

MINUTES OF WEST DEREHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD AT WEST DEREHAM VILLAGE HALL at 7.30 pm

THURSDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2013

PRESENT (5 Councillors):- Mrs Pam Bullas (PB), Mrs Claire Cann (CC) – Chairman, Mrs Lorraine Hunt (LH), Ms Paula Kellingray (PK), Mrs Claire Page

Recorder: Nick Cann (NC) (present to record the meeting and to assist PK with IT finance)

7 members of the public were in attendance

Papers presented to Councillors: Financial Management Report (cash flow spread sheet and notes to the accounts), expenditure (for approval), Glazewing Report, Summary of NCC 'Putting People First' document, printout of Status of Parish and Town Council Precepts (Referendums) Bill 2012-13, letter from Elizabeth Truss MP on funding for community projects.

Immediately prior to the meeting the 3-year contract for the farm business tenancy was signed.

The Chairman welcomed everyone present and opened the meeting.

1. **Apologies for Absence.** Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Tom Foy (examination) and Pam Walker (birthday surprise).

2. **Declarations of Interest.** There were no declarations of interest from Councillors relating to any item on the agenda.

3. **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 3 October 2013.** The Chairman confirmed that all Councillors had seen the minutes of the last meeting of the Parish Council held 3 October 2013. These were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

4. **Reports.**
 - 4.1 **Chairman's Report.** In the absence of a Clerk the Chairman combined her report with the Clerk's report at item 4.2 on the agenda.
 - 4.1.1 **Willow Lane Closures.** There was no further movement on this issue. The Chairman said she had drafted further letters to Norfolk County Council (NCC) and one of the local landowners involved.
 - 4.1.2 **Bath Road Drainage.** Some pipe works had occurred at Hill House Farm but this was unrelated to the drainage problem on Bath Road. Another drainage problem had now been reported in the Village on Hilgay Road and the Chairman said she would speak again to Highways.
 - 4.1.3 **Flu Vaccine.** A campaign was being promoted in support of flu vaccinations. It was agreed that details would be provided for villagers in the next leaflet drop and would also be placed in notice boards. The Chairman reported combination locks on these boards as being inoperative. PK agreed to initiate a check.
 - 4.1.4 **Café Cluster.** The next Café Cluster meeting was to be held in Swaffham Community Centre on Tuesday 19 November from 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm. It would involve a judge for "Anglia in Bloom" and the

Highways Department would be present to answer questions about this year's Parish Partnership Scheme. The Chairman said she would email Councillors in order to arrange attendance.

4.2 **Clerk's Report.** The Parish Clerk's report was included at Item 4.1.

4.3 **Police report.** PCSO Jane Edwards had apologised for her non-attendance at the meeting and PK reported on her behalf. No crimes had been reported in the area. There had been two anti-social behaviour telephone calls made to Police and one reported missing person, which had been quickly resolved. Dog owners who allowed their dogs to foul footpaths could now be ticketed and were subject to a £75.00 fine. The PC had been warned that it was now the 'rave season' and bookings for the Village Hall should be carefully scrutinised. Police warned of a 'rave' being organised somewhere in Norfolk on Saturday 16 November but the venue was unknown. PK reported there was no party booked in the hall on this date.

4.4 **Village Hall Report.** PK reported that a regular booking for the hall had been received from an Ante-Natal Group. The first booking was in December and this would continue into 2014 for 6 months. One party had been booked in November, two in December and another in February. Also in November there would be a Remembrance Day lunch (10th), a fish and chip supper (27th) and Christmas Bingo (30th). The Village Hall bar continued to flourish.

4.5 **Glazewing report.** Glazewing had sent their November report by e-mail covering the period from 26 September to date. One complaint had been received relating to a speeding car possibly belonging to an employee. In order to report such incidents to the Police, a vehicle registration number must be provided for action to be taken. No planning applications had been submitted during this period.

4.6 **Broadband Report.** Better Broadband for Norfolk's Information Sheet No 14 reported the latest tranche of villages which did not include West Dereham and nor were we included in those areas to be connected in the first few months of 2014. Karen O'Kane (KoK), NCC/ BT, had implied at meetings with the Parish Council that West Dereham would be early receivers. A member of public from the floor reported that BT had a new scheme whereby BT Infinity could be applied for from the Village after 30 November if running a business. This had speeds of up to 20 Mb. Such information needed clarification since it may refer only to existing business subscribers. The Chairman said mixed messages were being received and KoK must be contacted to obtain a definitive answer.

5. **Finance.**

5.1 **Accounts.** Accounts for approval were submitted by PK and NC. NC provided Councillors with the monthly financial management report. At 31 October the half-year point had been reached. He reported that cash flow was operating well and the Council was solvent. Savings were being made since there were no outgoings for a Parish Clerk's salary. Advertising costs for a new Clerk were being met through the 'Clerk's Expenses' cost centre. Invoices for approval were:

Payee	Net	VAT	IRS (PO)	NICs	Gross
CGM (grass cutting Sep)	89.92	17.98			107.90
CGM (grass cutting Oct)	90.00	18.00			108.00
Society of Local Council Clerks	120.00	24.00			144.00
Maxey Grounds & Co	300.00	60.00			360.00
NALC photocopying	32.80				32.80
Royal British Legion (wreath)	18.50				18.50
PC web site – 10 yrs purchase	82.71				82.71
Village Hall hire	127.50				127.50
CGM grass cutting Village Hall	37.00	7.40			44.40
CGM grass cutting Village Hall	37.00	7.40			44.40
CGM herbicides in Village	26.50	5.30			31.80
Taylor's Bulbs for cemetery	73.00	14.60			87.60
Total	1034.93	154.68			1189.61

All the above payments were considered and approved. NC advised of the cost centres used for the various items of expenditure. There was no cost centre for 'professional services' and the consultation costs of Maxey Grounds & Co for redrafting the Farm Business Tenancy had been accounted for under 'administration'. He recommended inclusion of a separate budget heading to cover consultancy costs in the budget for 2014-15. CGM costs for additional work carried out in the Village, herbicides and the purchase of bulbs for planting in the cemetery extension had been placed within the 'Parish Improvements' cost centre, even though no funding had been allocated here. He recommended that, since elections were not due until 7 May 2015 when £1,000 would be required, £250 should now be vired out of this cost centre (which held £1,000) into 'Parish Improvements' in order to meet the expenditure. Councillors approved this virement action.

5.2 Precept. The Chairman said it was already known historically what the Parish Council "must have" in its precept but additional items could be added to improve the village. A "wish list" was therefore drawn up each year. She invited first Councillors and then those members of the public present to add their views. There were no additional items recorded for inclusion in the precept. However one member of the public asked for

the precept not to be increased. The Chairman advised of a Private Members Bill in existence in 2012-13 aimed at capping Parish and Town Council precepts. If any increase of more than 2% was being sought then a referendum should be held. She pointed out that the current year had seen a decrease in real terms of the funding available. This Parish Council held Quality Parish Status and employed a professional Parish Clerk to ensure that business was dealt with efficiently. The Clerk's salary was an important outlay which could not be interfered with. If the West Dereham Parish Council precept was capped at 2% per annum it would not be able to keep up with rising costs (inflation), would not be able to meet its responsibilities and must then cut services. The aim was to make our Village an attractive place in which to live. By way of example the Chairman indicated the work being put into the cemetery where 1,200 bulbs had been planted by Councillors themselves. She gave further examples relating to hedge and footpath cutting, dog waste bins, etc. She said she could not vote in favour of not increasing the precept but agreed that a balance was necessary. She said research would be conducted and the Borough Council approached to discover exactly how any proposed increase would affect each household. Councillors would give the matter their careful consideration but without investment current standards could no longer be maintained and no improvements could be planned. The precept would, in normal circumstances, be set at the December meeting but, due to the promise now given concerning identification of the impact of any increase, this might have to be delayed. The Parish Council had until February 2014 to make its decision.

6. **Village Handyman**. The Chairman said there had been one application received for the position of Village Handyman. Councillors had been advised previously of this application and now agreed that the application should be approved. There would be a 6 months probationary period in the contract which would last for one year. The aim was to issue the employment contract as soon as possible.

7. **Norfolk County Council (NCC) Document 'Putting People First'**. LH declared an interest in this item of business being a Local Authority employee. The Chairman said NCC's consultation document – 'Putting People First' – was aimed at making savings of £189 m over the next 3 years. The three main priorities were education, jobs and infrastructure. She outlined NCC's approach which included selling expert or professional services and selling unneeded assets. She said there were no plans to increase NCC's share of Council Tax. Services for children and vulnerable adults would have a smaller percentage budget reduction. Details were given of the percentage decreases to a several Departments, the largest being a 26% reduction to Resources. NCC was seeking comments by 12 December. A full Council meeting would discuss proposals at the end of January 2014 and the budget announcement would be made 17 February 2014. The Chairman said she would provide a précis for the monthly booklet drop to all households.

8. **West Dereham Branch Royal British Legion (WDBRBL)**. The Chairman advised Councillors of the re-establishment of the WDBRBL. Originally West Dereham was a sub-Branch of Downham & District but the sub-Branch had ceased to function many years ago. Now, due to popular interest, it had become a Branch in its own right and the inaugural meeting had been held 2 November. It was proposed that, similar to the Village Hall, the WDBRBL be allocated a page on the Parish Council's website. This was agreed by the Parish Council.

9. **NALC Autumn Seminar, 6 November 2013**. NALC had held its Autumn Seminar on Wednesday 6 November for Parish Councils (PCs) and this had been attended by PB. PB gave details:

- Partnerships could be arranged for certain ventures if 50% match funding could be found.
- Vehicle activated speed signs in villages were available
- Training for employees was a consideration
- “Trods” (footpaths) was a topic – this related to making new footpaths in parishes
- LEDs to replace bulbs in street lights – but no more funding was available for this
- PCs should ensure their policies were reflected in their Standing Orders
- PCs were responsible for War Memorials and it was recommended that digital photographs be taken and stored in case of vandalism. (In West Dereham the War Memorial is in the Churchyard and cared for by the Parochial Church Council)
- In discussion all PCs had agreed on the need to increase precepts by considerable amounts since existing budgets could not meet requirements and capping would prevent planning and improvements.
- NALC was seeking a venue other than Sandringham in which to hold its autumn seminar. (Our Village Hall was a possibility)

10. **Planning Matters: Application 13/01459/F – College Farm, Basil Road.** The Chairman said this planning application related to the conversion and extension of a barn to form a residential annex at College Farm, Basil Road. It was pointed out that drawings did not indicate parking or garden areas. Councillors carefully considered the plans which were supported by all present.

The Chairman said at the last meeting concerns had been raised relating to a large wooden structure erected in the garden of a property on Hilgay Road, beside the allotments. The Planning Department at BCKLWN had confirmed that a temporary structure should be no more than 2.5 m in height and should not be erected within 2 m of its boundary. Additionally a garden shed or summer house should have a footprint less than 15 m² and should not be on a raised platform or contain a balcony or veranda.

11. **Correspondence.**

11.1 **Elizabeth Truss MP.** A copy of an undated letter from Elizabeth Truss MP concerning funding for community projects had been provided for each Councillor. The Chairman asked all Councillors to consider its contents and report back by email.

12. **Further Reports and Items for Inclusion on Future Agenda.**

12.1 **Allotment Gates.** Replacement allotment gates should be placed on the agenda.

12.2 **Walking Pathways.** A date was still required when Councillors would walk the footpaths of the Parish.

12.3 **Risk Assessment at Parish Cemetery.** A risk assessment was required for the Parish cemetery.

12.4 **Highway Rangers.** No requests had been received within the Village for specific work for the Rangers.

12.5 **New Parish Clerk.** Since no additional applications had been received from any of the advertisements placed on the official web sites advised, it was agreed that invitations for interview should now be issued to a short list of 3 or 4 obtained from the original 9 applications received. The contract for the Parish Clerk should be reviewed and this should include appraisal details.

12.6 West Dereham Branch Royal British Legion (WDBRBL). PK reported on the inaugural meeting of the WDBRBL held on 2 November. Mr Peter Starling of Pear Tree Farm had been elected Chairman, NC had been elected Secretary and PK had been elected Treasurer. Further details would be circulated in due course. Copies of the minutes of the 2 November meeting were available from the Branch Secretary on request.

12.7 Bulb Planting. All volunteer Councillors who had helped with bulb planting in the cemetery were thanked for their time and efforts.

The official meeting concluded at 8.52 pm and was opened to the floor for general comment.

13. **Open Forum**.

13.1 The subject of the lime pits on Lime Kiln Road and the derelict building there was discussed. It was a site of historical interest to the Village being an integral part of the Village's heritage. Fly tipping had always been a problem but this was considered better than becoming a landfill site. The Borough Council's record of interest in such matters was negligible and it was perhaps worthy of an attempt to try to obtain a preservation order for it. This matter was recommended to the PC for its further consideration.

Closure. The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and called final closure at 9.00 pm precisely.

Chairman's signature

Date