



# **Minutes of the meeting of Hoveton Parish Council Monday 2nd October 2023 at 18:45. Meeting held in the Jubilee Room at Hoveton Village Hall.**

## **1 ATTENDANCE**

Present: Cllrs Russell Reeve (Chair), Peter Howe, Alex Howe, Rob Henson, Barry Edwards, and Kerry Walker.

Apologies from Cllr James Nash.

In attendance: Ben Bethell (Parish Clerk), Cllr Nigel Dixon, Cllr Gerard Mancini-Boyle six members of the public.

## **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

## **3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING**

The minutes of the meeting on September 4<sup>th</sup> were AGREED.

## **4 PUBLIC FORUM**

- 4.1 Cllr Dixon started by talking about the County Deal – the proposal to devolve responsibility to Norfolk County Council. In principle agreement had been given last year but reservations about the way the deal was structured remained. Changes to the way that the Council Leader was to be elected and some elements of the finances gave cause for concern. The new Leader of Norfolk County Council wants changes to both points and further work is being done, with a decision expected late this year.
- No update was available in respect of Brooke Park, but the fly-tipped waste has been removed.
- It was noted that bin emptying remains an issue with some residents on Littlewood Lane (and possibly elsewhere) still having issues.
- A question was raised about the possibility of creating a Changing Space. Cllr Dixon agreed to see if NNDC had any information about how this could be achieved.

The Waterside Rooms remains a problem. This is on the agenda (item 6.6) and Cllr Dixon will continue to be involved. Cllr Dixon noted that the move towards compulsory purchase is not easy and that the process is not a quick one.

- 4.2 Cllr Mancini-Boyle began by noting that the Enforcement Team at NNDC appear to be on top of things.

A workshop has been held at NNDC to progress plans to move the Council to a net-zero position by 2045. Whilst it's currently aspirational, the discussions are reassuring.

A peer review has recently been undertaken of NNDC. The report from this has not yet been concluded, but any output is welcomed and will allow efficiencies and improvements to be made.

The new Planning Director is in post. Customer service is being prioritised and 95% of planning decisions are being concluded within 28 days. The appeals timeline now needs to be reduced. It was also suggested that moving the threshold for a solar panel application from 40kw to 120kw would improve the situation and that Cllr Mancini-Boyle hoped that this could be achieved.

- 4.3 No update.

- 4.4 No questions or comments from the public.

## **5 PLANNING**

- 5.1 PF/23/1983 – Demolition of existing bungalow and erection of replacement dwelling - 8 Three Acre Close, Hoveton, Norwich, Norfolk, NR12 8QL

The Council has NO OBJECTION to this application.

- 5.2 PF/23/1945 - Single storey rear extension - 148 Stalham Road, Hoveton, Norwich, Norfolk, NR12 8EE

The Council has NO OBJECTION to this application.

## **6 ADMINISTRATION**

- 6.1 The Clerk read his report. It was noted that the Parish Warden's involvement is helping the Council to understand what is happening around the village day to day and that his involvement is making a positive impact. The Village Hall continues to progress under its new stewardship and getting to grips with the more difficult issues is welcomed. The Council still has elements which need further investigation including streetlamps (particularly liabilities in the longer-term). The recent ideas workshop had been a success and the output has been brought to this meeting. The Council Digests have become more consistent again owing to the settling of workload. The VAT return is complete and funds have been received. Lastly, the Clerk confirmed that the Council's external audit had been completed with no problems noted.

- 6.2 There were no questions for the Clerk. The Clerk was thanked for ensuring a satisfactory external audit outcome.

- 6.3 The Warden's report was read out. His workload is settling with his regular hours at the village hall now clearer. Litter picking and village presentation remains a priority. Several reports have been sent to Council mainly about issues in the parks and highway problems. Also, the ramp report (item 6.4) was initiated by the Warden.  
A point was raised in respect of the Broads Authority's reaction to an issue noted in Riverside Park. The Clerk will speak to the Warden and the BA to find middle ground.
- 6.4 The report on the ramp by The Old Mill was noted and the Council discussed the matter. The ramp was repaired by the Council several years back but is not technically something over which they have responsibility. However, the thoroughfare would be lost if the ramp were to be condemned and it was felt that this was unacceptable.  
The ramp is showing signs of degradation but was not felt to be unsafe at this stage. The Parish Warden would be asked to monitor the situation and alert the Council to any further issue. It was AGREED that up to £200 could be spent by the Clerk on temporary repairs if/when needed, allowing time for the matter to be brought to a meeting and discussed again.
- 6.5 Cllr Reeve noted that the solicitor acting for the Council on the adverse possession of Pocket Park had suggested a compromise with a local landowner. One boundary of the park is unclear, and a large willow tree is causing the landowner concern. It was AGREED that the Council would be happy to allow the boundary to be drawn as the landowner asserts, with the willow tree being outside the park. The solicitor has suggested that the first step is to secure the adverse possession, and the boundary could be defined afterwards.
- 6.6 The Waterside Rooms remain a concern. Wroxham Parish Council has recently written to the Broads Authority to complain and ask that something is done to finally remedy the situation. Cllr Howe reported that a favourable (but non-committal) response had been received. It was AGREED that the Council also wanted to continue to push the Broads Authority and that Cllr Dixon would be engaged to support. Cllr Dixon noted that he had recently raised the issue in NNDC's Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting and was pushing for action too.  
If compulsory purchase is to be pursued, it would be necessary to have a described and resourced outcome before any action could be taken. Cllr Dixon was asked to provide any information he has about the process.  
It was AGREED that the Clerk would write an article for The New Bridge.
- 6.7 The use of the Council's website and Facebook was discussed. It was noted that it is difficult to determine exactly what should/shouldn't be posted on each forum, but it was AGREED that the website should be a place for the public to refer to for anything Council related and that it could be improved in this regard. It was AGREED that Facebook should be used for updates which have time considerations, like meeting notices, agendas, and working parties.
- 6.8 A discussion took place about how best to report highways issues and keep Councillors informed, especially now that the Parish Warden is finding areas of concern. It was AGREED that all issues should be emailed to Norfolk County Council copying the Clerk for information.  
Cllr Edwards presented the SAM2 data. The unit has been on Stalham Road and the speeds were generally acceptable. As always, there were some problems, with the main concern being repeated speeding traffic in the early hours.  
It was AGREED that the data and observations would be sent to the Police for their action.

## **7 2024/2025**

- 7.1 The Clerk showed his initial budget for 2024 which showed that the current levels of services could be maintained with a moderate increase in the precept. Further work and thought would be needed and the budget will see further discussion in the November and December meetings.
- 7.2 The Clerk presented a slightly changed reserves policy. The changes were to allow the Council to hold more in General Reserves, and to tie-up a new Earmarked Reserves sheet in the annual accounts spreadsheet. The intention is to begin planning for renewals at an earlier stage which will allow the Council to earmark money each year and save towards known items. These changes were AGREED.
- 7.3 The Clerk showed the Jamboard output from the recent ideas workshop. Councillors had considered a wide variety of potential projects. The meeting was noted as being very successful and would help begin a process of prioritisation.
- 7.4 It was agreed that projects should be considered against cost and benefit, allowing the Council to 'rank' projects and understand priorities. It was AGREED that the Clerk would circulate a list of the projects and that Councillors and Clerk would look to put some rough figures against those projects they felt were most immediate/important/impactful. It was also noted that the environmental impact should be considered where possible. The list will be reviewed at the next meeting.

## **8 STAFFING**

- 8.1 The Staffing Committee members were AGREED as Cllr Reeve, Cllr Henson, Cllr Alex Howe and Cllr Edwards.
- 8.2 It was AGREED that the Clerk's laptop should be passed to the Parish Warden and that a new laptop should be purchased to replace it. The cost would be £450 and the order would be checked by Cllr Edwards before being placed.

## **9 FINANCE**

- 9.1 The Schedule of Payments (attached) was AGREED.

## **10 ITEMS FOR THE NEW BRIDGE AND FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

- 10.1 It was agreed that the next New Bridge article should focus on Waterside Rooms but include a note on Japanese Knot Weed, and mention the Council's projects/priorities/budget.

Signed.....

Date.....

Name.....

Ben Bethell, Parish Clerk & RFO

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**Schedule of Payments**

Date	Item	Regular?	Minute Book	Value
12/09/2023	BROADLAND COMPUTERS		2023020	£25.00
19/09/2023	NPOWER	REGULAR	2022082	£92.66
29/09/2023	HORNING PC ALLOTMENTS		2023020	£140.00
29/09/2023	P HOWE - MATERIALS FOR BENCH RESTORATION		2023020	£70.04
29/09/2023	CIM SIGNS - FEATHER FLAG		2023020	£142.80
30/09/2023	SEPTEMBER PAY, HMRC, AND PENSION	REGULAR	2022082	£2,888.82

To Note

INCOME - VAT RETURN	£5,592.32
INCOME - PRECEPT 2ND PAYMENT	£31,573.67
B BETHELL - MOBILE PHONE - MAY TO SEP.	£67.50

To Approve

GARDEN GUARDIAN - JUNE, JULY, AUGUST	£1,788.30
B BETHELL - MILEAGE	£67.05
PKF	£378.00
P HOWE - FENCE PAINTING MATERIALS	£48.93
P HOWE - PLANTS	£198.19
NNDC BINS	£4,086.12
CHRIS PHILLIPO - RIVERSIDE & POCKET PARK	£590.00