

**LITTLE BLAKENHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY 16th JANUARY 2017 AT 7.30 PM IN LITTLE BLAKENHAM
VILLAGE HALL**

PRESENT: Wally Binder (Chairman), Stephen Wright ,Stephen Clark, Mary Whurr, Barry Palmer John Latham.
Janet Gobey (Clerk).
One member of the public.

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

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr. Mehra – business trip. Councillors agreed to accept the apologies
Apologies had been received from District Councillor Welsby and County and District Councillor Field.

2. Declarations of any pecuniary and non pecuniary interests.

a. Councillors declaration of interest appropriate to any item on the Agenda.

None.

b. To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interest (if any).

None

c. To grant any requests for dispensations as appropriate.

None.

3. Open Forum

Cllr. Wright reported that there was a beech tree in front of the Hall, that was partially dead and very close to the overhead power lines. Concern had been expressed about potential damage to the line or the possibility of the tree falling. The Parish Council had written to UK Power Networks a few years ago about the tree but no action had been taken. It was agreed that the Clerk should write to UKPN again and ask for the tree to be taken down. **ACTION:** Clerk

There was a discussion about the best methods for the Council to use when communicating with the public. The Government's strategy is that communication is carried out via the internet, but this disadvantages those members of the public who do not have the internet or have very low broadband speeds. Other methods of communication were discussed, including flyers in InTouch and setting up an email list. **ACTION:** Clerk to put on the Agenda for the next Meeting.

The Clerk read an email from John Field asking that the Parish Council consider moving the dates of their Meetings, as he was having difficulty in attending because other local Councils had their meetings on the same day. Councillors agreed that the Council could not alter the dates that had already been agreed for Meetings, but they would consider the request when considering further dates. **ACTION:** Clerk to check the pattern of meetings for Claydon and Whitton, Bramford and Barham Parish Council Meetings.

4. To approve the Minutes of the last Meeting.

The Minutes of the Meeting on 14th November 2016 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record of the Meeting.

5. To note the update on Action Points.

7b. No progress on printing the spreadsheet in a usable form.

7c. Glebeland lease – to be covered under Agenda Item 8.

3. The Clerk had not yet forwarded the example risk assessment for burial grounds to Cllr. Wright

10. No progress with the portacabin being transferred to the ownership of the PCC.

6. Planning

a. To consider any planning applications.

None

b. To note any planning decisions.

None

c. Any other planning matters

It was confirmed that there was nothing to report regarding progress on the Sterling Suffolk greenhouses project.

No further SnOasis Reserved Matters documents had been received and no decision had been reached by MSDC.

d. To determine the Council's representative to the SnOasis Parish Alliance.

It was agreed that this would be Cllr. Palmer. As Cllr. Palmer would not be able to attend the Meeting on 24th January, Cllr. Binder will attend instead.

7. To note progress regarding the refurbishment of the Beeches play area.

The Clerk explained that the play equipment company was spraying the equipment and would be ready to install it within a couple of weeks. The Chairman said that no progress had been made on site clearance, but he hoped to progress this in February.

Access to the site for clearance and installation was discussed. Cllr. Latham said that he was happy for access over Blakenham Farms land unless the ground was too wet. He agreed that the Clerk could give the company his mobile number to discuss the best access route with him. The Chairman will hire a mini digger and has found that there are diggers small enough to go through the entrance which will mean that the fencing can stay in place. One of his employees will drive the digger, as several of them have the required tickets. Cllr. Palmer confirmed that he also had suitably qualified staff who might be able to assist.

8. To consider the response from the Diocese to the request for a longer term rental agreement for the Glebeland.

The Clerk said that there had been no correspondence from the Diocese or Clarke and Simpson. Cllr Welsby had told her that he had not heard back from Dr. Dan Poulter, the MP for Little Blakenham, about his request for Dr. Poulter to approach the Diocese. Cllr. Welsby will contact Dr. Poulter again.

Cllr. Wright suggested that there might be a better response if the PCC approached the Diocese and offered to speak to the Rev. Seggar about it. Councillors unanimously agreed that this should be tried.

9. To consider the following issues of Parish maintenance:

a. The condition of footpaths in the Parish – raised by Cllr. Wright

Cllr. Wright said that he had been contacted about the number of bags of dog waste that were left hanging in bushes or trees along paths in the village, particularly the path that goes round the back of the Beeches.

It was agreed that an article should be put in InTouch asking that dog walkers use the dog waste bins provided by the Council and listing their location. **ACTION: Clerk**

b. The amount of mud and debris on the road outside the former Household Waste Site - raised by Cllr. Clarke.

Cllr. Clarke said that there was a great deal of concern about the amount of mud and stones being deposited by lorry wheels along the road outside JT Few's site and that he believed that it was only a matter of time before a serious accident happened. He said that he understood that one of the conditions of the planning permission for the site was that the road was kept clear of mud and debris. The road sweeper provided by the company was also damaging the verges which only added to the mud and was itself a hazard on the road.

It was frustrating because the situation had been reported to Highways numerous times, but no real improvement had occurred. Councillors discussed this issue and agreed that the Clerk should find and write to a named contact in Highways to express the Council's concern about the continuing problems with this. **ACTION:** Clerk

C. The condition of the trees by the entrance to the Glebeland and the area in front of the Village Hall. Item raised by Cllr. Wright
Councillors agreed that this item had been dealt with earlier in the Agenda.

10. Finance

a. To receive the Clerk's Financial Report

CHEQUES SIGNED SINCE LAST PARISH COUNCIL MEETING ON 14/11/16

None

PAYMENTS MADE BY DIRECT DEBIT 1/11/16 to 31/12/16

28/11/16	EON Village Hall electricity	£13.61	LGA 1972, s.133
30/12/16	EON Village Hall electricity	£14.06	LGA 1972, s.133

PAYMENTS TO BE APPROVED

None.

The Clerk circulated the Statement of Accounts, showing the bank balances at 1/1/17:

Treasurers Account: £9101.59 Deposit Account: £2930.38

The bank balances in the Statement of Accounts were verified against the paper statements provided by Lloyds Bank and signed off on the Statement of Accounts by Cllr. Latham. The Chairman signed the Statement of Accounts.

b. PAYMENTS TO BE APPROVED & CHEQUES TO BE SIGNED

16/1/17	Janet Gobey-Salary	£376.60	LGA 1972, S.111
16/1/17	Nick Edrupt -Salary	£72.00	LGA 1972, S.111
16/1/17	HMRC	£112.00	LGA 1972. S.111
16/1/17	MSDC Grass Cutting 2017 Season (The Beeches play area and the Glebeland)	£391.20	Public Health Act 1875, s164.
16/1/17	Anglian Water	£11.95	LGA 1972, S.111

Councillors unanimously agreed that these payments should be made.

11. Precept 17/18

a. To review the General and Earmarked Reserves

Councillors agreed that the reserves should be reviewed once the playground work was completed and once again when the outcome of the Glebeland lease issue is known.

RESERVES

GENERAL RESERVE

50% of the Annual Precept, plus one month's running costs.

15/16 Annual Precept = £5384. 50% = £2692.

One month's average running costs (14/15) = £306.

TOTAL - £2998

EARMARKED RESERVES

Playground refurbishment.

£1100 is left as an Earmarked Reserve to act as a contingency fund while the works are being planned and carried out.

Replacement of electricity poles and replacement of light fittings with LED lights.

Approximate cost of project = £9574.01

£2000 is set aside as an Earmarked Reserve towards these costs.

Glebeland lease legal costs

Approximate cost – unknown

£1000 to be set aside as an Earmarked Reserve towards the cost of legal fees.

TOTAL EARMARKED RESERVES - £4100

b. To determine the Precept for 2017/18

The Clerk presented the Draft Budget for 2017/18. Councillors noted with concern the rising levels of basic running costs for the Council. Various levels of Precept were considered. The Clerk reminded Councillors of the Government's emphasis on encouraging rises of below 2%. After some discussion, Councillors agreed that a modest increase would be in order, especially as other elements of the total Council Tax bill would be rising sharply in 2017/18. It was felt that the Council would be able to absorb rising costs during the next financial year, but that this situation could not continue indefinitely and would need to be reviewed when the Precept for 2018/19 is being considered.

Councillors agreed to set the Precept at £5500 for 2017/18 and the Chairman, Cllr. Clarke and the Clerk signed the Precept form.

12. To note and consider correspondence from Scottish Power relating to EAW construction work.

The Clerk said that she had circulated a newsletter from Scottish Power.

It was agreed that The East Anglian Offshore Windfarms construction work would be a standing item on the Agenda from now on until work was completed.

Work has begun on cutting down hedges. Utilities have been surveyed along the B113.

Construction work is due to start in March.

The Chairman closed the Meeting at 8.42 pm with thanks to all concerned.