

LITTLE BLAKENHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY 9th NOVEMBER 2015 IN LITTLE BLAKENHAM
VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT : Wally Binder (Chairman), Stephen Wright, Mary Whurr, Stephen Clarke, Mike Tabard, Barry Palmer. Janet Gobey (Clerk).

One parishioner.

Kevin Welsby - District Councillor.

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.30 pm with a welcome to those attending.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

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. No interests were declared.

3. OPEN FORUM Questions from parishioners and replies given:

What is the current position on the planning issues that were raised at the September Parish Council meeting ?

Storage of building materials at Vanquish House (formerly Stansfield House) - the owner confirmed that he will discuss the issue with MidSuffolk/Babergh.

Car sales at Broomvale Farm – the Chairman confirmed that no further action had been taken by MSDC after the owner had informed them that any car sales were being made by workers at the site.

Chickens being kept on the land formerly owned by Mr. Marland - no further action required, as water is supplied to the chickens. The new portacabin that has appeared at the end of the right of way was discussed. As it is under 4.5 metres high and is not lived in, no further action required.

Councillor Tabard arrived at 7.37 pm.

Save The Duke Campaign – the parishioner present asked what the current position was and expressed the objections of himself and other parishioners to the idea of Parish Council making any financial donation, especially as he felt that there were other areas that the Parish Council should be concentrating on.

Village Hall Health and Safety – the portable gas heaters have been removed. It was agreed that there was a need to review safety in the Village Hall and the Clerk confirmed that she would be doing this as part of the risk assessments that she would be carrying out.

The Chairman explained that the Village Hall now needed to have money spent on it for repairs and refurbishments, but this would not be a prudent use of public money when the Parish only has a one year agreement to rent the land where the Village Hall is situated. It was agreed that the Clerk should write to the agents for the Diocese to find out whether it would be possible to negotiate a ten year lease and what the costs to set this up would be.

Matters raised by District Councillor Kevin Welsby - discussions are proceeding regarding Suffolk and Norfolk combining services, but this is still only a possibility at this stage.

Councillor Welsby also noted that the road sign for Little Box Meadow was leaning over and will contact MSDC/Babergh to get it straightened up.

4. ACTION POINTS AND MATTERS ARISING

The Clerk circulated copies of the document Action Points Resulting from Parish Council Meeting 14/9/15 and asked Councillors whether it would be helpful to have this document updated for each Parish Council meeting so that they could have a summary of what had been actioned and what was still ongoing. Councillors agreed that they would like this to be put in place.

ACTION – CLERK TO PRODUCE THE SAME FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

The Chairman asked whether all Councillors had checked and amended their Online Register entry. Councillors are able to check their entry either by going straight to the Register on the MSDC/Babergh website or by following the link next to their name on the Parish Council website.

The Clerk said that one Councillor had had a query about what should be on their entry and that she had taken advice from SALC, who felt that it was better for Councillors to declare anything at all that they thought might be relevant. The Clerk also reminded Councillors that the guidance from MSDC/Babergh was that all property, owned or rented in the Parish, including the homes of Councillors, should be declared. It is the responsibility of Councillors to decide what information needs to be included on their entry.

5. CO-OPTION TO FILL COUNCILLOR VACANCY

The Chairman proposed that Barry Palmer be co-opted to the Council. Stephen Wright seconded the proposal. The motion was carried unanimously and the Chairman welcomed Barry Palmer to the Parish Council. Barry Palmer signed the Acceptance of Office form.

Councillor Field arrived at 7.55 pm

6. UPDATE ON NEW EQUIPMENT FOR THE BEECHES PLAY AREA.

The Chairman told Councillors that the ten year lease on the playground land had been signed and that a new application for funding would be sent to SITA UK Trust within the next few days.

Councillor Field said that he might be able to assist the Parish Council with a donation towards the 11.5 % LCP payment required by SITA UK Trust.

ACTION -CLERK TO WRITE TO COUNCILLOR FIELD TO REQUEST A DONATION.

Councillor Field circulated his Report and spoke briefly about it. He has been following up the issues around the management of roadworks and the resulting diversions with SCC, although it is acknowledged that a lot of the problems are due to the various utility companies. There are already signs of improvement and promises of further improvements to come

7. FINANCE

a. Clerk's Financial Report.

This was circulated. The Parish Council has a healthy financial balance at the moment, although there were some invoices to be paid and money set aside for replacement of electricity poles and for the Council's share of the costs for the playground equipment. The Chairman reminded Councillors that the Clerk had not been paid yet, although hours claims had been approved.

b. RESERVES (LBPC09112015 AG 7b)

The Clerk explained that she had contacted SCC to establish the cost of replacing the street light poles that had been identified as being at the end of their life, only to find that SCC seemed to have no record of this or any problems with our poles. After discussing this with SCC, a SCC Lighting Engineer will be coming out to inspect all the poles sometime over the next few weeks and will report back to the Clerk. The Lighting Engineer will also provide a quote for converting all the lights to LED fittings. This would result in a

substantial reduction in the Council's lighting bill, but would mean that the Council would have to fund the conversion process. The Clerk said that she had found out that Councils either did one or two lights a year or took out a loan from the Green Bank. These loans are structured so that no repayments are made until savings on the lighting bill are being made.

It was agreed that the matter would be put on the agenda for the next Meeting when the Engineer's reports would be available.

The Clerk said that she thought it would be sensible to add the General Reserves to the accounts and add any Earmarked Reserves later, as the lighting pole situation was more complicated than expected. This was agreed.

ACTION – CLERK TO SET UP GENERAL RESERVES

c.PAYMENTS TO BE AUTHORISED

The Clerk circulated a list of payments to be authorised, explaining that the invoice for the glebeland rent had arrived that morning, so she had prepared the cheque for that as well. These payments were approved by the Council.

It was agreed that the Clerk should approach the agents for the Diocese to check what the position was on access for the Parish Council on to the land formerly belonging to Mr. Marland for maintenance of the weepers for the septic tank and the water supply to the Village Hall. If there was no wayleave, the landowner would have to be approached to see if it would be possible to obtain one.

ACTION – CLERK TO CONTACT CLARKE & SIMPSON

d.Clerk'S SALARY AND EXPENSES

The Clerk's claim for hours was approved, it was clarified that these hours are the only payment due to the Clerk and that there is no fixed monthly pay rate.

8. TRANSPARENCY FUND - BID FOR MONEY (LBPC09112015 AG8)

A paper outlining the details of a possible claim from the Transparency Fund was circulated. It was agreed that the Clerk should follow this up and obtain quotes for the purchase of a suitable computer and scanner.

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ACTION – CLERK TO OBTAIN COSTINGS AND PREPARE A BID FOR APPROVAL

9. VILLAGE HALL

a.FINANCIAL REPORT

The Clerk circulated the Village Hall accounts. The apportionment of insurance costs for the Village Hall has been added to the outgoing and once the Clerk's hours had also been added, the Village Hall will be operating at a loss. Councillor Tabard queried the insurance costs and the Chairman explained that they were due to the cost of public liability.

Band bookings continue at a steady rate and brought in £50 during October. Bookings money and money from the coin meter are being collected monthly by the Clerk and banked.

b.APPROVAL OF SCHEDULE FOR CLEANING (LBPC09112015 AG9b)

Councillors reviewed the proposed schedule . It was agreed that the cleaner should be paid for three hours work each month at a rate of £10.00 per hour to clean the Village Hall, telephone box and bus shelter and that an advert should be placed in InTouch.

ACTION - CLERK TO ARRANGE FOR AN ADVERT TO GO IN INTOUCH.

c.VILLAGE HALL REFURBISHMENT

It was agreed that the Council could not proceed with any refurbishments until the issue of a longer lease had been resolved.

10. RIVER GIPPING TRUST

Councillor Wright reported on a meeting he had attended organised by the Trust. Their long term aim is to restore navigation between Needham Market and Bramford, although their immediate priority is the stretch of river between Needham Market and Baylham Rare Breeds Farm. They hope to run river trips using small electric boats.

The Trust are asking Councils along the river to take out Corporate membership of the Trust. This shows that there is community support for their plans and helps with grant applications.

The council agreed that they would consider taking out Corporate Membership at the next Parish Council meeting. The Clerk will scan in the leaflet that Councillor Wright was given at the meeting and email it to Councillors.

ACTION – CLERK TO SCAN IN THE TRUST'S LEAFLET AND CIRCULATE IT.

11. HM THE QUEEN'S 90th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS (LBPC09112015 AG11)

The Chairman said he felt that the Parish Council could host a tea party in the Village Hall for parishioners on either the 11th or 12th of June, with the Council organising some games and paying for tea, coffee and cakes. Councillor Welsby suggested that parishioners could be given the opportunity to write their thoughts about the village on sticky notes and put them up on board. It was agreed that the Clerk would find out what other local villages were planning to avoid clashes and that the Council would consider the matter again at the next Meeting.

ACTION – CLERK TO CONTACT OTHER PARISH CLERKS

The meeting was closed at 8.50 pm.