

LITTLE BLAKENHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

MONDAY 13th MARCH 2016 IN LITTLE BLAKENHAM VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT : Wally Binder (Chairman), Stephen Wright, Steve Clark, Mary Whurr, Barry Palmer.
Janet Gobey (Clerk).

One parishioner.

John Field - District Councillor.

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.31 pm with a welcome to those attending.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mike Tabard. No other apologies were received.

2. DECLARATION OF MEMBER INTERESTS

The Chairman reminded Councillors about the need to declare any interests they had in any matter under discussion during the Parish Council Meeting and also to ensure that their Online Register of Member Interests was up to date. The Clerk also advised Councillors that their home address should be included on the their Register entry.

No interests were declared.

3. OPEN FORUM

Complaints had been received about the number and noise levels of bird scarers in the Parish.

ACTION: CHAIRMAN TO CONTACT BLAKENHAM FARMS.

Complaints had been received about large lorries using Pound Lane. It was noted that there are no weight restrictions in place, so there is nothing to stop this.

John Field confirmed that the payment of £900 made from the MSDC Locality Budget was towards the cost of new noticeboards. This would cover the cost of 1.5 noticeboards. It was agreed that the Clerk would negotiate with company to see if a discount could be obtained for ordering more than one noticeboard.

ACTION: CLERK TO CONTACT NOTICEBOARD COMPANY.

It was noted that the road outside the old Blood Hill waste site is frequently covered with mud, in spite of the company at the site sweeping the road regularly.

Councillor Whurr said that she was planning a litter pick along Pound Lane. It was agreed that this would take place on 2/4/16 and be advertised as a Village Litter Pick (UPDATE – this did not take place, as Pound Lane was cleaned before the date).

There has been no response to the flyer about an event to mark the Queen's 90th. It was agreed that it would be publicized in In Touch to see if that would produce any volunteers.

The use of the word 'summon' on Agendas sent out to Councillors was queried. The Clerk explained that this had been stated as the correct and legal requirement when the issue was discussed at a SALC course she had attended, but said that she would confirm this again with SALC.

ACTION: CLERK TO CONTACT SALC

The issue of antisocial behaviour at weekends on the land owned by Braceforce was discussed. The police have been called by local residents but have not been able to catch anyone.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 11/1/16 were agreed as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 15/2/16 were agreed as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4a. ACTION POINTS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Clerk confirmed that the bid for funding from the Transparency Code had been submitted, but the outcome was not yet known. It was agreed that the laptop, printer and software should be purchased.

Information about the proposed cable laying work for the East Anglian Three Windfarm has been sent out and comments are invited by the end of April. It was agreed that the Annual Parish Meeting would be moved to April and the subject put on the Agenda to allow parishioners to have the opportunity to put their views forward. Councillor Wright will see if it would be possible to get a speaker from the construction company to come to the Meeting.

ACTION: COUNCILLOR WRIGHT TO ARRANGE A SPEAKER.

The lantern on the street light on the Somersham Road near the Beeches seems to have moved out of position.

ACTION: CLERK TO REPORT THIS TO SCC STREET LIGHTING.

5. FINANCE

5a. CLERK'S FINANCIAL REPORT

This was circulated. The Clerk explained that it was difficult for the reconciliation of bank statements, chequebook and financial balances to be set up for each meeting, as statements are only sent out quarterly. It was agreed that the Clerk should contact Lloyds Bank to see if it would be possible to either have more frequent statements or online access to be able to check balances, payments etc.

ACTION: CLERK TO DISCUSS WITH BANK.

The level of Earmarked Reserves was discussed and it was felt that it would be prudent to allocate more money to various projects in Earmarked Reserves.

ACTION: CLERK TO DRAW UP REVISED RESERVES FOR NEXT MEETING

It was clarified that no money from SITA Trust had been paid yet. The Chairman reported that he and the Clerk had met with Playquip and there is now a query as to whether the swing should be re/replaced or refurbished as it has been reported as being corroded and not meeting modern safety standards. The Chairman felt that it would be useful to know if there was any flexibility in the budget headings that were part of the funding bid. And this was agreed.

ACTION: CLERK TO CONTACT SITA UK

5b. PAYMENTS TO BE AUTHORISED

These were approved.

John Field left the Meeting at 8.20 pm.

5c. CLERK'S SALARY AND EXPENSES

These were approved.

5d. TO APPROVE THE FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT

This was approved.

5e. TO APPROVE THE ASSET REGISTER

This was approved.

5f. TO REVIEW THE COUNCIL'S INSURANCE COVER.

After some discussion, it was agreed that the street lights and the telephone box would not be added to the items insured for replacement after loss or damage. The Clerk had received confirmation from the insurers that the Council's Public Liability would still apply.

The level of cover for the Village Hall will be reviewed after the issue of the lease is resolved and any improvements made.

The level of cover for the playground equipment and noticeboards will be reviewed when new equipment is installed.

The replacement cover for the bus shelter is to be reviewed.

ACTION: CLERK TO CONTACT OFFTON PC TO FIND OUT WHAT THE COST OF THEIR NEW SHELTER WAS.

The level of cover in the Core Section of the Aviva Insurance Policy was queried.

ACTION: CLERK TO INVESTIGATE WHETHER THERE IS A RECOMMENDED MINIMUM LEVEL OF COVER.

5g. TO APPROVE THE REVISED STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Due to time constraints, it was agreed to carry this item forward to the next Meeting.

6. AUDIT ARRANGEMENTS

6a. TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF SALC AS INTERNAL AUDITOR

It was agreed to continue with SALC as the Internal Auditor for the 15/16 Audit.

6b. TO APPROVE EXTERNAL AUDIT ARRANGEMENTS

It was agreed that the Council would opt in to the Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments arrangements for External Audit for the next five years.

7. VILLAGE HALL

7a. FINANCIAL REPORT

This was circulated. The Clerk reported that she had adjusted the coin meter so that the rates being charged for electricity should now match the ones currently being charged by EON. However, the money collected from the coin meter is still not covering the EON bills. It was agreed that EON would be asked to come and check the meter and timing clock once the electrical work in the Hall has been completed (PAT testing, 5 year electrical check, provision of extra emergency light and

extra outside light).

7b. PROGRESS ON RISK ASSESSMENT ACTION POINTS

The Clerk has carried out the annual 3 hour test on the emergency lighting and is also checking it monthly.

The Chairman explained that work should be starting in the next few weeks on other outstanding action points relating to the Village Hall Risk assessment. He has also asked the handyman to check if rain is blowing under the capping and causing the leaks in the roof.

8. TO APPROVE THE CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT FOR THE CLEANER.

This was approved, with one correction to be made before the contract is issued (number of hours to be 3 per month throughout the contract).

9. TO CONSIDER ORDERING A COPY OF THE REVISED VERSION OF “THE GOOD COUNCILLOR GUIDE” FOR EACH COUNCILLOR

It was agreed that ten copies should be ordered and that each Councillor and the Clerk would have a copy.

The Chairman closed the Meeting at 9.06 pm with thanks to all present.

