

Minutes of Meeting held 26th September 2018

Present: Coun P Ridley (Chair), Coun A Moore, Coun O Poulter, Cllr. B Phillips (HDC), Cllr A Wilkinson (NYCC), R Dale (Clerk) plus 5 members of the public

1. Apologies

Coun. Gouldthorpe (work). Coun. Sanderson sent belated apologies for his absence, which was due to unavoidable work issues.

2. Declarations of Interest

None

3. Police Report

For the second successive meeting there was no police representative in attendance. An emailed copy of the bi-monthly report had been received and this indicated that during the preceding two months there had been 9 separate incidents in the Parish, compared with the 1 or 2 incidents normally being reported. There was no information to indicate whether this included the major incident in which four shoplifters were captured in the vicinity of Greenacres following a hunt involving several police vehicles, the Police helicopter and Police dogs. Council was disappointed that, in the light of the number of incidents reported (including several reports on social media of suspicious activity by strangers, the break-in at the egg shed and theft from the railway, which may or may not all have been included in the Police numbers) that the Police had not been able to send an officer to speak to Council. There were one or two comments from the floor about the apparent ineffectiveness of the 101 service, and that recent experience of some parishioners wishing to report suspicious activity was that the response time of that service was well in excess of the average of 2mins 46 secs that had been reported at the May Council Meeting.

The report did also comment on the significant reduction of the number of incidents of Anti Social Behaviour (ASBs) in Hambleton since the start of the year, and that this was in large part due to the work of the Neighbourhood policing teams in conjunction with the Hambleton Partnership Hub.

4. Minutes of meetings held 28th July 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 28th July 2018, having previously been circulated to Council Members, were agreed a true record proposed by Coun. Moore and seconded by Coun. Poulter. No dissensions. The minutes were signed off by Chair Ridley.

5. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting

- 1) Mr Andrew Sedgewick reported that he had finally heard back from Erica Bell, the technical director of Linden Homes, who had advised that the paddock area would be strimmed within the next few days as a temporary expedient to tidy up the area. The company's new sub-contractors had advised that more permanent action should now be delayed until the Spring. Contact had also been made with Peter Jones at HDC, who in turn had involved the Planning Enforcement Officer, since it appeared that Linden Homes may be in breach of their Section 106 obligations, not only with regard to the Paddock area but also to the pond and the ditch which were badly overgrown, and also the absence of trees and shrubs along the edge of the main green, which are shown on all the plans.
- 2) Coun. Poulter had spoken to Image and to their sub-contractors who had laid the mulch path in the Play Park. The latter had visited the Park last year and had indicated that the weed encroachment had nothing to do with they way the path had been put down. They alleged that the weeds were the result of seeds blown onto the surface of the path from the surrounding turf areas. However, a parishioner, Mr Coyle, said that he had been to have a look and that there were thick tufts of meadow grass growing through the mulch, which indicated that the ground had not been sprayed off before the membrane had been laid.

Ms McGready also drew attention to the general state of the pathway which was very uneven in places, and which made it difficult to be crossed safely by wheelchair users. This suggested that the ground had sunk and that the sub-surface had therefore not been properly prepared. This is not consistent with a park which is supposed to be fully accessible and is clearly unacceptable. Cllr. Poulter suggested that the committee should recontact the sub-contractors and ask them to visit again, and also apply pressure on Image Playgrounds.

- 3) The annual RoSPA inspection which had been booked to take place a week earlier so that the report would be available for review at the Council meeting had unfortunately been delayed due to adverse weather conditions, and had not yet taken place.
- 4) The zip wire has been adjusted and the operation is understood to be quieter. The seat has been re-attached ahead of the RoSPA inspection so that the equipment can be properly tested.
- 5) The promised advance notices of the intended bridge closure on 30th September (to facilitate recovery of the stones that had fallen onto the river bank below), had so far not materialised. Cllr. Wilkinson offered to contact Highways urgently to make them aware of this. There is no timetable agreed as yet for the permanent repair of the bridge, which is subject to a consultation exercise because of the historical nature of the structure.

- 6) The last couple of Community Litter Picking sessions had been poorly attended, and one had been called off when no volunteers had appeared by about 11.15am (although it is understood that one volunteer did turn up a couple of minutes after the organiser had locked up and left). The amounts of litter now being collected were comparatively small, and the major problem remaining is that of discarded cigarette ends – some of which will no doubt be from passing cars, but there are some specific areas in the village, such as adjacent to one of the bus stops where people waiting for the bus are stamping out their cigarettes before boarding. Only one of the public waste bins in the village (the one next to the bus stop at the entrance to Morton Grange) had an ash-tray on top.

The next pick was scheduled for Saturday 6th October and would probably be the last until next Spring due to the normal adverse weather conditions during the winter months.

- 7) Following the Community meeting on Traffic and Speeding held by Gina Allen in July, and also the further discussion on this topic at the July Council Meeting, copies of the 95Alive Speed Complaint Forms were made available, and a number of these had then been sent in by different parishioners with complaints about observed speeding incidents. In response to these, several people had received what appeared to be a standard letter which was felt to be somewhat dismissive in tone and content. The letter claimed that the NY Police Traffic Bureau had recently assessed the situation and that a letter confirming this was previously sent out to “this address” (presumably meaning the address to which this response was being sent). None of the parishioners who received this response had any recollection of having received an earlier letter about this matter.

Further, the letter indicated that a decision had been taken to enforce the area with one of their Safety Camera Vehicles, and that the last such deployment took place on 13th May 2018. This was more than three months prior to the Council Meeting, and it was felt that this could not really be described as “regular”. Whilst it was acknowledged that the presence of the Camera Safety Van did indeed act as a deterrent at the time, there was a general concern that the frequency, duration and timing of these deployments did not tackle the underlying problem of speeding through the village – particular at night or in the early hours of the morning when heavy lorries, as well as shift workers on their way to and from Leeming Bar Industrial Estate, have often been seen speeding along the A684, but at times when the Camera Safety Van is not on duty anyway. If assessment of the incidence of speeding along this stretch of the A684 is based solely on the number of motorists caught and convicted as a result of the periodic deployment of the Safety Camera van, this would not give an accurate reflection of the true situation. A more objective assessment made with the assistance of the 7-day 24-hour data logger, which records not only the speeds, but also the types of vehicles involved, as well as the volume of traffic, has been requested but has not yet been forthcoming.

6. Public Forum

No requests had been received from members of the public to either ask a question or make a statement at the meeting on topics that were not included in the main agenda.

7. Planning Matters.

- 1) The closing date for submissions on the planning application for East End House had passed. No comments had been submitted to the Planning Department by the Council.
- 2) A new application had been submitted for the construction of five new detached dwellings at Hatchend. Council had no comments which it wished to be submitted to the Planning Department.

8. Snicket between Meadowfields and St Helen’s Close

The snicket currently remained closed. It was understood that a neighbour whose land is adjacent to the snicket had put in a complaint to Linden Homes who were reportedly reconsidering whether to open the snicket. However, there is a Section 106 obligation that this should be opened to enable children to walk to and from school more safely. In any event it seems that the delay in opening the snicket had been solely due to the fact that kerbs and pathways on the approach to the snicket were unsafe and had to be relayed, and that the work to rectify this was now under way.

It was commented that the width of the snicket was very narrow and that this might present a problem for pushchair and wheelchair users if the hedges that bounded the path were not kept under control.

9. Finance

- 1) The Clerk reported that the balance of funds, including a sum of £43.92 in petty cash, was £8,575.72, with no unrepresented cheques awaiting clearance. The second instalment of the Precept (£3000) was due to be received before the end of the month, and a claim for a VAT Refund of £956 was due to be submitted in October.
- 2) The major outgoings during the preceding two months included £316.80 for grass cutting, £360 for the annual External Audit Fee, and £375 for the Clerk’s remuneration for three months to September (including £75 PAYE).
- 3) The Clerk reported that the External Audit report for 2018-2018 Accounts had been satisfactory, apart from two minor “except fors”, both essentially technicalities. Part 1 of the AGAR submitted by the Council had been signed and dated three days before the declaration in Part 2 was signed. Secondly, there was a discrepancy in the value of Fixed Assets, in that the value brought forward from the previous year plus the value of new capital purchases during the year did not agree with the value of Fixed Assets carried forward. This was explained by the fact that the brought forward value included VAT whereas the carried forward value did not. This explanation was accepted by the Auditors. In future all asset values reported will be shown nett of VAT, as this is the basis on which the Council does its budgeting, given that VAT paid is recoverable.
- 4) A proposal for a donation of £500 to the Village Hall Committee was approved unanimously.
- 5) A proposal for a donation of £250 to St Helen’s Church was approved unanimously.
- 6) New Financial Regulations, copies of which had previously been circulated to Council Members, were approved and will be published on the Parish Council website.

10. Standing Orders

Revised Standing Orders, based on the latest YCLA/NALC template dated July 2018, were approved for adoption and publication on the Parish Council website. These have been updated to comply with the new GDPR legislation.

11. Attendance by Councillors at other meetings

There had been no other meetings taking place which have been attended by Council members during the preceding two months.

12. Correspondence

There had been no correspondence of note during the preceding two months other than as dealt with under other agenda items.

13. AOB

There was no other competent business.

14. A resolution to exclude the press and public for the remainder of the Council meeting agenda was approved.

15. Appointment of Line Manager for Clerk/RFO

In his absence, Coun. Sanderson was appointed to act as Line Manager for the Clerk. Although it was noted that it was common practice for Council employees to undergo an annual appraisal by their Line Manager, and for this often to take place in the Autumn as part of the process of setting budgets and determining the Precept for the following year, it was agreed that this would not be either necessary or appropriate on this occasion, because of the review of the Clerk's performance and remuneration that had already been carried out earlier in the year.

16. Job Description for post of Parish Clerk/RFO

A draft Job description, based on a template provided by YLCA/NALC, was approved for immediate adoption. This document will form the basis of any future performance appraisals.

17. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 28th November 2018, commencing at 7.30pm
The meeting closed at 20.40pm