

HICKLING PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
Held on Monday, 5th September 2011 at 7.15 p.m. in the Methodist Hall

Present:

Chairman: S Clarke

Vice Chairman: A Lambard

Councillors: N Baker, P Berrie, T Ellis, D Scott
K Scott, L West, V Tallowin

District Councillor: S Partridge

7.15 p.m. – Public Participation

There were about 25 members of the public present. Matters raised included the cash flow forecast dated 5th September 2011, including a statement from Shirley Sainsbury, former parish clerk and current secretary to the HPFRG Charity, that the Charity would be refunding the professional fees of £2,625 deducted from the sale of the old community hall. There was also a report of a suspected attempted burglary in Barnfield Close and issues with the Police response.

7.20 p.m. the Parish Council meeting commenced:

1. Apologies Cllr Elliott **County Councillor:** Paul Rice

2. Declaration of interests in items on the agenda

Cllr Baker declared a personal interest in all North Norfolk District Council planning applications as an officer of North Norfolk District Council.

Cllrs Baker, Tallowin and West declared personal and prejudicial interests in the village hall project as they are trustees of the Hickling Playing Field or Recreation Ground charity. Cllr Lambard repeated a statement that, whilst she has a personal interest in the village hall because of the close proximity to her house, she did not believe she had a prejudicial interest in matters concerning the contracts.

3. Minutes of last meetings

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8th August 2011 were considered. It was agreed that, as not all councillors had remained behind after the meeting to consider a complaint about the council, the item concerning the confidential part of the meeting should be deleted. The minutes were then signed by Cllr Clarke as Chairman of the Parish Council.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd August 2011 were then considered. Cllr Baker asked that the minutes be held over until the next meeting as he felt that some of the minutes could be misinterpreted and should be worded differently. This was agreed.

4. Matters arising

4.1 Cllr Clarke reported that the repairs to the mower should be completed shortly.

4.2 Cllr Clarke will attend the Broads Authority Parish Planning Forum on 28th September

- 4.3 Cllr Scott gave a report on the Parish Surgery held on 18th August; matters raised included the

play equipment, the village hall, cars being driven on the playing field, the footpath map, a new noticeboard for the village and information on working parties.

- 4.4 The clerk was asked to contact Maggie Prettyman to ask about plans for the Jubilee lunch in 2012.
- 4.5 The new winches have been ordered and the signs have been sorted out.
- 4.6 Cllr Clarke reported that Brown & Co has confirmed that 12 months' notice is needed to increase the allotment rent, so there will be no change in the cost to the Council at this point. The clerk was therefore asked to send out the invoices to the allotment holders for the next 6 months.

5. Planning

None.

6. Correspondence

- 6.1 The AGM of the Norfolk Association of Local Councils will take place on Saturday, 1st October at East Tuddenham Village Hall. Councillors are also invited to a talk on Quality Parish Status on 12th October and a Coffee & Chat on 13th September.
- 6.2 The Broads Authority has sent details of the consultation on the changes proposed to the Development Management Policies Development Plan Document. This was noted.
- 6.3 Shirley Sainsbury has sent confirmation to the Council that she has notified the Inland Revenue that she resigned as parish clerk.
- 6.4 NNDC has invited the Parish Council to consider the name for the new road off Mallard Way; Brown's Loke, Edgell Lane, Nudd's Loke, Tate Close or The Loke. Cllr Baker proposed that the HPFRG Charity be asked to choose the name. This was agreed.
- 6.5 The Police sent notification of one recorded crime since the last meeting; the theft of a heavy duty batter from Mallard Way. There has also been a report of a theft of an outboard motor from the staithe.
- 6.6 Details have been received of a conference for people who are looking for work at the King's Centre, King Street Norwich on 23rd September.
- 6.7 Residents are invited to attend the next Broads Forum which will take place at Acle Recreation Centre on 6th October at 2.00 p.m.

- 6.8 Correspondence has been received about a planning application for a wind turbine at Bodham.
- 6.9 Details have been received of the RHS Britain in Bloom campaign.
- 6.10 The external auditors, Mazars, have requested additional information for the audit of the year to 31st March 2011. The clerk will send off the necessary paperwork, together with the Annual Return which was amended for interest on the deposit account.
- 6.11 NNDC has sent notice of the precept request. It was agreed that the finance committee should meet during October to consider a budget so that the precept can be agreed at the November meeting.

7. Treasurer's Report

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Community Account:

Balance b/f 8th August 2011 169,370.05

Receipts:

Transfer from no: 2 account 5,988.62

Payments:

PWLB first repayment of loan 5,357.00

Cyril Sweett – professional fees 1,800.00

Century Printing – leaflets 35.60

S Clarke – winches 200.86

P James – clerk's fee 740.00

P James – exps 59.21

Methodist Hall – room hire 36.00

Acle PC – share of exps 15.00

Eric Lindo – photocopying 67.44

J Haggith – maintenance of mower 260.35

Balance c/f 5th September 2011 166,787.21

No: 2 Account (- transfer) 8,047.23

Savings Account 20,168.58

Total monies at 5th September 2011 195,003.02

The above payments were approved.

8. Village Hall

8.1 Copy of signed contract between the charity and the builders

A copy of the contract, signed and dated 2nd September 2011 has been received.

8.2 Evidence of monies spent on the contract to date

Evidence that the Charity has now spent over £300,000 on the village hall project was also received.

The clerk presented a cash flow forecast for the Parish Council, using the accounts for the year ended 31st March, the Council's budget for 2011-12 and actual payments and receipts to date. A deficit of £2,127 is forecast for the year to 31st March 2012, before any further payments towards the village hall.

Cllrs Baker, Tallowin and West declared personal and prejudicial interests in the village hall project as trustees of the Hickling Playing Field or Recreation Ground charity, left the meeting at this point and took no part in the decisions.

It was agreed that the two outstanding invoices for professional fees, reported in the meeting of 6th June 2011, should now be signed.

It was also agreed that £6,000 should be transferred from the Council's brought forward general reserves to earmarked reserves, together with £2,500 from the current year's income, for repairs to the staithe.

The statement showed £180,273 of available funds after these transfers but before the second payment due to the Charity, of £110,000.

There was some discussion about the deduction of professional fees paid by the Parish Council from this second payment. The minutes say that the Parish Council will pay the professional fees as part of its grant, so that the VAT on those payments can be reclaimed, thereby maximising its donation, but no mention is made as to which professional fees were to be included. The Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2011 list some £30,575 of professional fees and state that some are recoverable from the Charity. A computer print out from the Council's accounts package lists £32,755 of costs paid for by the Council.

The clerk suggested that those costs which are clearly part of the village hall building project could be deducted, but perhaps not those legal fees incurred as part of the discussions about the village hall, as they would not have been expected or budgeted for by the Charity. If no past professional fees are deducted from the grant then the Council will be overdrawn by approximately £13,000. If all possible costs are deducted from the grant then it may be that the Charity would be short of funds.

It was agreed that, since the Charity was returning the professional fees of £2,625 which were paid on the sale of the old community hall, then the Council would pay the legal fees incurred during discussions about the new village hall.

It was therefore agreed to pay a second payment of £80,402, being the grant of £110,000 less the professional fees listed on the cash flow forecast and less the £2,625 fees on the sale of the old community building.

The clerk pointed out that the Parish Council could not then pay any further grant money until the third payment is due, which is on confirmation that the Charity has spent £550,000 on the project. This would mean that the Council could not pay any further professional fees until that time. The clerk suggested that the Charity should list the expected professional fees and that this figure should be held back from the amount of the second payment so that the Council could pay these fees as and when they arose.

Cllrs Baker, Tallowin and West rejoined the meeting at this point and the clerk explained about deducting the professional fees as above and asked the Charity to calculate the amount to be held back for future professional fees. It was agreed that the clerk would contact the Charity to set out the rationale for the above decision.

The clerk suggested that the councillors might need to increase the precept for 2012-13 in order to build up the Council's reserves. The current precept is £7,962, which is an average of £9.65 per elector, per annum. This will be considered at the October and November meetings.

It was agreed to transfer £8,500 to the staithe savings account and the temporary surplus in the current account to the Council's savings account.

The councillors also agreed that a committee be set up to draw up the advert for the new parish clerk and to agree the job description and hours, to be agreed at the October meeting.

It was also agreed to consider sub-contracting the grass cutting and to investigate the re-siting of one of the slipways at the staithe.

8.3 **Presentation by Eric Lindo**

The councillors thanked Eric Lindo for the very comprehensive report into the village hall project and the Council's decision-making process that he gave at a public meeting held on 23rd August.

9. **Parish Council Property Reports**

Cllrs Clarke, Berrie, Ellis, D Scott and Tallowin attended a parish property inspection walk on 12th August 2011.

9.1 **Chapel Pit**

The neighbour to the Chapel Pit has complained that two large trees are encroaching the foundations of her property. This is being investigated by Norfolk County Council but may be the responsibility of the Parish Council.

The picnic table is in good order but the two chapel benches need treating, as does the noticeboard. It was suggested that a buoyancy aid should be purchased and that additional signage might be needed. There was some discussion about the paving outside the Methodist hall. It was agreed to set up a working party to help with the paving together with the Methodist Chapel.

9.2 **Staithe**

NCC has patched the pothole on the road adjacent to the staithe, as well as one on the staithe land. It was reported that the staithe generally needs tidying up. Mr & Mrs Crabtree have given notice on their wet berth and will be refunded the rental, less one month's fee. This will be re-let to the next person on the waiting list.

It was agreed that the wire netting on the slipways needed replacement and to authorise Harry Nudd to purchase and install new numbering stakes for the dry berths.

It was confirmed that members of the public wishing to launch a boat should contact Harry Nudd to arrange a time and to pay him the launching fee.

9.2 **Allotments**

All allotments, bar one, are in good condition.

9.3 **Village sign**

The clerk was asked to write to the WI to thank them for their excellent work in maintaining the area around the sign.

9.4 **Other**

It was reported that the public toilets at the broad had been vandalised and had been closed by NNDC over the weekend. The councillors felt that the delay in repairing the vandalism was unhelpful over a busy summer weekend. The clerk was asked to contact NNDC to raise these concerns.

10. Website

Cllr Berrie has been working on the new website and will run it for the short-term. The councillors were invited to visit the website to give recommendations for additional pages or links.

11. Date of next meetings:

7th September at 7.15 to co-opt a new councillor

3rd October at 7.15 p.m. in the Methodist Hall

Parish surgery on Thursday, 22nd September from 10 – 12 noon in the Methodist Hall

There was no further business and the meeting was closed at 8.45p.m.

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Signature

Date