EASTON ON THE HILL PARISH COUNCIL

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Ketton

Stamford

PE9 3RA

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| **Minutes of the Meeting of Easton on the Hill Parish Council** |
| Held on Monday 8 April 2019 at 19.00 in the Easton on the Hill Village Hall |
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| Present |  |
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| Councillors | A Cutforth, I Forman, J Rawlinson, M Simpson (Chairman) & D Sharpe |
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| Clerk | A Benfield (Locum Clerk) J Rice (new Clerk) |
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| Others | 31 Members of the public were in attendance. |
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| **18/274** | **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** |
|  | Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs P Bates, W Davis, E Hanson & L Stokes (personal reasons). Cllr J Ward (ill health).  |
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|  | An apology for absence was given by Cllr Cutforth on behalf of Cllr O’Grady (personal reasons). The Locum Clerk commented that she would not normally accept apologies from one Councillor on behalf of another as it could lead to confusion and bad practice. |
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|  | **Resolved** | That the apologies be received and noted |
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| **18/275** | **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** |
|  | There were no declarations of interest made in any matters on the agenda |
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| **18/276** | **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** |
|  | A resident stated that he was unclear of how people get to know of meetings as he had only become aware that it was happening by a 3rd party. The Chairman stated that the agenda for the meeting is posted on both the Council website and notice boards throughout the village 3 clear days before the meeting takes place. |
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|  | He then went on the ask that if the development proposed by Johnson Mowat for land north of Stamford Road, immediately adjacent to the western edge of Easton on the Hill happened would it encourage the re-opening of the village school and the introduction of a 30mph speed limit along Stamford Road. The Chairman indicated that he expected these matters would be discussed during the specific agenda item. |
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| **18/277** | **MINUTES** |
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|  | **Resolved** | The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 11 March 2019 were confirmed as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman |
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| **18/278** | **RAF WITTERING** |
|  | The Clerk reported that Squadron Leader Knights had given apologies for non-attendance due to ill health but that he would welcome the opportunity to attend the next meeting |
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|  | **Resolved** | 278.1 | That Squadron Leader Knights be invited to attend the next meeting |
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|  | The communication from AMEY regarding the Tree Management Plan for RAF Wittering was received. |
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|  | **Resolved** | 278.2 | That the communication from AMEY regarding RAF Wittering Tree Management Plan be received and noted |
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|  | The communication from Wing Commander M S A Ainsworth MA RAF regarding proposed sites for Red Arrow Team due to closure of RAF Scampton was received. |
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|  | **Resolved** | 278.3 | That the communication from Wing Commander M S A Ainsworth MA RAF regarding proposed sites for Red Arrow Team due to closure of RAF Scampton be received and noted |
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| **18/279** | **GOVERNANCE MATTERS** |
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|  | The Locum Clerk reported to the meeting that a Code of Conduct Complaint she had brought against a Councillor was to be investigated as the Deputy Monitoring Officer who was dealing with it considered that a formal investigation should take place. Once this is completed the resultant decision notice will be provided to the Parish Council. |
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|  | The Locum Clerk also reported to the meeting that a complaint had been received by her against an Easton on the Hill Parish Councillor. She stated that she had requested advice from Northants CALC as the Council complaints policy only covers dealing with complaints against the Council as a whole. |
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|  | The Locum Clerk had tabled a letter received from the ENC Monitoring Officer received that day. The letter was in response to the six-month Governance Review update that had been submitted to ENC by the Council in February. Due to the fact that Cllr had not had a chance to consider the content in advance of the meeting it was agreed it should be on the agenda for the next meeting for formal consideration. |
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|  | **Resolved** | 279.1 | That the Code of Conduct complaint against a Member of EOTH considered by the ENC Deputy Monitoring Officer has proceeded to investigation be noted |
|  |  | 279.2 | That the outcome of the above item be carried forward until an outcome is received. |
|  |  | 279.3 | That the complaint received by the Locum Clerk from a resident against a Councillor be noted and await a response from the CEO of NCALC before processing further |
|  |  | 279.4 | That the letter and supporting documents from the ENC Monitoring Officer be brought back to the next meeting for formal consideration and response. |
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| **18/280** | **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**It was noted that the Planning Committee had informally reviewed the following Planning Application and recommend that no comments should be made. |
|  | 19/00399/FUL & LBC - Proposal : Single storey extension to rear of house and replace door on front of house at 4 High Street Easton On The Hill Stamford Northamptonshire PE9 3LR |
|  | 18/02424/FUL - Proposal : Replace kitchen/dining room window with french doors at 2 Priory Court West Street Easton On The Hill Stamford Northamptonshire PE9 3LS |
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|  | **Resolved** | 280.1 | That no comments be made on the above Planning Applications |
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|  | Communication from developer Johnson Mowat regarding the public consultation on proposed development on land off Stamford Road was considered. |
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|  | Chairman reported development on this land had been proposed previously and all the information relating to the consultation carried out at that time was online. ENC Planning Department had stated that the proposal for 92 properties was not in keeping with the Local Plan so it was not granted permission as only small infill development would be allowed without being supported through a Neighbourhood Plan. The Chairman will forward to the Clerk the note received form the Planning Officer last year. |
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|  | Differing views were raised by Councillors in attendance. One view being that development was needed, assuming site is reasonable, to bring life back into the village as there was in need of affordable housing. Alternatively, it was expressed that the quantity of housing proposed appeared excessive, but the formal plans would have to be considered before a decision was reached. Comment was also made that if the developers were proposing infrastructure to support the viability of the village, for instance relocation of the playing field it may be more appealing.  |
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|  | As the developers had requested to meet with Parish Council it was agreed they be invited to attend a meeting once the consultation ended so that the comments from the community were taken into account. The Chairman commented that it would be useful if those members of the public intending to respond to the consultation also provided a copy of their comments to the Council by email so that Members were fully aware of the views of the village prior to the meeting. |
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|  | **Resolved** | 280.2 | That the communication be received and noted |
|  |  | 280.3 | That an invitation be extended to Johnson Mowat to attend a Parish Council once their consultation is ended to enable comments submitted to be taken in account |
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| **18/281** | **TREE SURVEY REPORT** |
|  | Cllr Rawlinson provided a verbal report on the site meeting held on Friday 5 April with the Arborist, Locum Clerk and Chairman. He reported that tags have been removed from 2 trees that were not the responsibility of the Council, however there were a further 4 located in the same vicinity that appear to potentially belong to the same land owner.  |
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|  | In respect of NT1 (NT relating to ‘no tag’) it was very unclear if this was Council responsibility or not due to its location directly central to a stone boundary wall. It was also commented that the tree was subject to the complaint to be considered later in the meeting relating to the fallen ivy, the severing of which had satisfied one resident but caused ire from another. In addition, this tree was also subject to a request for pollarding by a resident, however within the tree report it was listed as not requiring any work for either health and safety or maintenance grounds. Members were asked to note that pollarding would require it to be repeated every three years and that regrowth could result in stem weakness leading to more risk.  |
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|  | Members discussed the options relating to NT1 and concluded that ownership of the tree should be established before making any further decisions. If established it belongs to the resident, he would be free to carry out any work he wished. However, if established that it is a Council responsibility and either permission was granted to the resident to arrange for pollarding to take place or the work was done by the Council at the behest of the resident there will be a long-term financial impact on the Council. |
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|  | It was agreed therefore, that the boundaries of Spring Close and all other Council owned land need to be formally established so that the Council is fully aware of its areas of responsibility and what trees do come under its ownership throughout the village. Suggestions were made that the Council should approach Stapleton’s to establish what deeds and boundary plans it holds on behalf of the Council and that the Council approaches residents to request they confirm their boundaries from their deeds.  |
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|  | Comment was made during the discussion on boundaries of a locked cupboard within the Village Hall that contained parish council records. All those present were startled at the revelation as this information had not been known until this time. |
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|  | Moving on to the tree report formally it was agreed that a decision be deferred until the work on establishing boundaries was completed. It was suggested that residents and Stapleton’s, be contacted to establish these. |
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|  | Having reviewed the report provided by the Locum Clerk regarding the formation of a policy concerning having work carried out on trees other than for safety and maintenance grounds it was agreed that a draft policy should be formulated for consideration at a future meeting. |
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|  | In giving consideration to the residents request to reduce the height of a tree in Spring Close due to loss of light it was agreed that no decision be made until ownership was established. |
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|  | **Resolved** | 281.1 | That the verbal report be received and noted |
|  |  | 281.2 | That consideration of the recommendations with the report be deferred until the boundaries are established using resident’s property deeds and/or records of Council land held by Stapletons. |
|  |  | 281.3 | That a draft policy be formulated by the Clerk for consideration of members at a future meeting |
|  |  | 281.4 | That the request to reduce the height of NT1 in Spring Close due to loss of light not be considered further until ownership was established. |
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| **18/282** | **ALLOTMENTS** |
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|  | The Locum Clerk provide brief details of incidents that had taken place in connection to the allotments since the last meeting. She said she was unable to provide further detail as it was linked to the complaint received against a Councillor as reported earlier in the meeting |
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|  | She did say that as a result of what had occurred, she had held a meeting with the Allotment Officer and the Chairman to inform them of advice received from the NCALC CEO that the Allotment Officer should no longer act on behalf of the Parish Council in matters related to the Allotments. |
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|  | Members considered the draft Allotment documents as provided. It was commented that the agreement is very extensive and appeared to be overly detailed. In response the Chairman stated that in the past policies and procedures had been less so which had resulted in some of the difficulties experienced by the Council. It was questioned if bees should be allowed due to the proximity of the site to local houses. |
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|  | Debate took place on the following points:-* 6.2 – what amenities other than water are provided? It was clarified this was to ‘future proof’ the document should it be decided that additional amenities would be provided – agreed it should remain in the rules
* 10.1 – following a discussion on the ‘fairness’ of this clause to plots in corners with additional hedges it was agreed that it should remain
* 14.3 – as each plot is separated from its neighbour by a footpath it was agreed that reference to dumping or storing of waste on the boundary with an adjacent property was not relevant and therefore it should be removed
* 15 – it was agreed that the keeping of bees option should be included
* 16.2 – it was agreed that reference to the not keeping of livestock without consent should be retained.
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|  | **Resolved** | 282.1 | Received and noted clerk report |
|  |  | 282.2 | That the allotment tenancy agreement as provided be adopted with the removal of point 14.3 only. |
|  |  | 282.3 | That the Tenancy Agreement and GDPR Allotment Privacy Notice be adopted without amendment |
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| **There was no item 18/283 listed on the agenda for discussion** |
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| **18/284** | **CLERKS REPORT** |
|  | Communication has been received from Troy Planning offering their services and it was agreed to consider them in the future for planning needs as appropriate. |
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|  | The request from the Village Hall Committee for payment towards the additional use of the Village Hall was considered. Members felt that it was a fair request as the Council had made additional use of the facility and that the payment requested should be made |
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|  | With regard to the information from ACRE about the Village of the Year Award it was agreed that it was not appropriate for the Council to get involved directly at the current time but that the communication should be passed onto the Village Plan Working Party to consider in the future. |
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|  | **Resolved** | **284.1** | a) That a payment of £106 be made to the Village Hall Committee for additional use of the facilities |
|  |  |  | b) That the communication from Troy Planning be received and noted |
|  |  |  | c) That the communication from Peterborough City Council Mineral and Waste Plan be received and noted |
|  |  |  | d) That the information from Northants ACRE on the Village of the Year Award be passed to the Village Plan Working Party |
|  |  | **284.2** | That the Rolling Program be received and noted |
|  |  | **284.3** | That the verbal update on the ICO investigation into FOI Request dated October 2017 be received and noted.  |
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| **18/285** | **REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES** |
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|  | Trees and Greens – it was agreed that most of this item had been covered earlier in the meeting. In respect of the complaint by the resident following the recent ivy removal in Spring Close was considered. Members felt that the timing of the work had caused the problem and that a letter should be sent apologising profusely for the additional work that had been caused by the dropping of the leaves from the severed ivy on NT1 |
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|  | Playing Field – Cllr Simpson stated that he had provided a presentation to the Playing Field Working Party at their first meeting on the background, history and current state of play and then left the meeting. Also, he was aware that the application to register the land had been sent into the land registry and the solicitors are awaiting a response but they would not be drawn on a completion date. |
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|  | Vehicle Activation Devises – Cllrs Forman & Rawlinson reported that both devises are working and that the batteries were being replaced regularly and that they would remain in the current locations until requested to relocate elsewhere in the village.  |
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|  | A discussion was held on the location of the historical downloaded data and who was responsible for the data download now as it was supposed to be sent to the police for analysing. Also, the Speeding and Traffic Working Party required a copy for the work they were undertaking on behalf of the Council. The Chairman agreed to contact the ex-Cllr who had been responsible for this matter in the past. In considering the cameras on the A43 it was agreed that no action should be taken in respect to relocating these until the data was available to review. |
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|  | Village Hall - Cllr Simpson reported that he was to complete the trustee documents and attend the meeting at the end of the month |
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|  | Playing Field Working Party – Cllrs Davis, Forman & Rawlinson – Cllr Rawlinson stated that the Working Party had appointed a Chairman and Secretary and agreed its Terms of Reference at the first meeting, that the group was moving forward and the second meeting had been arranged. |
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|  | Village Traffic & Speed Working Party – Cllrs Sharpe reported that the group had met but had not arranged a second meeting as they required access to the VAS data for analysis. The Chairman confirmed he would make arrangements for the data to be provided to Cllr Stokes as soon as practicable. |
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|  | Village Plan Working Party – Members agreed to defer the appointment of a Councillor to join the working Party until the next meeting when there would be more Councillors in attendance to discuss |
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|  | **Resolved** | **285.1** | That the Clerk write to the resident offering profuse apologies on behalf of the Council for the additional work caused by the severing of the ivy on NT1 |
|  |  | **285.2** | That the report from Cllr Simpson be received and noted |
|  |  | **285.3** | That the report from Cllrs Forman and Rawlinson be received and noted |
|  |  | **285.4** | That it be noted that no Checkers Report had been provided due to the absence of Cllr Davies |
|  |  | **285.5** | That the report from Cllr Simpson be received and noted |
|  |  | **285.6** | a) That the report from Cllrs Forman and Rawlinson be received and noted |
|  |  |  | b) That the Terms of Reference be received and noted including the amendments highlighted within |
|  |  |  | b) That the notes of the first meeting of the Working Party be received and noted  |
|  |  | **285.7** | a) That the report from Cllr Sharpe be received and noted |
|  |  |  | b) That the notes of the first meeting of the Working Party and the Terms of Reference be received and noted  |
|  |  | **285.8** | That the appointment of a Cllr onto the Village Plan Working Party be deferred to the next meeting until more Cllrs were in attendance to discuss |
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| **18/286** | **INTERNAL AUDITORS REPORT** |
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|  | **Resolved** | That the Internal Auditors report be received and noted and that the recommendations included be adopted for the following financial year. |
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| **18/287** | **ANNUAL RETURN** |
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|  | **Resolved** | **287.1** | That this Council formally noted its consideration and confirmation that it has maintained an adequate system of internal control throughout each financial year in accordance with Assertions 2 & 6 of the Governance statement contained in Section 4 of the Annual Return. |
|  |  | **287.2** | That the Annual Governance Statement for 2018/19 be approved and signed |
|  |  | **287.3** | That the Accounting Statements for 2018/19 be approved and signed |
|  |  | **287.4** | That following consideration of all the above documents, approval be given for the Annual Return to be signed by the Chairman and Locum Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer |
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| **18/288** | **APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2019/20** |
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|  | **Resolved** | That Northants Association of Local Councils be re-appointed as Internal Auditors for the Financial Year 2019/20 |
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| **18/289** | **ORDERS FOR PAYMENT** |
|  | The Locum Clerk informed Members of the difficulties in making the payments required at the current time due to the ongoing difficulties with closing the Barclay’s account and moving all funds to Unity Trust. It was agreed that arrangement should be made to transfer £10,000 from the Barclays Business deposit account to the Community current account and that a cheque for the same amount be raised to pay the funds into Unity Trust. |
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|  | **Resolved** | **289.1** | That the following payments be made –* Clerking Services - £2404.86
* Administration costs - £26.90
* ENC bin emptying - £64.19
* Street light energy - £245.15
* Grass cutting - £280.00
* Job advert – £241.20
* Street light maintenance - £222.84
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|  |  | **289.2** | That the following payments made between meetings be ratified:-* Street light energy - £249.72
* Street light maintenance - £56.33
* Annual cloud storage refund - £40.00
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|  |  | **289.3** | That the transfer of £10,000 from Barclays to Unity Trust be actioned as soon as possible |
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| **18/290** | **BANK RECONCILLIATION** |
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|  | **Resolved** | **290.1** | That the bank reconciliation report up to 28 February 2019 be received and noted |
|  |  | **290.2** | That the bank reconciliation report up to 31 March 2019 be received and noted |
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| **18/291** | **BUDGET REPORT** |
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|  | **Resolved** | That the budget report to the end of March be received and noted |
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| **18/291** | **MATTERS FOR INFORMATION** |
|  | Old clerk still listed on fbDefib training and new box for post office one to be on agenda for next meeting – first responder to arrange the training |
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|  | **Resolved** | **291.1** | That the previous Clerk’s details are listed on the Council facebook page be received, noted and amended |
|  |  | **291.2** | That defibrillator training for Cllrs and a new box for the post office equipment be included for consideration on the next agenda |
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| **18/292** | **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC** |
|  | To resolve that the press and public are excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the sensitive and/or confidential business to be transacted in accordance with s1(1) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 |
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| **18/293** | **CHURCHYARD GATE REPLACEMENT** |
|  | The Chairman reported that he and Cllr Forman had met twice to discuss the replacement of the gates in the churchyard. Site meetings had been arranged with 2 of the contractors who had quoted for the work and both had submitted amended quotes based on the updated specification. The third contractor had not attended a site visit or submitted a new quote as the changed specification was included in their original quotation.  |
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|  | The amended specification agreed during the site meetings and provided to the contractors was:-* Take down and leave on site the two existing timber field gates.
* Reuse current hinge furniture from exiting gates.
* Replace with 1no 10 ft wide and 1no 4ft wide standard timber field gate as a pair. Hung onto the existing timber gate posts. Complete with a drop bolt to the large leaf and hinges that could be padlocked and auto latch to the small leaf.
* Hang large leaf gate from eastern gate post at both the north and south entrance.
* Drill retainer holes for closed and open position at both entrances.
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|  | As the sum of approximately £4,500 of the Churchyard PWLB Loan will remain unspent following the completion of the gate replacement discussion took place on planting an additional row of lime trees along the wall of the cemetery extension to continue the existing row of mature trees in the original cemetery. Concern was raised that the space the trees would take up would reduce the amount of land available for burials in the future. Members noted that the advice received from NCALC was that there were three options available to the Council with the unspent sum –* Keep it ringfenced for future cemetery extension improvements
* Request permission from the Secretary of State to use it for another Council project.
* Repay it to the PWLB to reduce the sum outstanding on the loan
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|  | **Resolved** | 293.1 | That the report be received and noted |
|  |  | 293.2 | That the quotation report from the Locum Clerk be received and noted |
|  |  | 293.3 | That A1 Fencing be appointed to replace the gates at a cost of £625 per set of gates and that the existing gates be retained by the Council |
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| **18/294** | **STAFFING MATTER** |
|  | The report from Cllr Hanson on behalf of the Appointment Panel was received and noted and the appointment of Jenny Rice from Monday 8 April 2019 was confirmed on the SLCC/NALC Terms and Conditions of appointment.  |
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|  | The Locum Clerk stated that she was still to request references but would endeavour to do so as soon as possible but with the Easter holidays it would likely delay this as schools were closed. |
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|  | The continued appointment of the Locum Clerk to provide support to the new Clerk was discussed. It was clarified that this support would be at the direction of the new Clerk and only for those matters she felt she required assistance or support to deal with. The Locum Clerk confirmed she would not be attending any further meetings and would only communicate with the new Clerk. |
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|  | **Resolved** | 294.1 | That report be received and noted |
|  |  | 294.2 | That Jenny Rice be appointed as Clerk to Easton on the Hill Parish Council from Monday 8 April on the SLCC/NALC contract of appointment on the NJC pay scale LC2 (18-23) 2019 award |
|  |  | 294.3 | That the Locum Clerk be retained on an informal basis whilst the new Clerk requires support with this appointment to be at the direction of the new Clerk  |
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| **18/295** | **RE-ADMITTANCE OF PRESS AND PUBLIC** |
|  | To resolve that as the sensitive and/or confidential business has been transacted that the press and public are re-admitted to the meeting in accordance with s1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 |
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| **18/296** | **DATE OF NEXT MEETING** |
|  | The next meeting will be held on 13 May 2019 |
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|  | Signed: Date: |
|  |  | Chairman |
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