

WALBERSWICK PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Parish Council held in the Village Hall annex at 7.30pm on 3 September 2012.

PRESENT: Councillors Mr R Leighton, Mr B Morton, Mr A Pearson, Mr B Tibbles, Mr D Webb, District Councillor M Gower and Mrs J Gomm (Clerk).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr R Woodcraft and PCSO Newson (Suffolk Police).

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 August 2012 were **approved** and signed by the Chairman as a true record. Proposed by Cllr Tibbles and seconded by Cllr Leighton.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Pecuniary interests: Cllr Webb, items 8, 9 and 10 on the agenda (issues relating to allotments), Cllr Tibbles, items 8, 9 and 10 on the agenda (issues relating to allotments) and item 6c on the agenda (consideration of which seats in the Village to insure) and Cllr Pearson, item 8 on the agenda (request to keep pigs on an allotment).

Local non pecuniary interests: Cllr Leighton, item 12 on the agenda (consultations on the Sustainable Communities Act 2007) as a member of another authority responding to the consultation.

4. REPORTS FROM THE COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS AND THE POLICE

Cllr Leighton (as Suffolk County Councillor) reported that approximately a year ago, in part of Suffolk, schools were re-organised from a three tier to a two tier system. The children in schools that had changed showed at the end of the academic year 2011-2012 an increase in Key Stage 2 SATS results of 19%. He also reported that the County Libraries future was now secure and sustainable; direct control of the service had been transferred, together with all staff, to an Industrial and Provident Society. He said that EDF were committed to commencing public consultation on Sizewell C by the end of the year. Cllr Gower said he was aware of the problems associated with rubbish that had occurred in the summer months in Walberswick and asked the Clerk to copy him into any correspondence she undertook.

PCSO Newson had sent a report which said that there had been no reported crimes in Walberswick in July and one in August, recorded as "theft, other".

5. PLANNING

Planning notifications:

Threeways, The Street, C12/00093/TCA: This was an application to remove dying trees. The Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) Tree Officer had determined they were in poor condition, therefore the work could be carried out without the application being determined.

White Barn, Leveretts Lane, C12/00072: The Tree Officer had raised objections to this application.

1 Alexandra Place, The Street, C12/1215: planning permission had been granted for an oil tank and shed on plot 1.

Ryecroft, The Street, C12/1066: planning permission had been granted for alterations to include increase in height of roof, removal of two roof lights, replace with dormer windows, single storey side extension, single storey rear extension with garden terrace over and erection of studio. The application had been conditioned to prevent sitting out or balcony use of what had been proposed as the garden terrace.

Planning applications:

The Tuck Shop, The Street, C12/1847: variation of condition 1 to allow for an extension of time for development to be implemented for a further 3 years. Although the application

did not make it clear, the Clerk stated that permission had been granted under reference C10/0199 for a single storey extension and at that time the Parish Council had not objected to the application. **Agreed** to make no objections to the application.

Notice of intention to carry out tree works:

White Barn, Leveretts Lane, C12/00109/TCA: proposal to remove a sycamore and reduce a conifer by one third. **Agreed** to add this item to the agenda of the meeting proposed to be held on 24 September to enable Councillors to look at the trees before making a decision.

6. ACCOUNTS

a) Receipts:

- None
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b) Payments:

- BDO, external auditor, accounts for year ended 31.03.12 - £135 plus vat, total £162
- Village Hall Management Committee, hire charges, July - September 2012 - £65, no vat
- J K Gomm, Clerk's expenses for July and August, stationary - £18.47 plus vat £3.69, diary £2.07 plus 41p vat, 2 toner cartridges £149.64 plus vat £29.93, postage - £8.50, total £212.71
- JK Linley (also known as JK Gomm), Clerk's net salary for July and August - £1,838.07

It was proposed by Cllr Leighton and seconded by Cllr Tibbles that the above payments be made and it was **agreed**.

c) Consideration of which seats in Walberswick should be insured by the Council

Cllr Tibbles left the room whilst this item was discussed.

The Clerk explained that a substantial number of seats were insured by the Parish Council which were not on Parish Council land. The issue had been discussed before, but a decision was required before the Council's insurance was renewed. It was **agreed** to:

- insure the two seats on the Village Green, one on the children's play area within the sports field and one outside the pavilion at the sports field. These were to be insured because they were on land managed by the Parish Council.
- insure the seat near the Ferry Hut at the harbour because this had been provided by the Parish Council.
- cease, as from the next insurance renewal, to insure other seats in the village.

The Chairman explained that one of the seats on the children's play area had been provided by Cllr and Mrs Tibbles in memory of their grandson. Mr Tibbles would reimburse the cost of the insurance to the Parish Council.

Cllr Tibbles returned to the room.

d) Consideration of the proposal for insurance from the renewal date

The Clerk explained that the proposal received from the Council's insurer for all the Council's insurance needs (except the sports pavilion which was covered by a separate policy) would cost £919.01 or £827.11 if the Council entered an undertaking to continue with the same insurer for five years. Cover was provided for office contents of £2,500, the Clerk pointed out the Council possessed virtually no contents; she believed this cover came as part of the package, but would investigate. Money held in residential premises was only covered to £100, the Council only ever held money for a couple of days when the allotment rents were collected. This amounted to about £210, it would probably not be worth paying to cover the additional sum, but she would investigate. The fidelity guarantee cover had been increased during the year, £25,000 appeared to be appropriate to her, but she sought Councillors' views. The assets register and therefore premium would be

reduced as a result of the Council's decision on insurance of seats and she also understood from the Vice-Chairman that the strimmer and mower were worthless, but the premium for these items was £73.10, she advised removing them from cover. The Clerk thought it would be more sensible, if possible, to include the pavilion within the insurance rather than on a separate policy, she would investigate. It would be necessary to insure the visitor centre once the surrender was completed, she would investigate premium costs. Suffolk Acre (the agent) and Zurich (the insurer) had been very efficient in dealing with her, but she had no experience of making a claim through them. The Council **agreed**:

- to continue insuring with Suffolk Acre
- to take advantage of the saving provided by making the five year undertaking
- that the Clerk carry out the investigations set out above and negotiate a new premium sum for payment at the October meeting.

e) Consideration of the offer of a grant to enable the Council to send delegates to a conference

The Suffolk Preservation Society was holding a conference on 10.11.12 entitled "Localism, Neighbourhood Planning and Self Build". The Council did not have funds in its budget to send delegates. The Steering Committee of the Walberswick Parish Plan had offered the Council a grant of £50 to enable two delegates representing the Council to attend. It was **agreed** to accept the grant for that purpose and that Cllr Morton attend and the Housing Focus Group of the Parish Plan be invited to nominate a representative to attend.

7. CONSIDERATION OF THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT

The external auditor, BDO, had completed its audit for the year ended 31.03.12 and presented its opinion. The report was a qualified report because the Council did not undertake a risk assessment as part of its review of internal controls before the year end. The auditor was aware of this because the Clerk had told the auditor that the review of the risk assessment was completed on 03.04.12. Having considered the issues report produced by BDO, it was **agreed** to:

- approve and accept the annual return for the year ended 31.03.12
- further consider the existing risk assessment at the October meeting and add to or amend it if necessary
- review the risk assessment again in February and add to or amend it if necessary.

8. CONSIDERATION OF THE REQUEST TO KEEP PIGS ON AN ALLOTMENT

As three of the five Councillors at the meeting had declared a pecuniary interest the meeting was inquorate (less than three members able to discuss the matter) and so the item was adjourned to a future meeting.

9. REVIEW OF THE TENANCY AGREEMENT FOR NEW ALLOTMENT HOLDERS

This item was adjourned to a future meeting.

10. REVIEW OF THE RENTS PAID BY ALLOTMENT HOLDERS

This item was adjourned to a future meeting.

11. CONSIDERATION OF THE PROPOSALS BY COUNCILLOR MORTON FOR THE COUNCIL TO APOLOGISE TO INDIVIDUALS HE BELIEVES ARE AGGRIEVED BY ACTIONS OF THE COUNCIL

Cllr Morton explained he had produced his pragmatic notes as he believed the number of requests for information the Clerk was dealing with was causing a financial problem for the Council. He said he had asked the Chairman to make an apology which the Chairman was considering. He referred to advice received from another organisation. The Chairman adjourned the debate to the end of the meeting.

12. RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION ON WHETHER PROPOSALS FROM LOCAL COUNCILS SHOULD BE PERMITTED IN THE SAME WAY AS OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES UNDER THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACT 2007

Cllr Morton said this legislation had been put in place to help towns become sustainable. Cllr Leighton explained that it didn't apply to small communities such as Walberswick. It was **agreed** to write to the Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) to support their action in relation to the Sustainable Communities Act 2007.

13. LIVING WELL SUFFOLK

This organisation had sent an email with a link to a walks leaflet it produced. The Clerk had forwarded it to Councillors. Cllr Morton asked that it be publicized. The Clerk **agreed** she would mention it as part of her report to the next Village News and add in the web link.

14. MATTERS RAISED BY MEMBERS

The Clerk reported that Cllr Woodcraft had asked her to raise the issue of the holly tree growing over the road opposite Albion Cottages. She had reported it was dangerous as cyclists and pedestrians had to move out further into the road to pass it. The Clerk **agreed** she would contact Suffolk County Council Highways department to deal with it.

Cllr Tibbles said he was now a key holder for the floodgates. The Clerk reported she was making progress with a list of volunteers to help with closing the gates, more volunteers would be welcomed. She intended setting up a meeting in early October with the Environment Agency so that the Agency could demonstrate to the volunteers how the gates should be closed.

The Chairman said that in view of the problems experienced with rubbish in the Village this summer he had taken photographs as evidence of the problems and had spent several hours sorting and bagging rubbish. He suggested a meeting between Council representatives and Suffolk Coastal Services to discuss and resolve the problems for next summer. The Clerk **agreed** she would arrange such a meeting. He also said he thought there had been problems with sewerage this summer. The Clerk reported that sewerage had backed up into at least one garden this summer on more than one occasion. She had been in contact with Anglian Water and it had, as an emergency measure, carried out jetting before the August bank holiday weekend and pumping out of the pumping station after. The Anglian Water representative had also agreed to analyse its data to investigate whether the system needed jetting more than once every six months and, if so, to put in place a more frequent programme and to report back to the Clerk.

15. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no questions.

16. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETINGS

Special meeting – Monday 24 September at 7.30pm in the Village Hall

Scheduled meeting – Monday 1 October at 7.30pm in the Village Hall annex

11. CONSIDERATION OF THE PROPOSALS BY COUNCILLOR MORTON FOR THE COUNCIL TO APOLOGISE TO INDIVIDUALS HE BELIEVES ARE AGGRIEVED BY ACTIONS OF THE COUNCIL (adjourned from earlier in the meeting)

The Chairman proposed and Cllr Tibbles seconded that the public be excluded from the meeting during the continued discussion of this item pursuant to section 100 Local Government Act 1972 and section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. This was **agreed**.

Cllr Morton said that the legal advice from the solicitors involved in advising on the issue of requests for information would have helped the Council if it had been received at the time (early 2011), rather than last week. He said he had asked the Council's complainants to cease corresponding with the Council for a month. Councillors wondered if it would be useful to call a Parish Meeting. The Clerk explained that she had been in the process of arranging a meeting with SCDC officers. Councillors thought this would not necessarily be helpful. After further discussion, no decisions were taken or action agreed.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm.

Signed.....

Date.....