

**Minutes of the Meeting of Freethorpe Parish Council held on Monday 20th July 2020
at 7.45pm remotely on Zoom**

Present: Nick Spencer (Chairman)
Paul Bacon
Janet Church
David Lake
Linda Turner
Catherine Moore, Interim Parish Clerk

Also present: District Councillor Grant Nurden, County Councillor Brian Iles and three members of the public

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Michael Blake.

2. Public Forum

a) Public

John Fleetwood, Tree Warden, reported that he had carried out the tree inspections at the church and issued a report and recommendations.

John reported that the Broadland Tree Network was involved in some work with Norfolk County Council around tree diseases. The Network had allocated £5,000 worth of grant funding trees to the area. The Network was restructuring so that Assistant Tree Wardens could be introduced for those who were interested, but had less time available.

b) County Councillor

Brian Iles reported that the first virtual meeting of Norfolk County Council had taken place, taking eight hours to complete. Voting had been the most challenging aspect. The County Council deficit was currently estimated at £18M, although it was expected that 70% would be recouped from government grant for Covid-19. The Council was nearer to balancing the books.

Work continued at the Council however most staff were working from home and there were delays while staff tried to balance work with family situations arising from Covid-19.

Highways were 70% of the way through their outstanding work. There were fresh discussions regarding unitary authorities. A new waste contract would be out for consultation shortly.

District Councillor

Grant Nurden reported that Broadland District Council held an extraordinary meeting recently to realign their budgets. In 2020/21 the income budget was reducing by £431K and the budget for Council Tax Support was increasing by £224K. Emergent response costs were increasing by £500K and there would be a £100K Hardship Fund. The estimated surplus for 2020/21 was £62K.

The grant for the Junior Tree Warden scheme had been paid out and would be administered by the Parish Council as an earmarked reserve.

Council meetings would be live streamed on YouTube.

3. Declaration of Interest for items on the agenda

There were none.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 15th June 2020

The minutes of the meetings were **agreed** as an accurate record and would be signed by the Chairman.

5. Matters Arising

a) Wickhampton Sign

The Clerk had not yet heard back from Cantley Parish Council about the contractor they used for their sign repair. The Council needed to consider whether the sign would be repaired or replaced. Nick Spencer agreed to look at potential suppliers.

ACTION: NS

b) Second SAM2 Sign

The Clerk reported that the Council could use its remaining Community Infrastructure Levy reserves (CIL) to pay for the second SAM2 sign. It was **agreed** to get this ordered as the outstanding monies had been received. The locations would need to be signed off by Norfolk County Council, Nick Spencer and Linda Turner would send a map to the Clerk so that the paperwork could be completed.

ACTION: NS/LT

c) Methodist Church Highways Sign

The Clerk reported that Norfolk County Council had agreed to site a new post with a white directional sign to the Methodist Church and that this would be funded from budget available at NCC for small works.

6. Co-option of Parish Councillor

There had been no applications.

7. Clerks Report

The Clerk's report was presented and noted. The Clerk reported that she had asked the previous clerk whether there was any post to collect and had been told that there wasn't. No communication had been received from Santander regarding the mandate change, and it was suspected that correspondence would go to the previous address. Nick Spencer agreed to go into Santander to find out where they were with this and ask for copies of the bank statements.

ACTION: NS

8. Finance

a) Payments

It was **agreed** to pay the following:-

C Moore	Salary June 2020	£416.00
HMRC	PAYE June 2020	£104.00
C Moore	Expenses June 2020	£112.63
Information Commissioner	Data Protection Registration	£35.00
P James	Internal Audit (2 years)	£195.00
Indigo Waste	Recycling	£14.40
Freethorpe Village Hall	Reimbursement for Play Equipment	£4,265.58*

*The payment to Freethorpe Village Hall was made because the Hall was being chased by the supplier, and the Council was in a difficult period between Clerks, therefore to prevent court proceedings the Village Hall paid the bills on behalf of the Council, and requested a refund at the July meeting.

b) Monthly Financial Update

The Clerk reported the current financial position. The bank statements for June had not been passed on so it was not possible to report the balances, however

calculations showed that the Council had around £11,600 in free reserves. This would be reduced with the payment for the play equipment repairs to Freethorpe Village Hall which had not been budgeted for. The S106 money had been received, and the recycling credit money was anticipated. VAT reclaims would be made once the Council had determined ownership. It was hoped that an accurate financial position could be presented at the August meeting.

c) Internal Audit Reports

The internal audit reports for 2018/19 and 2019/20 were received. There was nothing unexpected raised, and all matters had been attended to. The Internal Auditor had agreed with the Interim Clerk's position on the VAT for the play equipment and the relationship with the Village Hall.

d) Annual Governance Annual Return 2018/19

The Clerk reminded Councillors that they were agreeing this retrospectively, as a Public Interest Report had already been issued against the Council for the previous financial year. It was **agreed** to approve the Annual Governance Statement and Annual Accounting Statement for 2018/19, proposed by Nick Spencer, seconded by Paul Bacon, all in favour. This would be published on the website. **ACTION: Clerk**

e) Annual Governance Annual Return 2019/20

The Clerk noted that the Council would be required to tick 'No' to all statements in the Annual Governance Statement as it had not fulfilled its obligations during the year. The Council could not declare itself exempt due to the Public Interest Report on the previous year. It was **agreed** to approve the Annual Governance Statement and Annual Accounting Statement for 2019/20, proposed by Nick Spencer, seconded by Paul Bacon, all in favour. This would be submitted to the external auditors and published on the website. **ACTION: Clerk**

9. **Correspondence**

a) Street Naming
None.

10. **Planning**

a) New Applications

20201215 124 The Common: Variation of Condition 2 following grant of planning permission 20200146 – plans and drawings.

It was noted that there had been complaints about extended working hours outside of those permitted, and the complainants had been referred to Broadland District Council enforcement. There were no comments on the application. **ACTION: Clerk**

b) Decisions
None

11. **Approval of Policies**

The following policy documents were approved as drafted: Complaints Policy; Equal Opportunities Policy; Training Policy; Filming at Meetings Policy; File Retention Policy; Press and Media Policy; Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme; Data Protection Policy; Data Protection Privacy Statement.

12. **Other Matters**

a) Ownership of Play Equipment

The Clerk noted that it was normal for the Parish Council to own and be responsible for play equipment sited on village hall land. It was noted that the play equipment in Wickhampton was also the responsibility of the Parish Council. It was **agreed** to confirm that the play equipment at the Village Hall in Freethorpe would be retained in the ownership of the Parish Council, including insurance, maintenance and inspections. This did not include the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA). The Council would need to make arrangements for monthly operational inspections either through training in-house resource, or through outsourcing. **ACTION: Clerk**

b) Councillor Training

The Clerk noted that councillors were welcome to sign up for training, which was being offered online. Janet Church had signed up for training.

13. Reports from Parish Councillors

It was noted that there were issues with tractors churning up verges around the village, especially in School Road when passing parked vehicles. It was acknowledged that there was not much that could be done about this.

14. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would be Monday 17th August 2020, 7.45pm at Freethorpe Village Hall or via Zoom, depending on government guidance at the time. Nick Spencer and Linda Turner sent their apologies for the meeting.

14. Exclusion of the Press and Public under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to consider the following item of business:

It was **agreed** to exclude the press and public for the remainder of the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

a) Applications for the Position of Parish Clerk and Interview Arrangements

The applications were received and sifted, and interview arrangements confirmed.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm

CHAIRMAN