

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

WEST DEREHAM PARISH COUNCIL

DATE: Thursday 1st July 2021
TIME: 7:00pm
PLACE: West Dereham Village Hall
PRESENT: Nick Drew (Chair), Tim Glover, Stuart Glover, Keith Gore, Susan Pepper (Councillors)
IN ATTENDANCE: Peter King (Minute taker)
PUBLIC: 1

1. To Receive Apologies for Absence

Linda Arthur (Parish Clerk)

2. To receive declarations of interest on agenda items and requests for dispensation

There were none.

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

ND asked if anyone present would be filming, recording, blogging, or tweeting during the meeting. There was no response from the members of the public. ND noted that the meeting would not be audio recorded.

4. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meetings

4.1 Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 13th May 2021

The minutes had previously been circulated and were unanimously agreed. ND as Chair will sign the minutes.

4.2 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

4.3 Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 10th June 2021

The minutes had previously been circulated and were unanimously agreed. ND as Chair will sign the minutes.

4.4 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

4.5 Minutes of the Extraordinary Parish Council meeting held on 24th June 2021

The minutes had previously been circulated and were unanimously agreed. ND as Chair will sign the minutes.

4.4 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

5. To report progress on items not on the agenda from the last meeting (Clerk's report)

5.1 Clerk's Report

There is no Clerk's report. ND commented that the Parish Clerk was on ongoing sick leave.

6. Reports

6.1 Chair's Report.

ND read out the following Report

"After a couple of months of disjointed and additional meetings, we are now back to our regular slot for Parish Council meetings, that being the first Thursday of each month (except January).

At the beginning of June 2021, I thought we had a mountain to climb, with what had to be undertaken if we were to meet our obligations with the PC's annual accounts and associated documents.

Thankfully with the help of fellow councillors attending additional and irregular meetings and the invaluable help and assistance of Norfolk Parish and Training Support (NPTS), this has been achieved. However, there is undoubtedly still a lot to be done.

First and foremost is the urgent replacement of a Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO). Our present Clerk leaves post as of 2nd August 2021. Adverts have been posted requesting applications to be returned by mid July 2021. Whilst it is desirable to have a new Clerk appointed by the August meeting (5th August 2021), when considering vetting of applications and undertaking interviews, I believe this will be doubtful. A more realistic timescale is to have an appointment confirmed for the September meeting.

This will potentially leave a void of a month where we will not have a Clerk. I have already spoken to NPTS who will assist where required and in the meantime, I would like to pass on thanks to Peter King who has stepped into the breach on more than one occasion to help and give much needed assistance, advice and guidance.

We are from our own admission a very green, new group of Councillors, but we are committed and determined to learn and progress. It will be a difficult period over the next couple of months with minimal Clerk backup, so we would respectfully request a little patience from any parishioners raising queries during this period as a response may take longer than normal, but with the guarantee that responses will be given."

6.2 Handyman's Report.

ND reported that he had spoken with the Handyman and noted that the following jobs had been carried out in the previous month:

- Moving of the SAM2 Speed Sign every 3 weeks.
- Maintaining the Garden of Remembrance at the Cemetery which include the following:
 - Cutting Grass
 - Weeding
 - Maintaining Borders
 - Blowing leaves away
 - General Tidy up.
- Attendance has also been given to the allotments and Recreation Ground to ensure no fly tipping and keep tidy.

ND questioned about the difference between the Assets Register and the Parish Council's Action Plan

SG questioned the need to remove or cut back brambles now spreading onto the roadway from the grounds of property on Hilgay Road.

6.3 Police Report.

There was no report available.

6.4 Glazewing Report.

Noted that there had not been any reports from Parishioners. Parish Councillors agreed to remove this item from the monthly meeting agenda but to monitor the position if Parishioners raise concerns.

6.5 Village Hall Report.

The Chair of the Village Hall Management Committee presented the following report:

1. The extension to the COVID 19 restrictions continue to impact on the ability of the West Dereham Village Hall Management Committee (WDVHMC) to operate the Village Hall (VH) effectively and profitably. However, the recent White Hart Bar openings have demonstrated the importance of this facility in the community with all who have attended expressing relief that a community hub is once again available, albeit on a limited basis.

Governance

All VH policies have been updated and will be ratified in the next month. The White Hart Bar Policy and operating guide has been re-written and training will be offered to volunteers shortly. The current Governance model is not supported due to the lack of Management Committee members; activity is safe but not sustainable over the long term. Support and advice from ACRE has been requested.

2. The current WDVHMC comprises 3 individuals who happen to also work full time and the workload to maintain the VH and run events is more than the capacity available. Financial matters are cross checked by all 3 members but the Management Committee is in desperate need of a dedicated Treasurer and Secretary as the demand rises post COVID restrictions.

Finances

The financial situation remains challenging with little revenue coming in but utility and upkeep bills having to be paid. An estimated water bill of over £900 and an unexpected FloGas top up of over £400 are unwelcome surprises; the water bill is being challenged. Additional costs include insurance. The WDVHMC will write to the Village Trust to request a refund of the monthly £50 fee for the car park loan, and the application for the section government COVID grant will be followed up with the Local Authority.

3. In better news, a second bank account has finally been established to separate VH and White Hart Bar finances. Gaining access to internet banking remains challenging but is being pursued. In the meantime, cash deposits are being conducted through Denver post-office. All transactions related to the VH facility will be transferred over time to the new account, leaving the White Hart Bar account for bar business only.

Infrastructure

Much work has been done over the past year to maintain the VH in a good condition. This has required investment in maintenance activity. A underground external water leak was reported on 15 June and a speedy response by The VH secretary meant the water supply was turned off as soon as possible the cause detected by investigative digging. A union junction was found to be faulty and replaced. This speedy response was much appreciated and thanks to West Dereham Plant Hire for acting so quickly. Subsequent inspection of the VH internally revealed a minor leak in the kitchen, and the boiler had failed to off. This is believed to be from overpressure when re-connecting the water supply. The leak in the kitchen was cleaned up and the boiler reset.

4. Projects identified for the future include:
 - a. Hedge trimming of the boundary hedge for the car park.
 - b. Refurbishment of the outside benches.
 - c. Purchase and fit of new fore doors for the Abbey Room and Main Hall.
 - d. Purchase of soft furniture for 'Chequers Corner' in the Abbey Room.
 - e. Purchase of additional benches for outside use.

Events

5. Enquiries have been received for several events which would require the VH to be hired, including meetings, weddings, christenings and birthday celebrations. Some of these vents have been subsequently cancelled or delayed until the COVID 19 restrictions picture becomes clearer. The interest level shown does indicate a promising future.
6. Table, chair, crockery and cutlery hire is now available to local residents, for any home based events should the VH not be available or suitable.
7. The White Hart Bar has been opened on Sunday afternoons and Friday evenings when volunteer staff have been available. Opening times will continue to be advertised on the Facebook page and Website <https://westderehamvillagehall.co.uk/>
8. The Bar will be open on Sunday afternoon!

7. Finance Report

7.1 To consider Statements for June 2021

PK noted that total expenditure of £1,385.47 was due for payment

7.2 To approve the June payments on the accounts list

PK presented the payments for June

Payments for June for approval at July 2021 Meeting						
ser	Cheque No	Payee	Net	VAT	Gross	Remarks
97		West Dereham Parish Hall	£72.00	£0.00	£72.00	Use of Village Hall for PC meetings
98		R. Poole	£205.75	£0.00	£205.75	Handyman's June Pay

99	R. Poole	£5.83	£1.17	£7.00	Handyman's June Expenses
100	L Arthur (Parish Clerk)	£288.00	£0.00	£288.00	Clerk's June salary and sick pay
101	L Arthur (Parish Clerk)	£8.95	£0.83	£9.78	Clerk's June expenses
102	Anglian Water Business	£2.94	£0.00	£2.94	Cemetery water supply
103	HMRC	£72.00	£0.00	£72.00	Parish Clerk PAYE June
104	CGM	£190.00	£38.00	£228.00	Birch Tree Pruning
105	CGM	£200.00	£40.00	£240.00	Beech Tree Pruning
106	Norfolk Parish Training & Support	£260.00	£0.00	£260.00	Work for year end accounts
	Total	£1,305.47	£80.00	£1,385.47	

All payments were unanimously **agreed**.

8. Proposal for the Recreation Ground St Andrews Close - Update

ND reported that there had been no further progress since the last meeting. The BCKLWN Planning Department would be contacted as soon as possible for their advice to move the proposal forward.

9. To comment on Planning Applications received

9.1 To receive results of applications.

There were none.

9.2 To receive new applications and comment.

There were none.

10. To consider Parish Council Internal Affairs & Policies

10.1 Standing Orders 2021/22

ND asked Councillors present if they were content with the Standing Orders without making any amendments. All Councillors were content. ND noted that the Standing Orders had been reviewed.

10.2 Equal Opportunities Policy

ND asked Councillors present if they were content with the Equal Opportunities Policy without making any amendments. All Councillors were content. ND noted that the Equal Opportunities Policy had been reviewed.

11. Allotments and Farm Tenancy

11.1 SG reported that he had held a meeting with Cruso & Wilkin, land agents regarding the content of the Farm Tenancy. He noted that he had requested that the new agreement be amended to include surrounding hedges to be cut 3 times a year at approved times, with the exception of the Brook Lane hedge to be cut once a year. In addition that the new tenant will be responsible for rotivating unused allotment plots to keep the weeds down.

12. Correspondence

12.1 A Parishioner had raised a question about the Village hall investigation and had been referred to the West Dereham Parish Council website.

12.2 A Parishioner had questioned why there was number of Parish Council meeting minutes missing from the PC website. ND had responded that Parish Councillors were waiting for an opportunity for a new Clerk to update the website details.

12.3 ND noted that in response to a letter received regarding the natural burial area in the Cemetery, a meeting was being planned to meet on site with the sender to discuss the matter.

13. To agree agenda items for the next Parish Council agenda (Thursday 5th August 2021 at 7pm)

There were no agenda items requested,

14. Open Forum for Public Participation

No items were brought to the meeting.

Meeting closed at 8.20 pm _____ (Chairperson)

_____ (Date)