

EASTON ON THE HILL PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Meeting of Easton on the Hill Parish Council

Held on Friday 11 January 2019 at 19.00 in the Easton on the Hill Village Hall

Present

Councillors P Bates, A Cutforth, E Hanson, A O'Grady, J Rawlinson, M Simpson (Chairman) & J Ward.
Following the co-options Cllrs W Davis, I Forman and D Sharpe were in attendance from item 18/221

Locum Clerk A Benfield

Others 25 Members of the public were in attendance.

Prior to the start of the meeting the Clerk made the following statement: -

The Parish Council is currently under a high level of scrutiny –

- A Governance Review was completed in July 2018
- I am here as Locum Clerk
- And it cannot afford to delay decisions

Having taken advice yesterday and today it is my advice to Council that the meeting should progress as planned. The 'letter of the law' states that 3 clear days' notice should be given of all Council meetings however with the current situation the Parish Council finds itself in it needs to take a pragmatic approach. Due to a miscommunication between myself as Locum Clerk and Councillors the notices were not displayed within the village as set down in law. However as soon as this was brought to my attention by a resident measures were put in place to rectify this:-

- The agenda was posted on the village website
- Social Media was used to inform people
- Notices were posted on 2 open notice boards in the village
- All Cllrs were asked to let people know

In terms of the village knowing about the meeting being held tonight there –

- Were a number at the last meeting who are aware of the reschedule
- Are a number linked to those scheduled for co-option who know of the reschedule
- There are a number who have been in communication with me about matters who know of the reschedule,
- I am also aware that a number of residents have been approached by Cllrs about matters that took place at the last meeting and about matters to be discussed at this.
- This is backed up by the number in attendance at this meeting.

The non-posting of the notices of the meeting only becomes a problem if someone makes a formal complaint and I am satisfied that I and Cllrs have done as much as possible to mitigate the issue in this instance. If they do it will be dealt with through the Councils adopted Complaints Procedure – in this instance I would expect the complaint to be upheld as it would be correct. However, the council has done what it can to mitigate the error and measures will be put in place to ensure it does not occur again.

Following the statement, the Chairman asked those Members present if they were content for the meeting to proceed. With a majority showing in favour of continuing the Chairman formally opened the meeting

18/215 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr L Stokes (Personal)

18/216 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made

18/217 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

One resident questioned the recommendation in the Clerks report at item 18/224.3 to which she responded

18/218 MINUTES

The Clerk commented that on listening to the recording of the meeting of Monday 12 November she agreed that the resolution at item 18/192 was not a correct record so she had amended them to reflect the recording.

The minutes of the meeting of Monday 10 December 2018 were discussed. It was agreed that the resolutions throughout were a correct record of the decisions made but it was felt that the wording within the background of item 18/03 should be amended to remove the words 'pedestrian access' in para 4 to avoid misunderstanding in the future. The Clerk crossed through the words and the Chairman initialled the change

Resolved 218.1 The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 12 November
218.2 The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 10 December 2018 were confirmed as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman with a minor amendment to remove the words 'pedestrian access from item 18/203 para 4 on page 3

18/219 VACANCIES AND CO-OPTION

Having noted that the current 3 vacancies were eligible for co-option as no electors had requested a bi-election consideration was given to the six applications of co-option. The Clerk confirmed that all six had signed to confirm that were eligible to stand and had submitted a short personal profile as circulated in advance of the meeting

Ballot papers were distributed to all Members with the following results:-

Vacancy 1 – three rounds of voting with Mr Forman receiving the outright majority

Vacancy 2 – 1 round of voting with Mrs Sharpe receiving the outright majority

Vacancy 3 – 1 round of voting with Mr Davis receiving the outright majority

Resolved 219.1 That the three vacancies on the Parish Council were eligible for co-option as not requests for a bi-election had been requested.
219.2 That Mr Forman be co-opted to the Parish Council to fill vacancy 1
219.3 That Mrs Sharpe be co-opted to the Parish Council to fill vacancy 2
219.4 That Mr Davis be co-opted to the Parish Council to fill vacancy 3

18/220 DECLARATIONS OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

Declarations of Acceptance of Office from Cllrs Davis, Forman and Sharpe were signed and witnessed by the Clerk

18/221 GOVERNANCE MATTERS

The draft governance documents circulated in advance of the meeting were considered and it was agreed that the member/Officer Protocol, GDPR Consent to Hold Information form and the Public Participation Policy and Procedure were accepted without debate.

Discussion did take place on the Unreasonable Complainant Policy and it was agreed that this should relate to Members as well as the public. It was therefore agreed to add the following statement to the policy 'This applies to councillors as well and members of the public'.

Resolved 221.1 That the Member/Officer Protocol as circulated should be adopted with immediate effect
221.2 That the GDPR Consent to Hold Information form as circulated should be adopted with immediate effect
221.3 That the Public Participation Policy and Procedure as circulated should be adopted with immediate effect
221.4 That the Unreasonable Complainant Policy should be amended to state that it applies to Members of the Council as well as members of the public and then adopted with immediate effect
221.5 That Northants CALC be appointed as DPO for the Council during the 2019/20 financial year at a cost of £10

18/222 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Consideration was given to the following application:-

- 18/02270/FUL - Erection of two storey dwelling at Land Adjacent 2 Newtown, Easton On The Hill, Northamptonshire (PP-07427941) –

The Planning Committee members made comments related to the flow of water through the underground stream, site access difficulties, lack of construction site management plans to mitigate inconvenience to local residents and the fact that the Highways Authority had recommended refusal on access grounds.

- Resolved** 221.1 Easton on the Hill Parish Council object to the application on the following grounds -
- The method of protection to the flow of water via the underground stream is not clear and therefore raises concern for local flooding and/or contamination
 - Should the underground stream be stopped from flowing this will have a detrimental impact on the wildlife in the pond it feeds
 - Site access is narrow and not management plan for development has been specified and may be detrimental to local inhabitants.
 - The Parish Council concur with the comments made by the Highway Authority

18/223 PLAYING FIELD – REGISTRATION OF LAND

The Clerk commented to Members that as the notice of the meeting was displayed late within the village and that a recommendation within the Governance Report on the Parish Council completed in July 2018 recommended that the Council should develop a project plan as a matter of urgency to develop proposals for the future of the playing fields to be put to the community as whole. That they may wish to defer making firm decision on this matter at the current time. She suggested that the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) be brought forward to early March to allow the village and all interested parties to start to discuss this matter and that a working party be formed to look into all the issues to develop working propositions to be put to the community for the Parish Council to adopt and take forward as a long-term strategy for the community as a whole.

A detailed discussion took place on a number of aspects linked to the playing fields including the history of the original lease to the Playing Field Committee, responsibility of the maintenance of the bridleway and the incompatibility between the status of the bridleway and the planning permission linked to change of use that required car parking on site.

Members agreed that there are a number of issues and concerns that need to be addressed and that it did need to include the community as well as other interested parties in the discussions but that without the Parish Council having proved title to the land little forward movement could be made. It was therefore decided that the Parish Council would proceed to register the land and, in the meantime, would arrange for the APM to include an item on the playing field to engage with the village. The intention being to reach a collective understanding of what the community want and to form a 'task and finish Working Party consisting of Cllrs, residents and other interested parties to look into the future of the playing fields as a whole. This should include all matters including the reclassification of the bridleway, responsibility for upkeep, relocation and future use. The terms of reference of this Working Party to be agreed at the APM.

- Resolved**
- 223.1 That the content of the Playing Field Update Report from the Chairman dated 2 December 2018 be received and noted
 - 223.2 That the content of the appendices to the Playing Field Update Report from the Chairman dated 2 December 2018 numbered 1 to 3 be received and noted
 - 223.3 That the Parish Council formally register the ownership of the land known as Easton on the Hill Playing Field (Ordinance Survey reference number 91 and 162) to the Parish Council
 - 223.4 That the Parish Council confirms that it intends to apply to have the bridleway known as Ketton Drift to be reclassified to a Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT)
 - 223.5 That the content of the Statutory Declarations 1 to 4 in support of Easton on the Hill Parish Councils registration of Playing Field Land be received and noted
 - 223.6 That the content of the appendices to the Statutory Declarations 1 to 4 in support of Easton on the Hill Parish Councils registration of Playing Field Land be received and noted
 - 223.7 That a sum of £150 be approved for payments in support of the registration of the land and swearing of the statutory declarations.
 - 223.8 That the Annual Parish Meeting be held on Tuesday 5 March 2019 to include the forming of a Working Party to consider all aspects of the future of the Easton on the Hill Playing Fields and form recommendations for the consideration of the Parish Council.

18/224 CLERKS REPORT

The Clerk presented her report to Members.

- Kings Cliffe Local Liaison Group – Cllr Sharpe expressed an interest in becoming the Council representative on this group and no representative from Easton on the Hill had attended for long time
- Northamptonshire County Council 2019-20 Budget Consultation – it was agreed that Members should respond as individuals and to not submit a collective view of the Parish Council
- Northamptonshire County Council Library provision consultation – it was agreed that Members should respond and individuals and to not submit a collective view of the Parish Council
- Harris & Aspinall's Circus – it was agreed that the Council should decline to have the circus in the village due to the lack of suitable land at the current time

- Resolved** 224.1.1 That Cllr Sharpe be appointed as the Kings Cliffe Local Liaison Group Representative for the rest of the municipal year
- 224.1.2 That no response is submitted to the Northamptonshire County Council 2019-20 Budget Consultation
- 224.1.3 That no response is submitted to the Northamptonshire County Council Library provision consultation
- 224.1.4 That the Clerk responds to Harris & Aspinall's Circus request to hold a circus in the village declining the request due to the lack of suitable land at the current time

The Clerk provided an explanation on the Rolling Program and indicated that she would be working back through the last 12 months minutes to capture those resolutions that had been agreed but not actioned. She hoped to have completed this work by the next Council meeting.

- Resolved** 224.2 That the rolling program be received and noted

Discussion took place on the content of the Clerks report that was recommending reimbursement of £62.35 for the cost of the Hub on the Hill domain renewals. Different views were expressed with some suggesting that the council should not pay with others of the view that the payment should be made as an act of goodwill. A vote was called with five voting in favour and five voting against.

Reference was made to the neutrality of the Chairman's casting vote. The Clerk stated that the Chairman's casting vote should be used wherever possible to maintain the status quo and should not be used in favour of their personal opinion. In this instance the Clerk was recommending that the payment be made and therefore the Chairman should use their casting vote in line with that recommendation. The Chairman confirmed that as part of the Chairmanship training, he had taken he had been advised to consider the view of the Proper Officer when being required to use a casting vote.

- Resolved** 224.3.1 That the report be received and noted.
- 224.3.2 That the sum of £62.35 be reimbursed to Mr Nicol for the domain renewal costs linked to the Hub on the Hill domains
- 224.3.3 That the domains be registered in the name of the Parish Council and that further consideration is given to if the Parish Council should keep ownership of them in the longer term before they are due for renewing again in 2020

Cllr Ward left the meeting at this point in the discussions

18/225 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES

Trees and Greens – Cllr Bates reported on a meeting she had with an Arborist who had been requested to quote by the Clerk to complete a full Tree Survey. The Clerk informed Members of the actions she had taken to arrange for quotes for the survey as one had not been completed for a number of years and the Council was at risk if it did not carry out regular surveys and maintenance.

Playing Field – Cllr Simpson made no report and the matter of the playing fields had been discussed earlier in the meeting

Vehicle Activation Devices – some background to these devices was provided for the newer member of the Council and what was required as part of the regular maintenance and inspections. The Chairman indicated that Cllr Stokes had expressed an interest in this matter. Cllrs Forman and Rawlinson agreed to take on the maintenance and inspection of the devices and it was agreed to speak to Cllr Stokes to establish what he could do to support them going forward. It was requested that the data from the devices was reported to a future meeting.

Communication and Website – the Clerk commented that with the new website in preparation she did not envisage that a Cllr would need to be appointed to undertake this task. However, she did request that all members provided, photos and contact details as soon as possible to assist her in getting the site live. She also requested that they provide scenes and photographs from the village to enhance the site, along with details of events and activities that take place.

Checkers – Information was provided to new members on what was required of the 'Checkers' and why it was necessary. It was agreed that the list for the year should be drawn up alphabetically with Cllr Bates carrying out the tasks during January. The Clerk committed to check with the insurance company how often the checks were required.

- Resolved** 225.1 That the verbal report from Cllr Bates and the Clerk be received and noted
- 225.2 That the comments from Cllr Simpson be received and noted

- 225.3.1 That Cllrs Forman and Rawlinson be appointed to take on responsibility for maintenance and inspection of the vehicle activation devices owned by the Parish Council and that Cllr Stokes be approached to assist.
- 225.3.2 That the Chairman discuss with Cllr Stokes further his expressed interest in speeding matters within the village
- 225.4.1 That the verbal report from the Clerk regarding the new website is received and noted
- 225.4.2 That Cllrs provide the Clerk with information for the website as soon as possible to assist her in getting it live by the end of the month
- 225.5.1 That the list of Checkers for 2019 be formed by allocating Cllrs alphabetically to each month
- 225.5.2 That the Clerk clarify with the insurance company how often checks on Council assets should be undertaken.
- 225.5.3 That the Clerk review the last play equipment ROSPA report to establish if all action had been completed

18/226 ORDERS FOR PAYMENT

Resolved That the following payments be made –

- Clerking Services - £1843.36
- Domain renewal - £62.35
- Expenses - £55.43
- Street light energy - £267.09

18/227 BANK RECONCILIATION

The Clerk indicated to Members that there was currently a difference of £100 in the bank reconciliation.

Resolved That the bank reconciliation be received and noted

228 BUDGET REPORT

The Clerk stated that she still had not managed to review the budget report but that this would be done in advance of the next meeting

18/229 MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

Comments on the following matters were made –

- Spring Close – the ivy has grown considerably and needs to be cleared
- Street lights – the light on the corner of Baxter's Lane is the responsibility of the Parish Council
- News and Views – no item included in the last edition from the Parish Council.
- Weed Spraying of verges – who was responsible

Spring close – ivy has grown want to get volunteers – add to Feb agenda.

- Resolved**
- 229.1.1 That the comments made were received and noted
 - 229.1.2 That the Clerk add the street light on the corner of Baxter's Lane to the Parish Councils asset list and inform the street light maintenance company
 - 229.1.3 That Cllr Sharpe provide contact details for News and Views to the Clerk to allow her to make contact prior to the next edition going to print
 - 229.2 That the issue of ivy in Spring Common is brought forward to the next meeting