

Minutes of the meeting of Griston Parish Council held at Angelica Place on Tuesday 12th January 2016.

Attending: Malcolm Bellingham (Chairman), Stewart Southgate (Vice-Chairman), David Barnett, Tracey Johnson, Andrew Merritt-Morling, Stephanie Merritt-Morling, Malcolm Newby, Claire Bowes (County Councillor) and four members of the public.

The meeting began with a presentation and grateful thanks to the retiring Clerk, Bridget Park who has served the Parish Council for over 30 years.

1. Public participation: There were no questions.
2. Apologies received from: PCSO Tonya Winsley.
3. Declarations of interest: All the Councillors declared an interest in item 12 on the agenda. Dispensations were requested in writing and were granted.
4. Minutes of the meeting of 3rd November 2015 were approved.
5. Matters arising:
 - Village sign – Mr Barnett reported that fundraising had been disappointing so far with only three donations received amounting to £350. He did not feel able to approach Breckland Council for match funding until more had been achieved locally. A fundraising event is to be held at the Waggon & Horses in the near future. Mr Barnett will re-visit local businesses. Claire Bowes advised that businesses need to be approached now, before they have set their budgets for the year.
 - a) Adopt a kiosk – The Clerk reported that the British Heart Foundation funding had now run out for defibrillators. If this is to be the Council's aim for the kiosk then it needs to be adopted and made ready ahead of any future funding applications. There was much discussion over ownership of the land where it is situated, the need for permission from the landowner and the possibility of it being moved to a different location. It was decided not to proceed to adopt the kiosk.
 - b) Bank change of mandate – The majority of the required forms have now been completed. The Clerk will sort out the last few details during the next week.
 - c) The outstanding disclosable interests form was collected and will be dispatched.
6. Police/SNAP – The October crime figures showed four crimes all of which related to the prison. The November figures showed thirteen crimes, again these were all prison related. The meeting was informed that the next SNAP meeting would be held at Watton Fire Station on 27th January at 2pm.
7. Recreation ground
 - Quotes had now been obtained for different quantities of 'Cushionfall'. It was decided that the quote for tote bags @ £71 +VAT per cubic metre represented the best value for money. It was agreed to order 2 tote bags.
 - Quotes had also been obtained for 'No barbeques allowed' signs. It was decided that the wording needs to be 'No unauthorised barbeques'. The Chairman will visit Signs Express to check the quality of the proposed signs. If the cost is not significantly different from the quoted price of £13.83 + VAT per A4 sign because of the alteration in wording then an order will be placed for 3 x A4 signs.
 - Two quotes for the kissing gate for the proposed new entrance to the recreation ground had been received. One of the quotes was for £2282.33 + VAT for supply and fit of the gate only. However, the other quote from Waveney Fencing also included the replacement of some damaged fencing and was a much lower price at only £1335 +VAT. It was decided to accept the lower quote.
 - It was pointed out that the hedges at the recreation ground have for the last few years been trimmed on a voluntary basis and concern was raised that perhaps this should be officially put out for tender. As it is done on a voluntary basis and no payment is made it was decided that it was proper for this arrangement to continue.

8. Correspondence
- a) NALC Sector Led Body - The Clerk explained that a new system was to be introduced in relation to Parish Council audits. The Parish Council have the choice (until 31st March) of opting out of the Sector Led Body for the procurement of auditors. The Clerk explained that she was not yet in a position to fully understand the current requirements for audit or the implications of opting out of the new system as she was very new to the position. However, she felt that the Parish Council would possibly incur higher costs and more difficulties by opting out and having to procure their own external auditor. As there will not be a requirement for an actual external audit to be carried out it was suggested that the Council did not need an external auditor at all and that the internal audit system currently in place would be sufficient unless any problems arose. The Clerk explained that there would be a legal requirement to have a properly appointed external auditor in place at all times not just if or when any questions arose about the village finances. After some further discussion the Parish Council decided to opt out of the new system.
 - b) Electoral Register – The clerk provided forms for signing for any Parish Councillors who wished to request a copy of the electoral register.
 - c) Wayland Partnership – There are currently two new schemes that may be of interest to young people in the area. Further details of these can be found on the village website. Mr Merritt-Morling will contact the Wayland Partnership about this. The former Clerk, Mrs Park has registered an interest with them for some planting in the orchard area of the recreation ground. Mr Barnett informed the Council that eighty village residents had now signed up to the website.
 - d) Age Concern – A request had been received for a donation from the Parish Council. It was considered but it was decided not to make a donation due to there being a local trust fund with similar aims to assist people in the village.
9. Churchyard grass cutting.
RG Maintenance Services have advised the Parish Council that they will be keeping the price of their services at the same level as this year. It was agreed to ask them to continue to cut the grass in the churchyard.
10. Planning
The Clerk reported that outline permission has been granted to J Gulliver for 2 residential Properties adjacent to the Manor House and also to P E Garner for a side extension to straw barn.
11. Neighbourhood Watch
Mrs Merritt-Morling advised the Council that a Co-Ordinator and a Deputy Co-Ordinator had now been appointed for the newly formed Homewatch (formerly known as Neighbourhood Watch) group.
It had previously been suggested that the Parish Council may be willing to release some funds to to the group for the purchase of the Homewatch signs (£20 each) and the initial room hire costs (£16) for the first two meetings that had already been held. It has not yet been decided how many signs will be required but possibly five. Mrs Merritt-Morling said that fund raising activities were already being planned and it was hoped that the group would soon be self-financing. At this point Mrs Merritt-Morling was reminded that she should have declared an interest in this item. It was decided that a sub-Committee of the Parish Council should be formed for the Homewatch group.
Mr Barnett suggested that the money could be paid from the funds that the Council had received from the now disbanded Griston Community Committee. The Chairman felt that this would not be a proper use of that money as it was donated to the Council on the understanding that it would only be used 'for the benefit of the village as a whole'. As the Homewatch group currently had only a small number of members he felt that this did not fulfil that criteria. It was pointed out that even though the number of members may be small the scheme itself would benefit everybody in the village whether or not they chose to join. Mr Merritt-Morling suggested that perhaps targets for future membership numbers could be set. It was agreed to make payment for the £16 room hire immediately and for the cost of the signs when the number required has been determined.

The Clerk suggested that parameters need to be set for the future use of the GCC money.

12. Precept/Budget 2016/17

It was decided that there was no need for any increase in the precept for the next financial year and the amount should remain at this year's level of £8138. The proposed budget was approved.

13. Financial:

Norse – grass cutting	£1071.16
Berryman – glass recycling	£16.20
Angelica Place – room hire	£24.00
B Park – salary	£337.10
HMRC	£71.00

All accounts were approved for payment and cheques signed.

14. Transparency Code Funding

Approval was given to submit the application for government funding.

It was decided that in the unlikely event that the funding application is not successful a laptop and printer would still be purchased by the Parish Council for use by the Clerk.

15. Queen's 90th birthday celebrations.

Mrs Merritt-Morling advised that there was possible funding available of up to £200 for the celebration of the Queen's 90th birthday. The celebration events will be held between 21st and the 24th April. In order to be eligible to apply for funding the village must hold a litter pick in March. Mrs Merritt-Morling has already organised this. Suggestions were made to hold a Village Party on the recreation ground with fancy dress perhaps for the children. Contingency plans will need to be made in case of bad weather. Mrs Merritt-Morling will be organising this for 23rd April. Details will be advertised on the website and in The Waylander.

There will also be beacons lit across the country as part of the national celebrations but it was decided that the village would not take part in this due to the cost and safety implications.

16. Parish Plan

Mr Merritt-Morling requested that there be a full discussion on this at the next Council meeting in March when he will explain his ideas for a type of 5 year business plan for the village. This would enable the Council to monitor its aims and achievements. He provided a printed example for all the Councillors to look at before the next meeting. It was decided that the Clerk could work with him on this over the next few weeks.

17. Clerks salary/training/contract.

The Clerks salary was set at £2059pa. The Chairman stated that a contract would be provided in due course. The Clerk has already booked two training courses for February and March.

18. AOB

Mrs Merritt-Morling has had some feedback from the young people in the village regarding what they would like to see for them in the village in the future.

She asked if the Council could be more pro-active regarding future events. She said that it was disappointing that the Carol singers didn't get organised in time last year.

Mrs Merritt-Morling asked for clarification on how much notice was needed for items to be included on the agenda. The Clerk informed her that she would need to allow 10 days before the date of the meeting.

Mr Newby was concerned that the marquee frame had been left out in all weathers since it was last used.

Mr Barnett now has one of the collecting boxes for EDP tokens. There is a scheme underway that gives community groups the chance of being awarded £1000 if they collect 500 tokens in a month. This could be a chance to raise more funds for the village sign. It was suggested that the local nursing home and the prison are approached to collect some tokens for the village. Copies of the consultation documents for Breckland Council's Local Plan were handed out to be passed amongst the Councillors for any comments. The consultation period ends at 4pm on 22nd February.

The date of the next meeting was set for 1st March 2016. The meeting closed at 9.20pm.