MARSHLAND ST JAMES PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 7th January 2019

Present

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

Five members of the public

Clerk – S Thorpe

1. Apologies for Absence

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

2. Confirm Minutes of Meetings Held on 10th December 2018

Having been circulated before the meeting the minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record by all present at the meetings.

3. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Gathercole declared an interest in item 7.

4. Public Speaking

Resolved that meeting be adjourned for public speaking,
Prop: Cllr Long 2nd: Cllr Norman

Cllr Norman Agreed.

Meeting re-started.

5. Matters Arising

None as all matters arising to be dealt with under other items.

6. Correspondence

Circulated prior to meeting: Police – parish newsletters, rural crime newsletters, scam alerts; NALC – newsletters; NCC – temporary road closure on Blunts Drove from 8th-10th January, West Norfolk Early Help Bulletin and Service Directory; BC – new property address of Orchard View, Dades Lane; Norfolk Local Access Forum – call for new members; NPT&S – Training update; Ward Gethin Archer – info on services; Alive Places – January update.

Clerks & Councils Direct January Newsletter was brought to the meeting but Councillors did not wish to circulate it.

7. Issues from the Playing Field Management Partnership (PFMP) meeting.

<u>Condition of football pitches</u> – the PFMP had discussed the issue and agreed that the Clerk should send a letter to Marshland Saints FC asking for them to rotate use of some areas for training and matches for the junior teams.

<u>Flooding in the PC car park</u> – the PFMP had agreed that the work was required to solve the problem of surface water flooding, which was still collecting between the two car parks. As the PC had agreed at the last meeting that this work should go ahead if required there was no need for a decision on this item by the PC.

8. Highways issues

The third village gateway had been installed. It was noted that it was very narrow but Highways had advised that they had cut it to the maximum size to fit the verge. The developer constructing the Walton Fields site had advised that the sign post on the corner of Smeeth Road with Walton Road had been removed under the instruction of NCC Highways department. They had retained the sign and were awaiting instruction on relocation. Highways had advised that the sign post had been removed as part of the agreed planning consent and a new one would be installed but how and where had

not yet been agreed. The PC agreed that Highways should be asked to reinstall the original sign rather than a new one and that the developer should be asked to store the sign in a more secure location to ensure it was not stolen.

New issues to report:

Smeeth Road/Trinity Road junction – street name sign (SNS) for "Smeeth Road" (next to No 133) needed replacing.

School Road/Moyses Bank junction – SNS for "Moyses Bank" needs replacing. Smeeth Road/Rustons Road junction – SNS for "Rustons Road" has been hit and damaged.

Hope Lane (from corner with Bonnetts Lane up to Marshland Arms) – pot holes. Smeeth Road (former site of Jubilee Hall) – street lantern needs repositioning. School Road/Middle Drove junction (towards Neeps Bridge up to Fir Tree Farm and beyond Podyke Bank to junction with Outwell Road) – pot holes.

Trinity Road (from Trinity Hall Farm to Hall Road junction) – pot holes.

Action: Clerk to report new issues.

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9. Consultation on the Terrington St John Neighbourhood Plan

The Draft Neighbourhood Plan had been circulated to all members prior to the meeting. It was agreed a response would be sent to say that the PC had no comments to make.

10. Review of Parish Council policies and documentation

The following draft documents had been circulated to all prior to the meeting: Revised Standing Orders; Financial Regulations; Financial Risk Assessment; Equal Opportunities Policy; FOI Model Publication Scheme and Information available; and a Child Safeguarding Policy Statement. The review of the documents was discussed.

To adopt all of the above as per drafts circulated.

Prop: Cllr Long 2nd: Cllr Askew Agreed.

11. Finance

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a. Accept accounts to 31st December 2018.

Prop: Cllr Boyce 2nd: Cllr Askew Agreed.

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

Miss S J Thorpe – Clerk's expenses, arrears, subs Nov-Jan £85.45
Play Inspection Co Ltd – Annual Inspection of Play Equipment £114.00

Agree to sign cheques and approve payments.

Prop: Cllr Boyce 2nd: Cllr Gathercole Agreed.

Budget and Precept for 2019/20 – a final budget and explanation notes had been given out to all Councillors prior to the meeting. Some amendments had been made to the budget since the last meeting. Cllr Coleman asked a couple of questions about the figures. Cllr Coleman advised that she wanted to make a proposal that the £350 allowed to make a donation to the St James Church should be removed as the local Church was in Emneth and the PC didn't make a donation to them, and as the PC no longer met at the Church, it should not be making a donation to them. The Clerk advised that she had included this amount in the budget as the St James Church was a community building which was used by some clubs; the PC had previously made a donation to the Jubilee Hall when it had not held its meeting there, and some Councillors had expressed the wish to continue supporting the Church in its capacity as a community asset, in the way it had the Jubilee Hall in the past. Cllr Long felt that as this was only a small amount of the total budget it could be considered at a later date and it was not necessary to remove it at this stage.

That the £350 allowed in the budget as a donation to the St James Church should not be included in the budget.

Prop: Cllr Coleman No seconder was found so no voting occurred. Cllr Askew advised that she felt the Precept needed to be increased and suggested that the PC should consider an increase of 50%. Cllr Long advised that he would not be able to support an increase of this size and that the maximum increase should be 10%; he would resign as a Parish Councillor if the PC made a decision to increase the Precept by a large amount, as he felt this was not necessary and the reserves could be built back up slowly over the next few years. Cllr Coleman advised that she would not be supporting any increase in the Precept as the current situation was a result of the PC overspending, and that she wanted to request a recorded vote on any decision. Cllr Wilkinson asked that it be recorded in the minutes that the PC had not overspent, as this term was incorrect and misleading; the correct explanation was that the PC had spent more in the year than it had budgeted to spend. A discussion took place on what Councillors felt was a reasonable increase and several Councillors expressed the view that they believed a 20% increase was the most appropriate as this would allow some increase to the reserves but also allow the PC to continue to make improvements within the village and carry out any necessary maintenance. Cllr Long restated that he believed an increase of 10% was he maximum the PC should consider and that the BC would not be allowed to make an increase of anything like this amount. The Clerk advised that an increase of 10% would only add £555 to the reserves based on the budget, which had been set at a basic amount and did not allow for any improvements, any money towards a new skate ramp or refurbishment of the MUGA. Cllr Long advised this was true but only if the budget was accurate and that maybe some savings could be found within the figures shown.

To set the Precept at a 20% increase to the band D taxbase.	
Prop: Cllr Gathercole 2 nd : Cllr Norman	Agreed.
Voting in favour: Cllr Askew, Gathercole, Norman, Thorpe and Wilkinson.	
Voting against: Cllr Boyce, Coleman and Long	

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Cllr Long left the meeting at this point advising that he was unable to remain following this decision and would be submitting his resignation as a Parish Councillor.

12. Planning Matters

- a. <u>Applications received since last meeting:</u> None
- b. Planning decisions from the BC. The following applications had been permitted:
- 18/01843/F Removal of current polebarn and replacement with American Barn at Fen-Acres, Gooses Lane.
- 18/01406/RM Reserved matter for construction of 6 dwellings at 195 Smeeth Rd.
 18/01688/F Construction of an agricultural building at The Limes, 226 Smeeth Rd.
- iv 18/01905/F Two storey extension to rear at Pedar Meadow House, Moyses Bank.
- v 18/02089/F Single storey extension to rear at 86 Smeeth Road.
 - Appointment of PC Representatives to attend BC Planning Committee. The Clerk read out the resignation email which had been received from Cllr Coleman. It advised that she was resigning as the planning rep for the PC. It stated that it was the previous PC meeting which she had been unable to attend due to illness, and not the planning committee meeting; she apologised for muddling the two meetings up. Cllr Coleman felt that the Chairman had questioned her integrity regarding her ability to represent the views of the PC because she had voted to support the application. She had told the Clerk in conversation that she had difficulty in reconciling her views with the PC on the matter, which was compounded when she read the applicant's letter about a private conversation he had with the Chairman, and when the Clerk suggested the Chairman write a statement to be read out at the planning committee meeting she agreed, as the Chairman's recollection of what had been said was different to that of the applicant. The Clerk had advised her that the response would be emailed if she did not attend, which she had thought was a good idea as it was not her statement and she did not particularly want to go. Cllr Coleman explained that she had been the planning rep for nearly 5 years and had always represented the PC views, attending numerous planning meetings, seminars and workshops. She had never claimed expenses and had always reported to the PC on the events she had attended on their behalf. As her integrity had been questioned in an open PC meeting, she had felt the only option was for her to resign. The Clerk advised that she had not informed Cllr Coleman that the Chairman was writing the statement as it had been written by the Clerk and checked by the Chairman. Cllr Askew stressed that she had stated at the last PC meeting that the issue was that the PC rep should not make a decision not to attend without consulting with the Council.

A discussion took place on the way forward with PC representation at planning committee meetings and the following proposal was made:

That the PC should send a statement in future, unless it was considered that the application necessitated a rep attending, and in these cases a decision would be made when the PC consultation response was agreed; the Chairman would then attend the planning committee meeting or delegate the role to another Councillor if necessary.

Prop: Cllr Thorpe 2nd: Cllr Gathercole Agreed by a majority.

13. Public Speaking

Resolved that meeting be adjourned for public speaking, Prop: Cllr Askew 2nd: Cllr Gathercole

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Meeting re-started.

14. Councillors Concerns and Agenda Items for the Next Meeting

Items to remain on agenda as already agreed. Cllr Coleman advised the Clerk that she had just noticed that the PC website was showing the incorrect date of 9th January for this meeting instead of 7th January. The Clerk apologised for the error.

15. Date of Next Parish Council Meeting

Monday 11th February 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 February meeting.

Meeting closed at 8.17pm.

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