

**MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL WEST DEREHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD at 7.00pm  
On THURSDAY 6<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2020**

**Attending by Zoom (Seven Councillors) :-** Nick Drew (ND), Tom Foy (TF), Stuart Glover (SB), Tim Glover (TG), Keith Gore (KG), Lorraine Hunt (LH) Chair and Susan Pepper (SP)

In attendance: Peter King, Parish Clerk, and 6 members of the public, on-line.

LH stated that monthly Parish Council meetings would resume and continue as virtual on-line meetings until advice is received to resume in a public setting. LH added that current regulations allow Councils to hold meetings remotely until 2021 and the Parish Council is following the advice from the National and Norfolk Associations of Local Councils and the Society of Local Council Clerks that meetings should not be held in person. LH commented that she appreciates the frustration of those who are unable to join the meetings via internet connection but alongside these regulations the Parish Council have a duty to allow the public to observe Parish Council meetings without placing restrictions on the number attending, however it cannot risk being unable to accommodate everyone in a safe way at this time. LH noted that from 8 August, the Government has extended the list of venues where a mask or face covering must be worn inside buildings, that includes community centres. LH commented that these conditions are making it difficult for the Parish Council to meet in a face-to-face setting. LH requested that the message be passed to any parishioner who is known to be unable to join the on-line meeting should contact either the Parish Clerk or any Parish Councillor with any comments or concerns that they wish to raise with the Parish Council or to receive copies of any meeting minutes.

LH welcomed Nick Drew as a new Parish Councillor and everyone present to the Parish Council Meeting.

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

1. **To receive Apologies for Absence:** One Parishioner, Councillor Alan Holmes (BCKLWN), Councillor Brian Long (BCKLWN & NCC)

2. **To receive Declarations of Interest on agenda items**  
The Parish Councillors confirmed that they had no personal interests for items coming up on the agenda.

3. **Notice regarding use of social media, audio recording of Parish Council meeting and invitation for public contributions.**

LH asked "Will anyone present be filming, recording blogging or tweeting during this meeting? There was no response from the members of the public on-line. LH noted that the meeting is audio recorded to assist the Parish Clerk in the writing of the minutes.

4. **Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

LH confirmed that all Councillors had seen the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020. The Councillors agreed that they were content that the minutes should be signed as a true record with one amendment to a date in Minute 8. LH as Chair will sign the minutes when possible.

5. **Matters Arising**

**5.1 Ditches, Church Road** - The Parish Clerk reported that on 18<sup>th</sup> June a further problem reported with photographic evidence of faeces appearing in an exposed ditch outside of 5 Church Road. The homeowner noted the problem and the Parish Clerk contacted the BCKLWN Environmental Health Department, but no further information has been received.

**5.2 Parish Cemetery, boundary trees** – The Parish Clerk noted that the cutting back of the boundary trees had been resolved shortly after the last Parish Council meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> March.

Agreed as a true record of the Meeting: Signed ..... Date .....

**5.5 Flooded Bridle Path** – The Parish Clerk reported that the message and photograph of a flooded bridle path had been forwarded to NCC Highways area manager, but no response had been received to date.

**8. Local Footpaths** – The Parish Clerk reported he had recently written to NCC Highways area manager regarding local concerns that had been raised about the possibility of the footpath between West Dereham and Crimpleham being closed in the future. The Parish Clerk noted that at the last Parish Council meeting that Councillor Brian Long had commented that he had not felt that a closure to the footpath would take place, but that it would be sensible to write to the NCC footpath department to register that there was some concern.

**10. Planning Application 19/02100/F - Extensions and alterations to dwelling at Poachers Retreat, Hilgay Road, West Dereham, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE33 9RN** – The Parish Clerk reported that the application had been passed.

**14.3 Additional Signage - A134 at Lime Kiln Road and Bath Road Junctions** - The Parish Clerk reported that the Parish Council had been looking at steps to improve the road direction signage to deter any large vehicles from entering and driving via Bath and Lime Kiln Roads that are heading towards the Glazewing waste recycling site. The Parish Clerk noted that he had received a message from NCC, Department of Environment, Transport and Development concerning some funds being made available for highway improvements, by application on a 50/50 funding basis. The Parish Clerk commented that he had contacted the department to clarify whether the signposting proposal would be considered as a suitable application for funds.

## 6. Reports

### 6.1 Chair's Report

**6.1.1 New Parish Councillor by Co-option** - LH welcomed Nick Drew as a new Parish Councillor. LH noted that a previously elected Parish Councillor had resigned at the start of 2020 and having followed the due process of advertising for a replacement and receiving no response, the position was filled as a Co-opted vacancy. LH added that this now means the Parish Council has a full complement of 7 Parish Councillors.

**6.1.2 West Dereham during the Coronavirus** – LH commented that whilst over the past 5 months, it had been unusual and difficult at times to live under the developing situation, parishioners were fortunate to be able to take advantage of the outside spaces and enjoy the local countryside. LH noted positive examples of where parishioners had been involved with helping out with shopping for neighbours, the weekly clapping in support of the NHS workers with the vehicle procession, many posts on the West Dereham Community page offering help and advice and the community involvement with supporting the wooden planters in Church Road and adding summer plants in other positions. LH stated that she hoped that parishioners would continue to engage with the Parish Council over any concerns or questions that might arise. LH added that some projects that the Parish Council had been considering in the past that were being held in abeyance but would be reviewed and added that parishioners' involvement and views would be welcomed. LH commented that she hoped that the village hall, being a good resource in the village, could be re-opened as soon as possible. LH added that there are some things that have happened in the past that cannot be changed, but that the positives need to be focused upon and move forward together.

### 6.2 Parish Clerk's Report

**6.2.1 Coronavirus** – The Parish Clerk reported that since the start of the Coronavirus lockdown in mid-March, he had received a considerable amount of emailed information on the subject that required review and sifting for useful local information and as a result, a specific Parish Council website page had been set up. The Parish Clerk stated that he had received from the Government information site, 775 emailed messages alone, that he had scanned for useful advice and together with other local agencies such as NCC, BCKLWN and local NHS also forwarding advice and so far he had received in

total, in excess of 825 messages. The Parish Clerk noted that he observed that very few people were checking the Parish Council website page for Corona virus advice, so had lessened the amount of listed information unless he felt it to be of major significance to all.

**6.2.2 Potholes** – The Parish Clerk noted that he had reported a number of potholes brought to his attention by parishioners and felt that given the lockdown, that NCC Highways had responded well in carrying out repairs within a reasonable timeframe.

**6.2.3 Footpaths, hanging brambles** – The Parish Clerk noted that there had been quite a few complaints about overgrown local footpaths and overhanging brambles and he had written letters to landowners and in most cases had a good response.

**6.2.4 Temporary Road Closures** – The Parish Clerk noted that the Parish had appeared to have had more than its usual share of recent road closures due to burst water mains pipes involving Church Road (twice), The Row and a major 3 week closure on the A1122 between Fincham and Swaffham.

**6.2.5 Website Accessibility Requirements** – The Parish Clerk noted that he had attended an on-line advice session concerning new regulations that Parish Council websites have to comply with by making reasonable adjustments so that people with various disabilities, e.g. impaired vision, can access the site. The Parish Clerk noted the Parish Council will need to take the first steps and put together an action plan by 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020 stating any further actions that it will require to make to ensure full compliance.

**6.2.5 Speed Monitor** – The Parish Clerk noted that the Speed Monitor has not been active for several months and he hoped to re-activate it and resume moving it around the village with the assistance of the handyman from September.

**6.2.6 Parish Councillor training** – The Parish Clerk commented that during the last couple of months, new Parish Councillors have found it difficult to receive introductory training as a result of being unable to attend sessions and have concluded that the Parish Council should join and subscribe to Norfolk Parish Training & Support to extend and maximise its opportunities of available courses. The Parish Clerk noted that the Parish Council already subscribes to and attends courses organised by Norfolk Association of Local Councils, however under the present circumstances and for the foreseeable future, the Parish Council felt it would be beneficial to be members to both organisations.

**6.2.7 New Parish Council Laptop and associated software** – The Parish Clerk reported that in March, the Parish Council agreed to renew the Parish Clerk's laptop and software at a cost of £785.18. The Parish Clerk noted that the previous laptop was several years old and its software support had been removed in January. The Parish Clerk noted that the Parish Council had previously applied and obtained for funding to replace the equipment and associated software and so the costs had been covered by monies held in reserve.

**6.2.8 Flytipping** – The Parish Clerk noted that a few weeks ago, there had been complaints of flytipping that these were reported to BCKLWN who acted promptly. The situation had now seemed to have improved. The Parish Clerk noted that the Parish Council website held the link to report cases of flytipping.

**6.2.9 Cemetery – Natural Burial Area** – The Parish Clerk noted that Councillors had given approval to the design and purchase of what will be the first burial plaque in the Natural Burial Area.

**6.2.10 Planning Application 6 Church Road** – The Parish Clerk reported that an application had been received for approval for the proposed installation of a new fence. The Parish Councillors had noted local comments both for and against the application. Correspondence from an officer of NCC Highways was also noted as being opposed on the basis of height of the fence and Parish Councillors noting these comments opposed the application. The applicant resubmitted an application was with a reduced

fence height that Parish Councillors considered still did not follow the advice of NCC Highways, so again objected to the application. The Parish Clerk noted that on a recent BCKLWN Planning Department's applications and decisions list, it was noted that the second application had been approved.

**6.2.11 Website Information** – The Parish Clerk reported that he had received a detailed report from Councillor Alan Holmes of BCKLWN actions and decisions. The Parish Clerk noted that he proposed to add Councillor Holmes report, together with a list of all Parish Council decisions, financial transactions and actions taken by the handyman taken to 30<sup>th</sup> June and put into a summary to be added to the Parish Council website.

**6.3 Glazewing Report** – The Parish Clerk reported that a newly appointed manager at the Glazewing waste recycling site had been in contact and had agreed that his contact details be added to the Parish Council website. The Parish Clerk commented that he had received messages from a concerned Parishioner at Station House, Station Road following a conversation with a different Glazewing manager regarding the storage of gas for washing facilities and in addition commenting that there might be people sleeping in vehicles within the lorry park area behind their property. The Parish Clerk noted that he had raised the Parishioners concerns with NCC. The Parish Clerk also noted that he had received a photograph from a Parishioner of a marked Glazewing vehicle containing waste products in its trailer but not covered by netting. The Parish Clerk added that he had received an apology from Glazewing and they noted that they were looking into the matter.

#### **6.4 Handyman's Report**

The Parish Clerk noted that the report covered July.

**6.4.1** Attended the Remembrance Garden, in the cemetery to carry out edging and weeding.

**6.4.2** Cut back brambles along the footpath in Hilgay Road that borders the farm tenancy land.

**6.4.3** Attended an outdoor meeting with Parish Clerk, observing social distancing to discuss work priorities and progress on checks carried out on Parish Council assets.

**6.4.4** Resumed grass strimming around bridges, the phone boxes, safety signs, post boxes and trimming brambles around road signs, including Brooks Lane signposts

**6.4.5** Rubbed down, cleaned and repainted the bridge in Basil Road, close to the junction with Brooks Lane.

#### **6.5 Village Hall Report**

The Parish Clerk read out the following report from the Village Hall Management Committee:

*“As of 24<sup>th</sup> May this year the term of the Pro Tem Committee came to an end, leaving only the resident Treasurer who had kindly agreed to continue until a new Treasurer is appointed and representatives of certain village organisations, Sue Pepper and Tomas Foy representing the Parish Council and Graeme Pressley representing the Church.*

*To support the remaining Village Hall Trustees, the Parish Council sought advice from a charity's expert, Charlotte Stannard, from Charity Governance Consulting. That advice was:*

*The remaining Trustees were enough to form a quorum and MUST continue with the operation of the Village Hall Committee and as it was not possible to hold an election, to Co-opt new suitable Trustees if and when possible.*

*Also, that the Charity Commission will not at this time make any alterations to the 2010 Trust Deed until the financial reports are up to date. Any changes to the deed would appropriately be achieved by means of a resolution under s280 of the Charities Act 2011. A new deed would need to be drawn up by a solicitor and they would not advise such changes. The 2010 Deed is based on the ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) unincorporated model of the time and there is no obvious reason to change it.*

*It was also advised that the term 'pro tem' committee is unlikely to have been accepted by the Charity Commission because it conflicts with clause 4.1 which makes clear the management committee are the Charity trustees.*

*As we are all aware, the hall has been closed in accordance with government guidelines to prevent the spread of Coronavirus. During this time the remaining Trustees have been working tirelessly in preparing the hall for a long-awaited opening.*

- *Our caretaker/cleaner has been furloughed and is now on standby for part time work when required.*
- *The two-year overdue Fixed Wire Testing has been completed and remedial works are in hand.*
- *The fire risk assessment is being prepared.*
- *A new glass washer has been purchased for the bar.*
- *Sanitising equipment has been purchased and installed in relevant stations.*
- *The car park and compound have been cleared of weeds and sprayed by CGM.*
- *The main doors to the foyer were found to be damaged and quotations have been sent to our insurance company to assist in purchasing new.*
- *After much campaigning in the village we have two new trustees co-opted to the committee who will be a great asset to the community, Andy Challen and Nick Drew.*
- *In due course the Charity Commission site will be updated as we now have our accounts returned to us from the Police.*
- *The Treasurers Report to date reads:  
Reserve account Balance as at 28<sup>th</sup> July 2020: £1,690.09  
Bar account balance as at 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020: £9,993.37  
Bar account balance as at 5<sup>th</sup> August 2020: £7,776.40  
Less expenditure for the month: £3021.48  
A breakdown of expenditure is available on request.*

*We still have a long way to go but with the determination and skills the current committee have and with future Trustees when an election is possible, we will make our village hall one to be envied."*

## 7. Finance Report

### 7.1 Accounts for July 2020 – Payments

**7.1.1 Cash Flow Book July 2020** – The Parish Clerk noted that he had distributed copies of the Cash Flow to those on-line before the meeting. The Parish Clerk reported income of £15.33 received for a rebate from the renewed insurance premium at the beginning on June 2020. The Parish Clerk reported that the July expenditure aggregated to a total of £1,734.85.

**7.1.2 Cheque Payments for Approval from July 2020** – The Parish Clerk noted that he had distributed copies of the itemised the payments to those on-line before the meeting, that were now due.

Payee	Cheque No	Net	VAT	Gross	Remarks
R. Poole	101170	£208.66	£0.00	£208.66	Handyman's payment, travel & allowance for Jul20
Norfolk Parish Training & Support	101171	£174.00	£0.00	£174.00	Annual subscription 2020/21
J Raby	101172	£85.00	£0.00	£85.00	Internal Auditor's report 2019/20
Holly Landscapes	101173	£487.50	£97.50	£585.00	Grounds Maintenance – June 2020
Peter King (Parish Clerk)	101174	£682.19	£0.00	£682.19	Staff Salary and expenses - July 20
<b>Total</b>		<b>£1,637.35</b>	<b>£97.50</b>	<b>£1,734.85</b>	

Agreed as a true record of the Meeting: Signed ..... Date .....

**7.1.3** LH reported that Councillors had had to recently review the handyman's pay and it had been agreed to increase his rate per hour so that it was in-line with the level of national minimum wage.

**7.1.4** LH asked Councillors present and on-line if they were content with the July payments. All Councillors noted that they were content. LH stated that the cheques and control processes would be signed off as soon as possible.

## **7.2 Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/20**

The Parish Clerk summarized the audit process that is completed for the end of year accounts. He noted that the reporting timetable had been changed due to the coronavirus lockdown and local councils being unable to hold meetings and therefore, deadlines had been deferred to later dates than usual.

The Parish Clerk noted that during the summer and early Autumn of 2019 the Parish Council had then been unable to meet for several months due to the number of Parish Councillors and as a result, had missed a financial statutory deadline. The Parish Clerk noted that this was highlighted by the external auditors who instructed that question 4 would require a negative ('No') answer on the 2019/20 Section 1 Statement, to follow.

**7.2.1 Approval of the Internal Auditor's Report 2019/20** - The Parish Clerk noted that the Internal Auditor's Report had been previously circulated to Parish Councillors for their approval. All Parish Councillors gave notice that they approved the Internal Auditors Report.

**7.2.2 Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2019/20** - The Parish Clerk noted that it was his duty to ask the Parish Councillors, that in the knowledge that the Accounts having been approved by the Internal Auditor, seven questions listed in the Annual Return regarding control processes to fulfil this stage of the Audit process listed under Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2019/20 and to confirm by the Councillors their understanding to the best of their knowledge and belief of the controls put in place.

The Parish Clerk then read out the statements that the Councillors agreed by each saying "Yes" to all other questions. The Parish Clerk added these affirmations to the Return and agreed to make a suitable time for signatures to be added by the Parish Clerk and Chair of the Council.

The Parish Clerk noted that Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2019/20 had been previously circulated to Parish Councillors for information and these were approved.

The Parish Clerk advised the meeting that the accounts will be open to scrutiny by the members of the public who would be able to carry out an inspection at his home at a mutually agreed time and under suitable social distancing conditions between the period 10<sup>th</sup> August and 18<sup>th</sup> September 2020. The Parish Clerk noted that his contact details are available on the Parish website and on the document 'Exercise of Public Rights' that is to be added to the Parish website, will noted in these minutes to be added to the local monthly Village Magazine and displayed on the two Parish Noticeboards for the six-week period.

## **8. Approval of application for the erection of a new Memorial in the Cemetery and an addition of a name and details to a second Memorial**

The Parish Clerk noted that the dimensions and typeface presented by the stonemason for both Memorial stones was in compliance with the West Dereham Parish Council Cemetery Regulations. Councillors gave approval for both Memorial stones to be accepted.

## **9. To comment on planning applications currently received**

The Parish Clerk confirmed that no planning applications had been received.

## **10. Correspondence**

**10.1** The Parish Clerk reported that in the absence of the Parish being able to hold its Annual Parish Meeting, the West Dereham Village Trust had issued a statement addressed to the Parish Councillors and requested that the Parish Clerk read it to the Parish Council Meeting. It follows:

*“There have been some recent comments regarding the repayments made by the Village Hall Management Committee to the Village Trust and also inferences regarding the transparency of the Village Trust. In the absence of an Annual Parish Meeting the Trustees have asked that this statement be read out at the next Parish Council meeting to ensure there can be no misconceptions regarding their honesty, intent and work ethics.*

*The sum of £40,000 was a loan to the VHMC from the Village Trust by mutual agreement as documented in the extracts of the minutes (see below). The aim of the Village Trust Trustees has always been to abide by the terms of its Trust Deed and help in the provision of facilities for this village. Apart from the £100,000 donation towards the renovation of the village hall the Trustees have donated:-*

☒ *£2900 towards the dismantling and transportation of an organ for St Andrew’s church (hopefully soon to be installed)*

☒ *Purchased the additional land for the village hall car park; this included fencing, hedging, levelling, draining and surfacing*

☒ *£5000 towards the cost of the installation of the lavatory at the church*

☒ *£1500 towards the cost of the multi-sport play equipment on the playing field.*

*The Village Trust annual returns are available on the Charity Commission website and a report is given at the Annual Parish Meeting. Mention has been made that the Village Trust is a ‘select club’ and is by invitation only. It should be pointed out that last year an invitation was issued for applicants to apply for a Trustee vacancy. We did receive one application, unfortunately too late as we had just co-opted another committee member. As a point of interest there is no requirement for an election process further to the appointment of new Trustees. Below is an extract from the Trust Deed.*

*‘In selecting individuals for appointment as Trustees, the Trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the Charity.’*

*The current and previous Village Trust Trustees have given many hours of their time and expertise freely; some of them working tirelessly on grant applications to supplement the £100,000 donation towards the village hall renovation.*

*We cannot forget the hard work of those people who originally bought the village school and started the Millennium Project; without them none of what we have today would have been possible.*

*Unfortunately, despite years of dedicated fundraising and enthusiasm things didn’t work out and the hard decision to sell the school/community centre had to be made.*

*In 2010 the Millennium Project was renamed the Village Trust and a new Trust Deed was written. This states that there is no requirement for a public Annual General Meeting. As previously mentioned, our annual returns can be checked on The Charity Commission website – even when a nil return was recorded in 2015!*

*On checking through the records of both the Millennium Project and the Village Trust it is quite staggering to see the amount of hours and effort that so many people have put in to ultimately help get the hall we have today.*

*The huge sums of money initially involved in the village hall project weighed very heavily on all participants. Every penny was accounted for along the way and has been ever since.*

*Inferences regarding lack of transparency are distinctly unpleasant and the Trustees take this as a personal slur that is unfounded, ill-informed and unjust.*

*The past and present Trustees have and still are fully aware of their accountability and responsibilities. This is why they feel strongly that the Village Trust is responsible for this ‘village money’. As the loan is repaid and when there are sufficient funds in the account consideration will be given to other needs within the village.*

*The repayments from the Village Hall will be used in line with the aims of the charity as agreed by The Charity Commission:-*

*‘For the benefit of the inhabitants of the village of West Dereham by providing and assisting in the provision of facilities for the use of said inhabitants, in particular, but not exclusively for recreation and leisure time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants.’*

*The achievements of the Millennium Project and the team that worked on the renovation of the village hall shows what a united village can do.*

*Hopefully a future Village Hall Management Committee will be able to work together to put the bad times behind us and look to a brighter and more positive outlook for our village hall.*

*The Trustees, West Dereham Village Trust”*

The Parish Clerk noted that he would not read out to the meeting the extractions mentioned for the Village Trust minutes but would include them in the minutes in the form of a pdf file.

[../..../PARISH/Village%20Trust/Extracts%20from%20Village%20trust%20minutes%20regarding%20Village%20Hall%20loan\\_repayments%20Aug20.pdf](http://.../PARISH/Village%20Trust/Extracts%20from%20Village%20trust%20minutes%20regarding%20Village%20Hall%20loan_repayments%20Aug20.pdf)

**10.2** The Parish Clerk reported that the Parish Council had received an email from a Parishioner with a series of questions regarding the Village Trust and the Village Hall. It was agreed that the Parish Clerk should read the questions (In italics) together with the responses from the Parish Council (normal type), as follows

*“Surprised to learn I have not been copied in on the recent E mail on the next Parish Council Meeting asking for questions for the agenda.*

Reading your message ahead (of the Parish Council meeting), its general content is noted and the Village Hall report is on the Agenda.

*I am of the opinion that a meeting should be called and chaired by the PC solely on the Village Hall and the way forward, I fear that your next meeting will be overwhelmed by this topic to the detriment of the agenda*

Under normal circumstances, the Parish would have held an Annual Parish Meeting (APM), usually in the month of April (can be to 30<sup>th</sup> June) where reports would have been received from various organisations in the village. This is not a Parish Council meeting as such, but as is the practice, is organised and led by the Chair and Clerk of the Parish Council.

The holding of the APM was put on hold by Government instructions concerning a range of public meetings for a whole year, but we are looking into whether this restriction might have now been lifted. This is however likely to be held as an on-line platform for the foreseeable future as a meeting with contributors having to wear face masks will be nigh impossible.

Whilst the Parish Council acknowledges your concerns about one particular subject overwhelming the Agenda, that sometimes happens with a range of concerns that are raised by Parishioners, remember the concerns of the flies? The Parish Council has, otherwise, to try and meet as soon as possible to cover other items on the agenda.

*Nevertheless, please be advised of my questions submitted for the PC meeting in respect of the Village Hall:*

1. *Do we actually require a Village Hall Trust?*

A Parish Council has no authority over any group of people wanting to set up and run a charity. I believe that you are referring to the West Dereham Village Trust (WDVT). This is a registered charity approved by the Charity Commission and with no connection to West Dereham Parish Council.

2. *Considering the recent actions by the police, it would appear there was a total lack of transparency and accountability in the previous running of the village hall*

We await the outcome of the police investigation. The current Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC) could start to address the transparency and accountability village hall issues that you raise.

3. *The governing document, Trust Deed September 2010, is definitely not fit for the purpose intended.*

This would be a matter for the village hall managing trustees to consider. Sue Pepper will be covering this point in her report this evening.

4. *Recently the majority of the previous trustees, took no part in anything to do with the running and organising of the Village Hall*

The Parish Council is unable to comment on this.

5. *The previous elections to this trust, at one time eight trustees, seems to be cloaked in secrecy. One can only assume nepotism and cronyism rule for elected trustees*

The Parish Council is unable to comment on this.

6. *Apparently a loan is to be repaid to ?? The repayment amount can be varied by someone (this happened some time ago) with no recourse to anyone*

This would be a matter for the VHMC to discuss with the WDVT.

7. *The hall car park is reputed to be owned by the village trust therefore rent must be payed. It is owned by the village, I would assume!*

The car park land is currently owned by WDVT.

8. *The Trust Deed makes provision for up to six persons to attend any meeting as appointed members, associated with the Village Hall, two from the Parish Council, two from Village Trust, and two from Heritage Group for what purpose? See item 3*

In addition, it was agreed to also have representation from St Andrews Church. To the best of our knowledge, this is a common practice with Village Hall Trusts to invite or include unelected representatives from some or all local organisations onto the Management Committee.

*Nowhere in the public domain is there any information of any meetings, AGM's or election's associated with the Village Hall Trust, as a resident of West Dereham I am very concerned at this state of affairs*

It is the prerogative of the WDVT as it is with any charity, to organise their meetings as it feels appropriate. I would note that WDVT have in the past provided an annual report to the APM for several years. Their annual reports, together with those from other Parish organisations, can be found on the West Dereham Parish Council website page - <https://west-dereham-parish-council.norfolkparishes.gov.uk/policies-and-documents/> . Furthermore, in view of the fact that the APM has not been held, the Trust has prepared an annual statement to be read out at the Parish Council meeting.

*My apologies for the length of this E mail but it would seem all we ever do is paper over cracks when we should be looking at the rebuild of the whole structure and ethos of the Village Hall in association with Custodial Trustees, namely West Dereham Parish Council.*

The Parish Council holds an interesting position in its role as Custodian Trustee (this is any Parish Council involved, not just in West Dereham) - A Custodian Trustee holds the title to all property on behalf of the charity, it does not take part in the day-to-day management and operation of the charity, neither, does it own the property.

*I close with possibly the one part of the trust deed which should be read and actioned by all.*

*"The Property and the trust fund and its income shall be applied for the purposes of a village hall for the use of the inhabitants of the Parish of West Dereham without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, nationality, race or political, religious or other opinions, including use of the Property for meetings, lectures and classes or other forms of recreation and leisure time occupation in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants."*

*I respectfully requesting to be included in the Zoom meeting.*

## 11. Open Forum

### 11.1 Management of West Dereham Village Hall

A discussion followed regarding the Village Hall.

A summary of the points clarified by the meeting and actions to be taken follows:

- The West Dereham Village Hall is a charity with a governing document called a Trust Deed.
- The West Dereham Village Hall is managed by a Management Committee (WDMC) made up by representatives from village organisations and elected members. These individuals are the Trustees of the charity
- The West Dereham Village Trust (WDVT) is a quite separate charity within the village with its own governance documents.
- Currently, the WDVT does not have any representatives on the WDMC
- Currently, The Parish Council has two appointed Councillors that sit on the WDMC. Newly co-opted Councillor Nick Drew has agreed to be also co-opted to the WDMC.
- A Parishioner has agreed to be Co-opted to the WDMC.
- WDMC has received advice that some form of working management needs to be in place to ensure the future running and existence of the Village Hall.
- Any amendments to the 2010 Trust Deed or proposed amendments will only be considered when the audited Village Hall accounts for 2018/19 and 2019/20 have been filed and accepted by the Charity Commissioners.

In addition, a Parishioner was concerned at the number of village representatives on the WDMC. LH expressed concern that past members who joined the VHMC were not given sight of the Trust Deed. SP noted the need to try and to Co-opt willing and interested people keep the village hall running until formal elections can be held. LH noted the WDMC need a full board of trustees in place before any changes can be made and the Village Hall can move forward. SP noted her concern that a leaflet recently circulated within the Parish had brought little response.

A Parishioner questioned whether the Village Hall needs to be run as a different type of organisation and that the Trust Deed is unhelpful and out of date. Another Parishioner commented that the future of the Village Hall as well as its governance may become a legal issue and is consideration for the future. The Parishioner added that an 'operating manual' would assist in the running of Village Hall. SP noted that the Village Trust would be willing to sell the village Hall car park at an appropriate time in the future, but that when considered in the past, there was concern about the cost of the required legal advice.

LH summarised that their needs be a line drawn in the sand and the village needs to pull together to make the village hall operational again, that the Trust Deed is in place and is the current governing document and that there will be a time in the future to review the policies that are in place.

A Parishioner commented that he was pleased to hear so much passion about returning the village hall to normality as soon as possible. He added that it was important to find people willing come forward and look to the future and must stop keep digging up the past.

**11.2 Village Signs** - A Parishioner questioned the position of the village signs at the north (Lime Kiln Road) and south (Church Road) ends of the village, that they are positioned parallel to the road and not at right angles like most signs, therefore they are very difficult to read until one is very close to them. Parish Councillors responded that it was positioned some years ago.

**11.3 Further Reports** - LH reported that the Parish Clerk had resigned and will be working his notice until the beginning of November. Parish Councillors will be seeking to appoint a new Parish Clerk.

**11.4 Meeting feedback** - LH commented that the Parish Council would welcome feedback about the organisation and running of the meeting.

**12. Date of next meeting** - LH noted that the next Parish Council Meeting is due to be held virtually on-line on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2020 at 7.00pm.

**13. Close of Meeting.** The Chair thanked everyone joining the meeting. The meeting closed at 9.20pm

Parish Clerk: Peter King – Email: [clerk@westderehamparishcouncil.uk](mailto:clerk@westderehamparishcouncil.uk) Telephone: 01366 502110

Agreed as a true record of the Meeting: Signed ..... Date .....