

Minutes of Meeting held 27th September 2017

Present: Coun P Ridley (Chair), Coun A Moore, Coun O Poulter, Coun R Gouldthorpe, Coun J Sanderson, Cllr A Wilkinson (NYCC), Cllr B Phillips (HDC), R Dale (Clerk) PCSO Kim Laws (Northallerton Police) plus 18 members of the public

1) Apologies

None

2) Minutes of meeting held 26th July 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th July 2017 were agreed a true record proposed by Coun Gouldthorpe and seconded by Coun Moore. Signed off by Chair Ridley

3) Police Report

As the meeting was being attended by PCSO Kim Laws, it was agreed to take the Police Report early in order that PCSO Laws could leave the meeting for another appointment once she had finished her presentation. She reported that during the preceding two months there had been one reported incident of Violence against the person, and one incident of Criminal damage. PCSO Laws confirmed that the latter related to the recently discovered vandalism of the new Play Park trampoline. She also reported that there had been a force-wide increase in shed and outbuilding burglaries and warned of the need to keep buildings secure at all times and to report any suspicious activity immediately. A property marking service is available for valuable items and a session could be arranged in the Village Hall if there is sufficient demand for this.

4) Matters arising

It was agreed to defer reporting and discussion of matters relating specifically to the Play Park until item 8 below (originally item 7 on the Agenda).

- a) The sponsorship funding for the Play Park from Yorventure had now been received, together with a VAT refund. The second instalment of the Parish Precept was due at the end of September. An unexpected bill of £300 plus VAT had been received from the auditors. Audits of Parish Council finances are normally conducted free of charge unless turnover in the year exceeds £10,000, which it did in 2016/7 due to the initial one third deposit paid to Image Playgrounds at the commencement of work on the Play Park in February. Budget provision will need to be made for a similar expense in 2018/9 in respect of the 2017/18 audit.
- b) It was reported that Mr Andrew Sedgwick had had some correspondence with Mr Andrew Byrne of Linden Homes regarding the neglected state of the paddock and that the latter had raised the matter with the company's technical team. Unfortunately Andrew was on holiday at the time of the meeting and therefore there was nothing further to report at this time.
- c) The snicket safety barriers on Back Lane had been repaired. A complaint had been received from Mr Michael Fox that the old damaged barrier had been left lying close by. This had now been removed thanks to Coun Sanderson.
- d) It was confirmed that repairs to the damaged road surface at the railway crossing in Station Lane would be the responsibility of Network Rail rather than Wensleydale Railway. Clerk to contact Network Rail.

5) Planning Matters

- a) Concerns were raised by a number of residents regarding a planning application by Mr S Clayton for a proposed development to the rear of Swaledale Court. They reported that vehicles connected with Mr Clayton's business were frequently being parked in the car parking area at the rear of Swaledale Court which is intended for use by residents. A tree had been removed without permission, and there was concern for wildlife as a result of the removal of the tree and shrubbery which had provided a habitat for a variety of birds including owls. They stated that the site had planning permission for equestrian use only and was not a brownfield site, but that since the land had been purchased by Mr Clayton it had been used as a storage facility for plant and equipment used by Mr Clayton's business. The only access to the site (as well as for residents of and visitors to Swaledale Court properties) was via a track which is in poor condition, and that this has been damaged further by heavy duty vehicles used by Mr Clayton's business. The residents asked for the Parish Council's support for their objections to the Planning Application, which was due to be considered at a Planning Committee meeting on 9th November. This was agreed and the Clerk was instructed to prepare a suitable letter of objection from the Council.

6) Correspondence

- a) Our current insurers (AON) have reported that they are ceasing their involvement in the Local Councils' market. Alternative arrangements will have to be made at the next renewal in July 2018.
- b) Following renewal of arrangements with Walkers for grasscutting, several invoices have been received and paid. The projection is that the total grass-cutting bill for the year will exceed budget provisions, but that this is mainly due to the increase in workload from cutting the playground.
- c) A number of notices have been received from Hambleton DC and NYCC. These are now routinely being posted on the Parish Council website and also on the two village noticeboards. It is also now possible for residents to sign up to receive email alerts on Crime & Police, Fire & Rescue, Weather Warnings, Road Alerts, Community News and Events and Service Disruptions by subscribing foc at www.nycm.co.uk.

- d) Residents were being invited to “Have Their Say” in respect of Hambleton DC’s Budget Consultation Process for 2018-9 by completing an online survey at Hambleton.gov.uk/survey/budget (until 27th October 2017).
- e) Notification had been received that the Parish Council must inform the District Council by 31st December of its precept requirements for 2018/19.
- f) Police Matters Report – see item 3 above.
- g) The External Audit had been completed and the Auditors Report had been received, Copies of their report have been placed on the two village noticeboards, and can also be viewed on the Parish Council website.

7) Parish Council Website Updates

The Clerk reported that the website manager Mr Stuart Stephenson, had recently made a number of improvements to the Parish Council website, including the provision of a new facility to allow residents to report any problems with street lighting, drains, paths and roadways etc, and also to send messages directly to the Clerk regarding these and other matters. The sections for Council meeting agendas and minutes and also annual accounts have been brought up-to-date and there is a new section via which residents can view a range of community and other general information notices. A direct link has been added to the Council’s Facebook page. The Transparency Code and Standing Orders have been uploaded to the website.

8) Playing Field

- a) A full RoSPA inspection on the new Play Park has been carried out. The full report had not been received by the time of the meeting, but verbal reports suggested that there were still a significant number of problem areas that needed to be resolved by Image Playgrounds.
- b) Two additional litter bins have now been provided at a cost of £533 excluding VAT. These will be emptied weekly. Mr Steve Ingram, whose house backs onto the park, asked if a request could be submitted to Hambleton DC for the collection day to be changed to Monday, as he was concerned about the possibility of smells from rotting food in the bins especially in warmer weather if they were left unemptied for longer than that (assuming that weekends will be the busiest periods of use of the park and hence when most of the rubbish would be deposited in the bins). Clerk to follow up with Hambleton DC.
- c) There was a wide-ranging discussion over various reported issues which, for convenience, have been grouped under the general heading of “Anti-Social Behaviour”. These included many incidents of “inappropriate” parking, principally in Rievaulx Drive but also in other neighbouring residential streets; children (and some adults) urinating against the hedges at the rear of gardens backing onto the park (particularly in the SW corner of the field); litter; the level of noise during daytime hours especially in the peak periods of use; reports of older teenagers and some adults entering the park in the evenings drinking and making a nuisance of themselves; noise from use of the zipwire, particularly 2out of hours”. The Clerk was asked to make contact with the Hambleton DC Community Safety team for advice and guidance on how best to handle anti-social behaviour, and, if possible, to invite someone from that team to attend the next Council meeting. Other suggestions included installation of a Portaloos, improved signage regarding parking to be placed on the gates and at the entrance to Rievaulx Drive, and setting a “curfew” time for park use. The coordinator of the play Park Committee, Ms Kirsty McGready, indicated that plans were in progress to establish various “friends of the park” groups to try and encourage more community “ownership” of some of these issues. It was felt that some of the issues raised were essentially behavioural problems, and that there was a general need for education of the public. It was also recognised that a major difficulty was that of “enforcement”. Cllr Wilkinson said it was important to try and get photographic evidence but it was acknowledged that this might sometimes be difficult.

The problems of parking seemed to be the source of the majority of complaints that had been received prior to the meeting and it was agreed to convene a separate meeting to focus on this issue.

- d) Two further payments had been made to Image Playgrounds, but a sum of just over £5000 had been retained pending their completion of various “snagging” works at the Park. It was agreed that this final payment would continue to be withheld pending completion of outstanding snagging work (see RoSPA report above).
- e) We are still awaiting payment of the outstanding tranche of funding from Groundwork/Tesco (£3000). Kirsty McGready and the Clerk are pursuing this.
- f) The Clerk reported the contents of correspondence received from two residents – Mrs Amy Abbott, who had written twice about the parking problems in Rievaulx Drive; and Mr Michael Fox, who had sent an email covering several of the issues referred to above, but also extending his concerns about litter to other areas of the village.
- g) The Clerk was asked to contact the Dales School, with whom informal arrangements had previously been made for park visitors to use the school car park during school holidays and at weekends, to try and secure a more formal agreement over these arrangements in order that any new permanent signage could be accurately worded,

9) AOB

- a) A resident complained about dog litter not being picked up along Back Lane. The Clerk was asked to notify the dog warden and ask him to police this area. Mention was made of the posters that had been made previously by school children, and which, whilst they were in place, seemed to encourage dog walkers to pick up their pets’ litter. Perhaps this initiative could be repeated?
- b) It was noted that the noisy manhole covers outside the Royal George and near the entrance to Morton Grange were not the responsibility of NYCC Highways Department. Contact would need to be made with Yorkshire Water to attend to these.
- c) A resident asked whether a 20mph speed limit could be introduced near the schools. Cllr Wilkinson (NYCC) promised to follow this up.
- d) The school sign in Station Lane (approaching from Thrintoft direction) is obstructed by a hedge.

10) Date of next meeting

Wednesday 29th November 2017

The meeting closed at 9.30pm