

LITTLE BLAKENHAM PARISH COUNCIL  
ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

MONDAY 9<sup>th</sup> MAY 2016 IN LITTLE BLAKENHAM VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT : Wally Binder (Chairman), Stephen Wright, Steve Clark, Mary Whurr.  
Janet Gobey (Clerk).  
Two parishioners.  
John Field - District and County Councillor

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

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Wally Binder was proposed by Steve Clark, seconded by Mary Whurr and elected as Chairman and signed the Declaration of Office.

2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Stephen Wright was proposed by Wally Binder, seconded by Steve Clark and elected as Vice Chairman.

3. TO APPOINT MEMBERS TO ANY OUTSIDE BODIES

It was agreed that the following appointments would be made:

SALC – Wally Binder

Viridor Liaison Meetings – Stephen Wright

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Barry Palmer (absence due to holiday) and were accepted

5. DECLARATION OF MEMBER INTERESTS

The Chairman reminded Councillors about the need to declare any interests they had in any matter under discussion during the Council Meeting and also to ensure that their Online Register of Member Interests was up to date.

It was agreed that the Clerk would reissue the Online Register of Member Interests forms so that Councillors can check and amend their entries as required.

No interests were declared.

**ACTION: CLERK TO REISSUE ONLINE REGISTER OF MEMBER INTERESTS FORMS**

6. OPEN FORUM

A parishioner stated he felt that Councillors should engage more with parishioners, citing the proposed construction work for the onshore windfarm cables at the Common as an example.

He felt that it was essential that Councillors should go and talk to parishioners affected by e.g. large scale developments to see what their concerns and questions are and then address them.

The location for the meeting with Scottish Power was discussed, with the parishioner suggesting that it should be onsite.

A named contact with phone number would be required before work started so any problems could be raised immediately.

John Field said that he thought it would be advisable to have a first meeting to enable people to get to know each other and begin to discuss the various issues, before another meeting to discuss particular issues in more depth. He also felt that a survey of residents and businesses likely to be most affected should be considered.

John Field summarised his report and reminded everybody that it is available each month in InTouch.

It was felt that the grass cutting by Suffolk County Council on the verges of the B113 could be improved. The grass around the bases of posts is never cut, leaving signs partially obscured and the verges looking untidy. However, the large number of posts for various signs does interfere with efficient cutting.

#### 7. MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 14/3/16

These were agreed as a true and correct record of the Meeting and signed by the Chairman.

#### 8. ACTION POINTS

Culvert and ditch beside the Beeches. Blakenham Farms are responsible for this and will clean it out this summer.

Meeting with Scottish Power speaker to raise concerns and ask questions about the construction work for East Anglia Offshore Windfarms 1 and 3. The meeting will take place in the Village Hall in the evening. The Clerk will obtain some possible dates.

#### **ACTION: CLERK TO LIASE WITH SCOTTISH POWER.**

The Clerk said that she had been approached by the Clerk to Bawdsey Parish Council who was proposing setting up an information sharing group for the parishes in Suffolk along the route that the onshore cables would take. It is intended that this will operate by email, rather than by face to face meetings.

The Council agreed to join the group.

#### 9. FINANCE

a. The Parish Council Accounts for 15/16 were approved. It was noted that, although the Council has a large balance in its bank account, most of this is earmarked for various projects.

b. The BDO Annual Audit Return for 15/16 Page 1 was approved and signed by the RFO and the Chairman.

The BDO Annual Audit Return for 15/16 Page 2 was approved and signed by the RFO and the Chairman.

c. It was agreed that no change would be made to the Council's insurance cover for this year, pending progress on various projects. As this will be the last year of the three-year agreement with Came & Co, there will be a review of provider before the insurance policy is renewed.

d. It was agreed that the cheque signatories would remain unchanged and that three was an adequate number.

e. It was agreed to reappoint the Clerk as RFO.

#### 10. CLERK'S FINANCIAL REPORT

The Clerk explained that she had contacted the bank and that they would now issue monthly statements. This would mean that in future it would be much easier to implement the system for checking payments made against bank statements and the Accounts spreadsheet.

Councillor Clarke carried out the checks for the period 1/4/16 to 31/4/16.

a. The following payments were approved and cheques signed:

SALC Clerks Networking	£18.00
SALC 10 copies of 'The Good Councillor'	£22.50
Anglian Water	£14.26
Thirsk Community Care (payroll service)	£32.50
Janet Gobey (Clerk's Expenses)	£422.48

b. To approve the General and Earmarked Reserves.

After some discussion, it was agreed:

The General Reserve would remain unchanged

The Earmarked Reserves – the amount set aside for replacing the street lights would be raised to £6000.

c. Clerk's Expenses

This item had already been dealt with under Item 10a.

#### 11. REVISED BUDGET FOR PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

The Clerk circulated the latest quote for the trim trail equipment.

It was agreed that the existing swing would be refurbished, with a replacement leg and removal of one of the seats. Costs for this will need to be obtained.

#### **ACTION: CLERK TO CONTACT THE SWING MANUFACTURER**

Councillors will clear the remaining wooden equipment and remove the concrete that the equipment was set in. This will save money that can then be spent on extra play equipment such as a wobble board. It was agreed that there should be something designed for younger children.

Councillors will also remove the tree that is growing inside the concrete ring.

The issue of soft play surfacing was discussed and it was felt that further information should be obtained on the legal and insurance requirements for play area surfacing.

#### **ACTION: CLERK TO CHECK ROSPA AND INSURANCE COMPANY GUIDELINES.**

#### 12. PURCHASE OF NEW NOTICEBOARDS FOR THE PARISH

It was agreed that three noticeboards would be purchased. The Clerk had asked for quotes to include three boards, but these had not yet been received. It was agreed to consider this at the next Meeting.

#### 13. REPLACEMENT OF STREET LIGHTS IN THE PARISH

After some discussion, it was agreed that the Clerk would contact SCC Street Lighting to obtain a quote for replacing the street lights in either all at once or in two stages. It was also felt that the Clerk should check whether the recommended lanterns were the lowest output suitable for the location, especially for the lights in the Beeches.

#### **ACTION: CLERK TO CONTACT SCC STREET LIGHTING**

#### 14. VILLAGE HALL

a. Village Hall Report

The Clerk circulated the Village Hall Accounts. Adjusting the electricity meter has increased the amount of money being paid by the Hall users for the electricity they use and, after a few months, it should be possible to determine whether electricity costs are being covered. Bookings are slightly down and the Hall has been publicised in InTouch again.

No response has been received from the Diocese to the proposal to discuss a longer lease for the Glebeland. The Clerk will chase this up.

#### **ACTION: CLERK TO CONTACT CLARKE & SIMPSON AGAIN.**

b. Ownership of and responsibility for the portacabin.

It was agreed that the Parish Council would assume ownership of the portacabin and would continue to insure it. The portacabin is in a state of disrepair and the question of whether it should be replaced was discussed. The Clerk will inspect it and carry out a risk assessment. This will be considered at the next Meeting.

**ACTION: CLERK TO INSPECT THE PORTACABIN.**

15. GRASS CUTTING IN THE CHURCHYARD

An invoice has been received from the Community Payback Team relating to a Service Level Agreement for one session of churchyard maintenance. This was discussed by the Parish Council and it was agreed that they had not approved entering into a contractual agreement with CPS and did not wish to assume responsibility for maintenance of the churchyard. It was agreed that the invoice would not be paid. The Clerk would inform CPS of this and instruct them to resend the invoice to the Treasurer of the PCC.

The PCC may consider if they wish to write to the Parish Council to ask for a grant towards the cost of maintaining the churchyard.

**ACTION: CLERK TO INFORM CPS OF THE COUNCIL'S DECISION**

16. LONE WORKER RISK ASSESSMENTS

The Lone Worker Risk Assessments for the Clerk and the Cleaner were approved.

17. SCHEDULE OF ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED ANNUALLY.

This was discussed and approved.

18. "THE GOOD COUNCILLOR" GUIDE

A copy was issued to each Councillor present.

The Meeting was closed at 9.50 and the Chairman thanked all present for their contributions.