

MINUTES OF WEST DEREHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT WEST DEREHAM VILLAGE HALL at 7.00 pm
THURSDAY 5 SEPTEMBER 2013

PRESENT (7 Councillors):- Mrs Pam Bullas (PB), Mrs Claire Cann (CC) – Chairman, Mr Tom Foy (TF), Ms Paula Kellingray (PK), Mrs Claire Page (CP), Mrs Pam Walker (PW) and, following Item 2, Mrs Lorraine Hunt (LH) Recorder: Nick Cann (NC), present to record the meeting, was also assisting with the IT financial book-keeping. 9 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), Clerk's final timesheet, Glazewing Report.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Mandy Maguire (MM), the Parish Clerk, had resigned her appointment in August (see below at Item 5).

1. **Apologies for Absence.** There were no apologies for absence.
2. **Councillor Vacancy.** Mr Mark Dawson had resigned as a Councillor in January due to pressures of work. The Borough Council had been notified and the vacancy advertised in the Village. The deadline for requests to hold an election was concluded on 2 August. There had been no requests received and this was the first Council meeting since the date expired. The Parish Council was now entitled to co-opt a Councillor. There had been 2 expressions of interest and written applications had been submitted by both candidates. A secret ballot was then conducted. After the count, the Chairman announced that Mrs Lorraine Hunt (LH) had received an absolute majority from votes cast and was now duly co-opted as a Councillor. LH was invited to join the Council and was given a Declaration of Acceptance to sign (taken from the Statutory Instrument of Governance for Local Councils).
3. **Declarations of Interest.** There were no declarations of interest from Councillors for any item on the agenda.
4. **Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 1 August 2013.** The Chairman confirmed that all Councillors had seen the minutes of the last meeting of the Parish Council held 1 August 2013. These were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman. There was one matter arising. PW referred to item 5.5 of the minutes since the Clerk had been asked to update the website with information on Broadband provision. The Chairman said there had been no mention of this task having been completed by the outgoing Clerk prior to her departure. Action would occur now in the fullness of time. (See also Item 14.3 of these minutes.)
5. **Reports.**
 - 5.1 **Chairman's Report.** Due to the absence of a Clerk the Chairman said she was combining her report with the Clerk's report. MM had resigned her appointment, effective from 15 August. Advertisements for a new Clerk had been placed on the NALC website and in the Lynn News. To date there had been 3 responses and these had been circulated amongst Councillors. All Councillors were working jointly to manage business during the interregnum. NC had volunteered his services to minute meetings and to assist PK with the electronic book-keeping. E-mails sent to clerk@westderehamcouncil.com were still being monitored. In sum, it was business as usual.
 - 5.1.1 **Willow Lane.** The Parish Council had written to Norfolk County Council regarding the stopping of vehicular access on Willow Lane and the re-instatement of an ancient footpath. A reply had been received and this would be copied to the resident affected. The matter would now be discussed further before responding to NCC. The Chairman thanked the resident for pointing out that gate security was an issue mentioned by Norfolk Police in the recent mail drop.
 - 5.1.2 **White Gate Speed Signs.** Fincham's Parish Clerk had been approached for information concerning the 'white gate' type of speed limit signs used in Fincham. Such signs were funded by Parish Councils. There had been a response received from Fincham and this would be considered next month.

5.1.3 **Bath Road Drainage.** Martin Edmunds (Highways) had visited to investigate the cause of water damage in Bath Road but there had been no water present at the time. There had been no follow-up visit yet by either Andy Wallace (Highways) or Martin Edmunds.

5.1.4 **Village Handyman.** The Parish Council was now seeking a replacement Handyman and notification of this would be in the next Village drop.

5.1.5 **Cemetery Extension Planting.** The Chairman asked Councillors to view the cemetery extension and to form a view on exactly what had been planted there. A discussion would then take place.

5.1.6 **Data Registration Fees.** NALC was seeking to remove the burden of Data Registration Fees, possibly forever, since this was viewed as a tax on Community Leadership. The Chairman would talk to NALC concerning this and, in the meantime, PK was asked to withhold the cheque payment for these fees.

5.2 **Clerk's Report.** The Parish Clerk's report was included at Item 5.1.

5.3 **Police report.** The PCSO had apologised for her non-attendance at the meeting and PK reported on her behalf. There had been 5 calls to the police from the Village in the last month: two calls reported suspicious circumstances, one related to anti-social behaviour, there was one call concerning criminal damage and one 'abandoned' call dialing 999 from Church Road. No crimes were reported although the theft of two bicycles from a shed in Hilgay Road was under investigation. The PCSO advised everyone with sheds and garages to keep them locked at all times. PK said the PCSO (Jane Edwards) had battery operated 'shed alarms' which she was able to sell to residents at a cost of £10.75 each. She often attended meetings in the Village Hall and sometimes had samples with her; alternatively she was always willing to take orders. Alarms were also available from the Police Station in Downham Market. A leaflet concerning this would be in the next village drop. PK said that one of the calls to the police reporting suspicious circumstances related to cars congregating in front of the barn at the North end of The Row. She believed this to be a younger resident living in The Row meeting up with friends.

5.4 **Village Hall Report.** PK reported that, now the summer was over, bookings for the hall were on the increase. The repairs to the compound at the front of the Village Hall had nearly been completed. The Village Hall bar continued to be very successful and carpet bowls was proving popular. A table tennis table would be a welcome addition very soon.

5.5 **Glazewing report.** Glazewing had sent a report by e-mail covering the period 18 July to date. No complaints had been received from Village residents in this period and no further planning applications had been submitted. Glazewing had thanked the Parish Council for forwarding last month's report and had noted that the website had been updated. They would obtain future copies of reports from the website.

6. **Accounts.** Accounts for approval were submitted by PK and NC. NC provided Councillors with a 'new-look' copy of the budget on a single page of A4 in landscape format. This was a monthly financial management report indicating cash flow, percentage spend year to date and indicating the predicted circumstances at the end of year. NC pointed out that a budget estimate in September for a receipt from HMRC (VAT rebate) for £434.84 had now slipped into October. A close watch must be kept on this item. Expenditure after 5 months of the year (31 August) should be running at 41.7% although some cost centres were front-loaded in that the total expenditure for the year occurred at the start of the year rather than being spread throughout the year. The accounts showed expenditure to date running at 48.2% and this was no cause for alarm. There were some obvious savings being made currently relating to non payment of a Clerk's salary and there being no Village Handyman to pay. PK said she had banked the sum of £8.90 for an insurance refund. A new bank mandate had been sent to Barclays containing authorised signatories for the account and a change of address form for bank statements had also been sent to Barclays.

Payee	Net	VAT	IRS (PO)	NICs	Gross
staff salary (1-15 Aug)	179.42		44.86		224.28
staff salary adjustment re holiday pay	-37.38		-9.35		-46.73
staff salary retrospective pay increase	12.23		3.06		15.29
staff expenses claim (Aug)	1.20				1.20
EFS Solutions (printing)	21.40	4.28			25.68
CGM Landscapes	18.50	3.70			22.20
NALC photocopying	32.80				32.80
Total	228.17	7.98	38.57		274.72

The above payments requiring authorisation were considered. The Chairman asked Councillors for their comments on the final salary request received from the Parish Clerk. NC said he had provided Councillors with a 13-step explanation showing how payment of contracted holiday pay for staff was converted from days into hours, reflecting a part-time employee. He advised an insertion into the contract for the next Parish Clerk to reflect this. He said the calculations of the Clerk in her final salary request were correct. PK pointed out that the hours being claimed for the two weeks worked in August (24 hours) were in excess of contracted hours at 10 hours per week. But the circumstances required additional work due to hand-over requirements. Final payment was approved. Payments to CGM for grass cutting at the Village Hall and to EFS Solutions for printing were also approved. The payment to NALC was not approved. NALC must still be approached for clarification concerning their invoice (ref 14/04 - Apr '13) for 328 photocopies costing £32.80 and the Chairman agreed to do this.

7. **Core Strategy for King's Lynn and West Norfolk (detailed policy and site plans).** The Chairman said the Core Strategy for Kings Lynn and West Norfolk was the Borough Council's strategy development for the next 25 years. Land owners locally in recent years had submitted 6 or 7 development plans. In each case, the Parish Council had expressed its concerns relating to the size of the Village (204 households), its infrastructure and accessibility (highway access). This was the second draft and, once again, the Parish Council was being asked to comment on the detailed policies and site plans. The draft referred to West Dereham as "a small village and hamlet". This classification meant that no development was to be expected since no services were in existence and communication routes were poor. Development "would have a negative impact on the countryside." What was permitted was "limited infill development". This was an important document which was stating not that there could not be any development per se but that villagers could have a voice in their own affairs in order to preserve the rural nature of the Village. The Chairman said she would draft a response thanking BCKLWN for their plans for West Dereham and saying this was in accord with the views of Councillors. She said it would be perfect if the Village could afford its own "Neighbourhood Plan" but this could cost up to £20k and the funding was unavailable.

8. **Tenancy Agreement for Allotment Gardens.** A new tenancy agreement for allotment holders had been drawn up with several new provisions following PC agreement at July's meeting. Copies of the new agreement would be given to Richard French by the Chairman, for him to distribute whenever approached by individuals wishing to rent allotments from the Council. Some vagaries in the old document had been removed and there had been a small price increase. The new allotment year started in October and Councillors would make another allotment inspection on 28 September .

Current allotment holders had been notified of the changes. The Chairman said the quarterly allotment inspections should be included in the Parish Council's Standing Orders and she would speak to Jane Scarrott at NALC to obtain advice.

9. **Farm Business Tenancy.** The Parish Council had previously agreed to have the Farm Business Tenancy contract professionally amended in an endeavour to prevent "crop over-spraying". After discussions by email the new contract would now include a 2m buffer zone not only along the side adjacent to the allotments but also along the side bordering the gardens of householders. The buffer zone would assist in the protection of the allotments and gardens and there would still be a need for the holder of the tenancy to follow the laid down procedures relating to spraying. The Chairman said that unfortunately negligence was not necessarily compensated. The latest draft was approved as final copy.

10. **Business Continuity Plan.** The Chairman said the Council's Business Continuity Plan needed to be considered by Councillors and discussions must now take place. This would become an agenda item at the meeting in October.

11. **Data Protection Policy.** The Chairman said that the Council's Data Protection Policy needed to be agreed by Councillors. This would become an agenda item at the meeting in October.

12. **Planning Decisions - update on the wood store at Hill House Farm, Bath Road (13/00809/F).** At the July and August meetings, the Parish Council had expressed concern about lack of detail in an application from Hill House Farm. A letter to this effect had been sent to the Planning Department relating to inaccurate drawings and inadequate information on environmental health issues. A response from Planners had provided insufficient information and so a further letter had been sent. To date this had not been responded to.

13. **Correspondence.**

- **Cemetery.** Letter received from AF Holman & Son, Monumental Mason concerning a request to erect a 'Crownstone Headstone' in the cemetery. PW provided a picture for Councillors to view on her I-pad. The dimensions were in accordance with the rules and Crownstone was appropriate. The Parish Council agreed this request. The Chairman agreed to respond to the request from AF Holman in the affirmative.
- **Hedge Cutting.** A letter had been received from CGM. On a visit to the allotment area CGM had found hedges not included in the hedge-trimming contract to be in need of trimming. CGM had offered to quote for this work. PK advised that hedge cutting had taken place in April and a second cut was due in January. The Chairman said she would need to check the detail contained in the contract before a decision could be made.
- **Hazardous Waste.** A leaflet had been received concerning hazardous waste. This would be placed on the Village Notice Boards and on the website. Information would be included in the next leaflet drop.
- **Inspiring Communities.** The East of England Community Land Trust Conference to 'Inspire Communities' and relating to collectively owning and developing properties was being held on Wed 25 Sep '13. The cost for each delegate was £60 which was considered too much for the PC to fund.
- **Green Burial.** PW & TF would attend a seminar on Green Burials at Colney Woodland Burial Site on 17 Oct '13.
- **Stone Curlew Soiree.** A Stone Curlew Soiree entitled "Wildlife in the Brecks" was being held at Thetford United Reform Church by the RSPB on Tue 8 Oct '13. There were no Councillors available to attend.
- **Recycling Morning.** A recycling informative morning was being held at Gressenhall Museum by the NCC Strategic Waste team at which coffee and cake would be provided free of charge. The Chairman advised of a similar event which she and PW had attended at West Dereham Village Hall recently so there was no need for Councillors to attend the Gressenhall presentation.
- **Pathways Afternoon.** A Pathways Afternoon was being held by NCC in West Dereham Village Hall on Wed 18 Sep '13. This related to pathways in West Dereham and the talk was to be given by Dr Sarah Spooner from the University of East Anglia. The Chairman reported that she had heard Dr Spooner lecture before and she was very good. PK would attend.

- Café Clusters. A coffee morning for Parish Councillors in the Borough (coffee and chat) was being held in the tea rooms at Norfolk Lavender on 22 October.
- New Parish Councillors Training Days. A leaflet relating to training dates for new Councillors, run by NALC at County Hall, had been received. The Chairman said the Parish Council required training for its Councillors and payment of course fees was through the precept. Sessions were held both during the day and in the evenings. Both TF and LH agreed to consider the dates and apply for training if any proved suitable.

14. **Further Reports and Items for Inclusion on the Next Agenda.**

14.1 Allotment Gates. The replacement allotment gates were held by Bonnetts of Stoke Ferry. These were longer than the previous gates and therefore did not fit exactly. Plans to rectify the situation were now under consideration. The subject would be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

14.2 Walking Footpaths. It had been reported previously that a University of East Anglia project on researching Footpaths and Green Lanes sought volunteers to walk local footpaths and study maps held at the Norfolk Records Office. Both the Parish Council and the Heritage Group had expressed interest in this project. Councillors needed to walk the footpaths on a date yet to be decided. Other villagers had expressed interest in participating in such a walk, turning it into “a ramble”. Information could be provided on the website highlighting hazards and colour coding pathways (green – yellow – red) relating to clear, partially blocked or blocked footpaths. CP agreed to identify a date on her return from the Antipodes in Nov.

14.3 Broadband. PW gave an update. People moving into the Village were being advised by BT that Broadband was available. This was not strictly speaking true as availability differed greatly in different areas of the Village. In some areas there was no service. Misinformation could prevent the sale of houses in the village. At the last meeting it had been the intention to invite Karen O’Kane from NCC to attend a PC meeting to give another Broadband update, but in e-mail correspondence she had stated implementation of superfast broadband covering West Dereham was to be covered by two different cabinets and would therefore be implemented in two separate stages. Stage 1 was due to commence “early” in 2014 with final completion of both stages by 30 June 2014. On past experience delays could be anticipated.

15. **Open Forum**. The meeting was adjourned and opened to the floor for general comment.

15.1 Towpath gates on South bank of Cut-Off Channel leading to Hilgay (by Glazewing). It was reported that the ironmongery on these gates had been removed and the gates were in a state of disrepair. Replacements were required. It was agreed that this was an Environment Agency responsibility.

15.2 Fly-Tipping. The dumping of rubbish was discussed. On Lime Kiln Road there were still grass cuttings in a lay-by several months old and now (on Tue 3 Sep) a large amount of garden rubbish from a trailer had been dumped in another lay-by on Lime Kiln Road. It was also reported that several car tyres had been dumped on Church Road (period 27-28 Aug). A notice concerning fly-tipping was on the Village Hall bar notice board. CP agreed to report the rubbish dumping to the Borough Council.

15.3 Parking on Ryston Road (leading to The Row). It was reported that some residents were parking on the pavement along Ryston Road between Lime Kiln and The Row. This was placing pedestrians at risk, especially those who were disabled, since they were compelled to walk in the road. PK said this matter had been reported previously to the Police. Hard standing was available for parking in St Andrew’s Close. It was agreed that PK would speak to the Police who would be invited to visit and advise on action to be taken. Photographic evidence would be provided. Villagers would be made aware of the problem through the leaflet drop.

15.4 Hedges along Lime Kiln and Ryston Roads. Hedges had grown and were adversely affecting the vision of drivers of motor vehicles. The Chairman agreed to speak with Highways Department concerning this.

16. **Closure**. The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 8.40 pm.

Chairman’s signature

Date