

MARSHLAND ST JAMES PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 10th December 2018

Present

Councillors: Askew (Chair), Boyce, Coleman, Gathercole, Hallett, Long, Norman, Thorpe and Wilkinson.

One member of the public

Clerk – S Thorpe

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Humphrey (County Councillor).

2. Confirm Minutes of Meetings Held on 12th and 26th November 2018

Having been circulated before the meeting the minutes were amended at item 9a to include the comment from Cllr Askew that she had attended the Armistice Day Service at St James Church on Remembrance Sunday to represent the Parish Council. The minutes of both meetings were then accepted as a true and accurate record by all present at the meetings.

3. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Thorpe declared an interest in item 16a(i) and Cllr Gathercole declared an interest in item 9.

4. Public Speaking

Resolved that meeting be adjourned for public speaking,

Prop: Cllr Gathercole 2nd: Cllr Long

Agreed.

Meeting re-started.

5. Matters Arising

An email had been received from Elizabeth Truss MP, in response to a copy of the letter issued to Cllr Dark regarding the proposed closure of Emneth Children’s Centre by Norfolk County Council (NCC). The email advised that she had written to the leader of NCC giving her support to Emneth Children’s Centre remaining open. She had also asked that before any final decisions were made, details were provided about what alternative provision will be put in place if the centre did close. She would keep the PC up to date of any response she received.

An email had been received from Geoff Hall, Executive Director (Environment and Planning) at the Borough Council (BC) in response to the letter sent to him regarding the procedure for naming new streets. It advised that the procedure for determining street names is set out in legislation, although the BC does operate a code of practise to guide developers on what may or may not be an appropriate name for a new street. They do always encourage developers to discuss their choice of name with a Parish Council before submitting an application but this does not always happen. He suggested that in future the PC might like to consider whether a new street name could be needed on new planning applications and make contact with the developer at an early stage to discuss street name/s prior to a formal application being submitted. In view of this it was felt that it would be a good idea to contact the developer of the new properties on Walton Road, to mention that although the PC was not expecting that this development would need a new street name the PC would like to be involved in any discussion, prior to submission, if it was discovered that one was necessary.

NCC Highways had been informed that the PC would like a refund of the cost of the additional Village Gateway which had not been installed and had responded to say that it would be installed by Christmas, along with the promised trimming around the Gateway at St Johns Fen End of the village.

A resident of one of the new properties on Smeeth Road, between No 26 and No 46, had contacted the PC again about the letter issued by the PC regarding the damage to the trod. The resident had advised that they had been in touch with the contractor, who they believed had caused the damage, and made arrangements for the damage to be repaired.

6. Correspondence

Circulated prior to meeting: Police – parish newsletters, info on Downham Market SNAP meetings, contact details and phone scam; NALC – newsletters; CAN – funding news, events and volunteering, newsletter; NCC – Norwich Western Link consultation, West Norfolk Early Help Bulletin and info on Christmas activities; BC – Confirmation of the Control of Dogs Order, new street name of Signal Close and addresses for this

Chairman..... Date.....

that electricity prices would continue to rise over the next 5 years. A discussion took place on entering into a contract with the new supplier, Haven Power.

That the PC should switch to Haven Power and accept the contract for a 4-year deal. Prop: Cllr Norman 2nd: Cllr Boyce Agreed.

11. Highways issues

Cllr Hallett reported that a new footpath had now been installed on Walton Road. All issues raised at the last meeting had been report but were still outstanding.

New issues to report:

School Road, Terrington St John (near sign for Fen End) – pot hole.

Chapel Road (junction with School Road, Tilney St Lawrence) – pot hole.

Hope Lane/Bonnetts Lane corner – damage to road surface.

School Road, Terrington St John (just after S bend) – hedge overhanging highway.

Smeeth Road (from Trinity Road junction towards Terrington St John) – damage and mud on trod where new dwellings are being constructed.

Smeeth Road (junction with Walton Road and School Road) – fingerposts missing.

Action: Clerk to report new issues.

12. Report from Police Engagement Meeting

Cllr Coleman had represented the PC and reported that it had been well attended by more than 40 Councillors. The village was now part of the Downham Market Safer Neighbourhood Team and contact numbers had been given out; it was felt that the 101 system was not coping well with the number of enquiries; poster with contact details to be displayed on the community notice board. SNAP meetings were not well attended. The new beat officer for our area would hopefully be attending a PC meeting at least once a year and was also going to attend the Primary School to give a talk to pupils.

13. Review of Parish Council policies and documentation

To be carried forward to next PC meeting as documents had not been fully circulated.

14. Parish Council meeting dates for 2019

Meeting dates were agreed for the second Monday of each month, excluding August, with the exception of the January meeting which would be on the first Monday. Annual Parish Meeting to be on Monday 29th April.

15. Finance

a. *Accept accounts to 30th November 2018.*

Prop: Cllr Wilkinson 2nd: Cllr Thorpe Agreed.

b. The list of payments due as follows was read out:

E & DE Gathercole – erect barrier and posts	£654.00
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All Clear Drainage Consultants – drainage work at playing field	£1103.56
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URM (UK) Ltd – Bottle bank emptying	£10.80
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CGM Ltd – Grounds maintenance for Oct/Nov	£271.80
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E & DE Gathercole – repair mole damage and play area maint.	£18.00
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Agree to sign cheques, direct debit mandate and approve payments.

Prop: Cllr Norman 2nd: Cllr Long Agreed.

c. Draft budget for 2019/20 – a draft budget and explanation notes had been given out to all Councillors prior to the meeting. The Clerk explained the figures, which represented a very basic budget for the minimum expenditure, but would still leave a shortfall, if the Precept was not increased. Cllr Coleman asked many questions which included querying the titles of some columns and a breakdown of how the figures had been produced. The Clerk agreed to review the figure in the Playing Field column for 2019/20 to ensure the figure was accurate, as it seemed too low. Cllr Coleman wanted to discuss options for removing items from the budget, including a donation to the Church Hall and Marshland Hall, and how much the Precept would need to be increased to return the PC reserves to the recommended minimum. Cllr Long disputed that the Precept would need to be increased by an amount that would replace the reserves in one year, and felt that this could be done gradually over a few years. Councillors who dealt with budgets in their work environment expressed the view that some of the questions raised by Cllr Coleman were unnecessary, as the format of the budget complied with usual accounting practise and some amendments suggested by Cllr Coleman were inappropriate. The discussion become quite heated and Cllr Askew reminded Cllr Coleman to moderate her behaviour or she would have to ask her to leave the meeting, as she continued to interrupt while other Councillors were trying to express their views. In the end Cllr Askew advised that she felt the discussion had

gone on long enough, but Cllr Coleman felt that she had further points to make and Cllr Askew was stifling the debate. Other Councillors asked if any decision was required on the budget at this meeting and the Clerk advised that it was not and the information was simply for consideration, prior to a decision being made at the January PC meeting. Cllr Askew informed the Councillors that anything further on this matter should be discussed at the next meeting.

Cllr Norman left the meeting during the many points raised by Cllr Coleman, advising that he couldn't sit and listen to this any longer. The parishioner also left the meeting.

Planning Matters

a. Applications received since last meeting:

Cllr Thorpe left the meeting at this point.

i **18/02089/F Single storey extension to rear of property at 86 Smeeth Road.** The PC discussed the application and made a decision to SUPPORT the application.

Cllr Thorpe returned to the meeting at this point.

b. Planning decisions from the BC. The following applications had been permitted:

i **18/01641/RM Reserved Matters Application for one residential dwelling at St James Lodge, 288 Smeeth Road.** Application had been permitted.

ii **18/01937/DM Prior Notification of proposed demolition of brick walled outbuilding at 86 Smeeth Road.** Permission not required.

iii **18/01768/CU Change of use of public house with combined residential accommodation to a single dwelling house at The Marshland Arms, 47 School Road.** Application had been permitted.

c. Applications considered by the BC Planning Committee. Cllr Askew advised that the application for change of use of The Marshland Arms had been referred to the Planning Committee for decision and a statement had been produced by the Clerk, which confirmed the position of the PC; however, Cllr Coleman, who had been elected as the PC representative to attend planning committee meetings, had decided not to attend, so the statement had been emailed by the Clerk. Cllr Askew stressed that a PC representative could not make a decision not to attend without consulting with the Council. Cllr Coleman advised that she had been unwell, Cllr Askew stated that this was not the reason that had been given to her for Cllr Coleman not attending. Cllr Askew asked that an item be placed on the next agenda to discuss appointing an additional PC representative. Cllr Long advised that he would have attended but was already committed to another meeting, when he was informed that Cllr Coleman was not attending. A discussion took place on the decision made by the planning committee. Cllr Coleman stated that she felt it was going to turn into a "slanging match" and that was why she did not go, Cllr Long advised that he had never heard of any such behaviour at a planning committee meeting and felt this was extremely unlikely, especially because of the format which gave 3 minutes to each person to put forward their case. Cllr Long said he would make an unofficial comment about the planning committee meeting, as there were no members of the public present at this stage of the PC meeting. Cllr Coleman advised that he was not allowed to make unofficial comments in a public meeting. Cllr Long replied that under the current regulations he was permitted to make an unofficial comment. Cllr Coleman said that she would report anything he said unofficially on Facebook. Cllr Long replied that this was out of order and that he could report her to the Monitoring Officer for this comment.

That Cllr Coleman should be excluded from the rest of the meeting due to her unacceptable behaviour.

Prop: Cllr Askew

2nd: Cllr Gathercole

Agreed.

Cllr Coleman left the room at this point.

16. Public Speaking

No members of the public were present at this point.

17. Councillors Concerns and Agenda Items for the Next Meeting

Items to remain on agenda as already agreed.

18. Date of Next Parish Council Meeting

Monday 7th January 2019 at 7.00pm for a Playing Field Management Partnership Meeting followed by an Ordinary Parish Council meeting at 7.30pm; all meetings at Marshland Hall.

Cllrs Askew and Boyce to check accounts before the January and February meetings.

Meeting closed at 9.30pm.