

**WALBERSWICK PARISH COUNCIL**

**The Minute of a meeting of Walberswick PC held on Tuesday the 5th September 2017 at 7.15pm in the Annexe of the Village Hall.**

**Present:** *Councillors Bassinette, Mackay, Richardson (in the chair), Sutherland-Rogers and Winyard.*  
Clerk Mary Mitson-Woods and a number of Walberswick electors.

**101/17 Chairman's welcome** – The Chairman welcomed members of the public and councillors.

**102/17 Apologies for absence** -the Chairman gave Councillor Sutton's apologies.

**103/17 Declaration of Interest and Requests for Dispensation:** Councillors to declare any interests. Notwithstanding this item Members may declare an interest at any point in the Meeting. There were no declarations.

**Open Forum:** The Chairman will open the Meeting for no longer than 15 minutes for members of the public to be invited to give their views on issues on this agenda or raise issues for future consideration in accordance with S.O. 3f – 3k. Members of the public may not take part in the Parish Council meeting itself.

A member of the public commented on the following – the history of the pavilion in the Minute of 17th July 2017, the inclusion of income tax in the Authorisation to Pay, the appointment of the finance assistant and the Council's responsibility under the changes to the Data Protection Act. These items were responded to at the meeting and will receive a separate follow-up via email from the Clerk.

**104/17 To consider the Minute of the Meeting of 17th July 2017** for accuracy and for the Chairman to sign as a true record. It was **RESOLVED that the Minute be signed as a true and accurate record.**

**105/17 Finance Matters**

**a) To consider payments on the Authorisation to Pay Sheet.**

Each item on the Authorisation to Pay Sheet was reviewed, discussed and it **was RESOLVED that they be authorised by Councillors for payment.** The Clerk commented that it may be possible to pay less for the Internal Audit from a different company in future and will research this for the current financial year. SCDC has given the Clerk confirmation that the commitment by Councillor Catchpole to provide £2000.00 towards the 20mph scheme will be honoured by SCDC; this off- sets part of the £4662.27 for which a cheque was issued. In addition a payment was authorised to SALC for £54 for payroll services (*invoiced after Agenda posted but part of regular administration*).

**b) Financial Report and comparison to budget for 2017-18** The RFO reported that since the Agenda was posted cheques have been drawn and the balance at Lloyds bank is £13,448.25. The available balance was reduced to £5878.05 by the cheques that were approved for payment totalling £7570.20. Expected income before the end of year was £8000.00 (2nd tranche of Precept and Locality grant for 20mph). Councillors were referred to the reforecast budget which was produced in November 2016 and from which the Precept was calculated. The Clerk warned that the budget was in a very precarious state with reserves below the recommended amount of 6 – 9 months

expenditure. Reserves can be unlimited as long as there is a clear intention to save up for a specific project. The Clerk advised Councillor to be cautious with expenditure for the remainder of the year. Councillor Bassinette asked that, in the light of this situation, the Council scrutinise each budgeted item and that a reforecast budget is prepared which the Council will review at each meeting. This proposal was agreed and it **was RESOLVED that the budget be reconfigured to reflect these changes below and a new forecast to end of year be presented at the meeting of 16th October 2017 and reviewed at each future meeting. This would also help guide plans for expenditure and precept for 2017/18.**

(i) It was acknowledged that it would be necessary to exceed the forecasted admin/salary figure and that this would be discussed in camera later in the meeting.

(ii) It was acknowledged that there had been no budget provision for Councillor training. The training booked for all Councillors on 18th September 2017 will cost of £260 +VAT and this figure should be factored into the reforecast budget.

(iv) It was requested that the exact amounts needed for village maintenance be examined and adjusted on the reforecast budget to more accurately align budget with actual expenditure.

(v) A review of the rateable value of the Heritage Hut from £1000.00 to 362.00 has resulted in savings of over £438.00.

(iv) £500.00 from the budget for the new safety matting, which is necessary under the equipment on the Green playground, can be reallocated as there is grant funding of over £5000.00 available from SCDC. The preferred option is for the area to be rotovated under the play equipment and for safety matting put down that allows the grass to grow through. The area will need to be fenced off for two months while the grass grows so that the final appearance will blend into the rest of the Green. **It was RESOLVED that the Chairman would get three quotes** for matting and that Council approval will be sought at the meeting of 16th October 2017. The Clerk agreed to seek clarification on whether the grant could be used to pay for replacing the current swings. She warned that the money was for new equipment rather than replacement but would ask the question. This discussion and conclusion resulted in freeing another £500.00 for reallocation.

(v) The £9750.00 in the budget for the playing field and pavilion has been underspent. The cost of the gorse clearance (£2500.00 +VAT) and herbicide (£250.00 + VAT) was funded from s106 money. £860.00 has been spent on an emergency repair to the fence around the playing field but a further income of £1010.00 has been received from the Community Infrastructure Levy. These tranches of funding have left a large surplus in the Playing Filed budget that can be reallocated.

(vi) Councillors noted that the cost of audit was unnecessarily large but it is in line with previous years. The excess charges are generated by the auditor dealing with electors' questions. **It was RESOLVED that the Clerk write to BDO** and ask that any additional charges should be notified to the Council in advance via the Clerk before invoices are sent out. This is in line with the letter received with the audit papers at year end setting out the terms when BDO can make excess charges. It also facilitates control over the Council's budget.

**c) Bank account for funds for the refurbishment of the Heritage Hut.** Arrangements were made to open the new HSBC account for this purpose.

**106/17** The Council discussed the insurance coverage for it's assets and it was confirmed that the pavilion should be included. It was agreed that the Scroll is added as it is owned by the Council; the Clerk has informed the VHC that it can now be removed from it's policy. Cover included the Scroll while in the Heritage Hut, during removal and in storage during refurbishment. This was agreed and the Village Hall Committee to has been advised to remove it from it's policy. The insurers have confirmed that the Scroll will be covered whilst work is undertaken at the Heritage Hut and while work progresses. The Clerk must inform CAS of when removal and return dates are. The scroll has

cover for £30,000 to finance repair should it be damaged. The pavilion is also included in the policy and the current coverage on the Heritage Hut was appropriate for its potential uses under the refurbishment. The Council confirmed that the new quote from CAS was the best and most appropriate and that taking on a 5 year contract provided best value. After advice from the Clerk that any profit CAS makes from its insurance brokerage is ploughed back into Suffolk communities it was **RESOLVED** to enter into a 5 year agreement with Business CAS Ltd to insure the Council and its assets. The cost of 956.82 represented a rise of around £20 p.a. **It was RESOLVED that the Council would review the appropriateness of the insurance every year before the Clerk makes the annual payment**

**107/17 Land near Westwood fronting onto Lodge Road.** The Chairman suspended Standing Orders to hear from an elector, Nat le Roux, who had requested the item on the Agenda to deal with the lack of maintenance on the piece of land behind Westwood, 'The Pightle' and 'Eastwood' and opposite 'Homeland'. As explained, the overgrowth had become so high and severe that not only had it become impossible to maintain the hedges of the surrounding properties, but that the state of this patch of land detracts from the general appearance of this part of The Street, which is otherwise very well kept. The Clerk added that Mr Philip Kett was aware that the SCC was responsible for that wedge of land. The SCC used to clean out the ditch and cut back the nettles on the brow and also used to mud out the bottom of the ditch onto the brow making it into a bank such that the ditch used to run along the edge of the properties to Short Lane. This particular piece takes surface water from the drain which is opposite Palmers Lane by pipe underground, and since SCC, it has not done the work and deals with the ditch only if it does not drain after a storm.

**It was RESOLVED that the clerk would bring the matter to the attention of SCC** and If SCC will not maintain the area the Clerk will seek permission from SCC for the village to handle it directly using cover from the SCC insurance for the work and a Health and Safety assessment. If necessary WPC will organise it. The Clerk will follow up and report back to the next meeting.

#### **108/17 Heritage Hut and Scroll Committee Report**

Bill Ungless, as Chair of the Committee, reported that the Heritage Hut / Scroll Committee, in addition to the £6000 from SCDC, had received a pledge of an additional £7000 towards the cost of the construction of the improvements to the Hut from the Le Roux Trust. The Committee was delighted that this meant that the Council could start planning positively for the future. Council expressed its gratitude to all members of the HHSC and to the Le Roux family . The HHSC are awaiting the results of the structural Survey which the WCLC had commissioned before returning to WPC with further recommendations on the future of the Heritage Hut and Scroll. The HHSC also reported that the new locks agreed at the 17th July meeting have not been fitted.

Following the report it was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk would take immediate steps to hire a locksmith to fit new locks on the front door and to secure the storage area in the back. It was agreed that the Scroll would be stored securely away from the building during the winter months and during reconstruction work. Bill Ungless has offered the use of his studio for this purpose. The Clerk had discussed the venue with CAS who felt it would be appropriate.

**109/17** Councillors considered that they should meet monthly on the 2nd Monday of each month given the amount of business that needs to be carried out. **It was RESOLVED that monthly meeting will be usually required and should be scheduled although if there is insufficient business the scheduled meeting will not be held. Or could be very short.** The Council will recess in August. The

clerk will produce a monthly schedule of meetings and circulate these to enable Councillors to place these dates in their diaries.

**110/17 Exempt Business** The Council passed a Resolution in Accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to exclude the public and press for the discussion of the following matters where publicity might be prejudicial to the special nature of the business – namely the Clerk's salary, conditions and welfare. At this point the Chairman asked members of the public to leave the meeting.

The arrangements were discussed and action agreed. This will be revisited and reassessed going forward.

**111/17** Date of next meeting: October 16th 2017 at 7.15 in the annex of the Village Hall..