.

Cllr. Meade – Playing Field - Following confirmation that the Field Maple trees for the Playing Field had been ordered at the last meeting, Cllr. Meade would be visiting the playing field to pinpoint where the trees should be sited and will contact Geoff Hall to advise.

11. Significant correspondence – The clerk commented that all correspondence had been forwarded to councillors and had been dealt with or replied to and these included the District Councillor report of last month, County Councillor report and Wellbeing emails. An email had been received from a resident suggesting that a litter bin could be placed on Pheasants Walk as there is a lot of littering in that area at the moment, however councillors were not in favour of this. The Chairman had reported the bad surface of the footpath to the clerk earlier in the month which has subsequently been reported to Norfolk County Council which is still outstanding. The broken sign, which the clerk reported to NCC still has not been dealt with – the clerk to report again.

As the two-hour meeting was now exceeding the time allocated, Cllr. Reeve proposed a 15-minute extension to the meeting which was agreed by all.

12. Business for next meeting – Speed sign on School Road, Commemorative Plaque, Signpost, Structures on the allotments, Millennium Film, Flooding, Co-option of new councillor

The meeting was adjourned at 21.34pm and reconvened at 21.48pm for public comment

John Gore commented that he was impressed with the Parish Council, for which he was thanked. Geoff Hall commented on the gate access to the footpath on Marston Moor and the concrete pads on the playing field which have been put down for the dugouts. Geoff commented that the concrete pads stand proud of the ground and are a trip hazard. Peter Goodfellow replied that once the dugouts are in place the concrete will not be noticeable.

13. Date of the next meeting – Wednesday 31st March 2021

Cllr. Wood thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 21.10pm.

Signed *S. Wood*

Dated *31st March 2021*