

WYKEHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at 6:00pm on Monday 27th July 2015 at the St John Office, Wykeham Business Centre.

Present:

Cllr Lady Downe (Chairman), Cllr. R Sword (until 7:00), Cllr. L S Day (from 6:45), Cllr. Colley and Mr G Parkin (Clerk).

Also present for part of the meeting were Cllr. Heather Phillips and PCSO Zac Waterman.

Before the start of the meeting, Lady Downe made reference to the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 and the Council's policy in respect of these obligations was displayed at the entrance to the venue.

No request to film or record was received or conducted and a designated area was not required.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were recorded for Cllr Ashman and County Cllr Jeffels.

2. Declaration of Interests and Register of Interests

In accordance with the adopted Code of Conduct, the Clerk may grant dispensation to any Member to allow them to contribute to the discussion of any agenda item should the meeting not be quorate as a result of a declaration of interest. This decision is in the interests of the inhabitants of the Parish and will facilitate effective consideration of the business. Voting dispensations will therefore be considered as and when they become necessary.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 23rd March 2015

The Minutes were AGREED to be true records and were duly signed by Lady Downe.

4. Matters arising

- A costed consultation document in respect of the options for North Moor speed reduction project prepared by Cllr Ashman was distributed to the members (kindly hand delivered by Cllr Colley due to Cllr Ashman's prevailing illness). The clerk advised that potential funding had been identified through the SBC Area Committee Grant Scheme and possibly through a NYM initiative. Further feedback had come from Cllr Jeffels.
- The invoice for printing the newsletter was queried with the Estate office and was thought to be correct as more printing had been done with this edition. However, the Clerk reported that subsequently, the charging regime had been reviewed

and it was evident that the recharge rates were not consistent with the revised charging regime of the new photocopier. Accordingly, a credit note has been received to correct the overcharge.

- The Clerk reported that the query raised by Mr Sands concerning broadband availability in Ruston had been referred directly to Robert Goodwill MP and that a meeting had been suggested to progress the matter.

5. Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 18th May 2015

The Minutes were AGREED to be true records and were duly signed by Lady Downe.

6. Matters arising

The Clerk advised that comments regarding Annual Return, Grass Cutting Budget, and Quarry Field would be covered later under Agenda items 7, 10, and 11.

There were no further matters arising.

7. Quarry Field Lease

The Clerk reminded the members of their decision (council meeting 18h May 2015) to grant a 1 year lease in respect of Quarry Field and that additional information had been made available very shortly after the meeting to which all members had been made aware of by the Clerk. In light of this, it was unanimously agreed to rescind the initial decision and potentially grant a 3-year lease subject to a satisfactory review of the proposed terms by the Clerk before the next meeting. The Clerk made reference to the proposed new lease and the 3 options that had been suggested by David Barrett MRICS FAAV of Wykeham Management Services who in his capacity of defined 'Expert' in the draft agreement.

The members AGREED to assign a lease for a 3-year term at the agreed rent generally as per the proposed draft to include the repair obligation. A modification to the starting date of the lease was discussed and the Clerk was given the mandate to arrange this through David Barrett and sign the lease on behalf of the council without recourse to a further meeting but only if **all** the noted requirements had been agreed with the other party.

8. Village Plan

It was noted that the last Village Plan was produced in 2006 and that a review should take place with regard to the action plan contained therein. Cllr Sword suggested that the Review Survey conducted some 18 months ago should be distributed amongst the members and a list drawn up of 'consensus' points that could be used as a basis for an updated Village Plan. It was noted that the high cost of producing the previous version but that there may be funding options available to underwrite the cost if the same quality of publication was required.

It was AGREED to copy and distribute the survey and 2006 Plan to the members for further comment in due course.

9. Police Report

The Clerk distributed a copy of the latest Derwent Valley Ward Police Report and PCSO Waterman outlined the latest initiatives. Static speed camera checks continue to be deployed along the A170 at various locations and there are now more camera vehicles available in North Yorkshire to support traffic control. The recent Seamer Horse Fair passed off without too much trouble but PC Bilton had been busy particularly with animal welfare issues supported by the RSPCA.

10. Clerk's Briefing

- The Clerk outlined the revised disclosure procedures that are now in force for smaller parish councils such as Wykeham. Routine external audit has been replaced by increased transparency requirements to enable local electors and ratepayers to access relevant information about the council's accounts and governance. The Parish Council now has a statutory duty to publish all disclosable documentation on its website.
- The Clerk made members aware that PKF Littlejohn had written to advise that the Council Tax Support Grant and Precept had not been correctly disclosed on Section 1 of the Annual Return. The funds received should have been declared as separate items and not as a consolidated single figure. The issue will be noted as an 'other' matter not affecting their recorded opinion on the Annual Return. The Clerk extended apologies for this error.
- Following advice from YLCA, the Clerk recommended that the adopted 'Rules for Effective Management of Recording at Parish Meetings' be amended to reflect a change of wording in the current version. Apparently a member of the North Yorkshire public had complained that the inclusion of the word 'must' in the adopted YLCA standard wording template implied that there was a legislative requirement for a person to contact a parish council prior to filming taking place. This was not the case but YLCA have revised the wording to remove any perceived ambiguity.

It was AGREED that the Clerk draw up an updated version of the wording per the revised YLCA template and record the date of adoption from date of this meeting.

- Cllr Jeffels had kindly sent through some notes for disclosure in his absence :
 - A170 flooding at North House – site had been inspected and a grip created to remove surface water.
 - Blocked gully at North Moor – Further jetting and a soak-away clearance required.
 - Ruston and North Moor speed limit – not prioritized for action without proven casualty history.
 - White lining/potholes at Burton Terrace – work order had been issued.
 - Further 10% cut in NYCC budget next year expected.

- The Clerk reported that he had recently received emails that were 1) threatening impending legal action and scheduled court appearance dates and 2) toll road usage fines. In all cases, the emails prompted opening a ZIP file that would probably deploy some sort of virus onto the computer. The members were very concerned about the situation and Lady Downe suggested that the council fund any external IT support that was appropriate to alleviate the problem and also report the problem to the police. All present AGREED to the proposal.
- The Clerk advised that the council had been given the opportunity to comment on a Gambling Consultation via online portal. It was noted and AGREED not to make any comment.
- The Parish Council had received a request under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) which was thought to be SPAM email as the wording clearly indicated that the sender did not know the current statutory obligations. YLCA had also been contacted by several other parish councils in North Yorkshire also in receipt of a similarly worded email but not as a FOI request. YLCA contacted the sender directly and verified that it was part of a research project and advised that a response was probably the best option but with added commentary. The Clerk responded online and provided additional commentary by direct email as the online survey did not provide the opportunity of full disclosure. Whilst surveys and requests under FOI Act are now lawful and place a statutory obligation on the Parish Council, it was noted that the current legislation of transparency risks clearly showing the slow demise of the same institutions as they struggle to find people willing to give their time and effort under such operating disciplines.
- The Clerk advised members that the initial automatic enrolment procedure had been completed for the Workplace Pension Scheme and that the "staging date" had been set for 1st May 2017. A further series of communications about the legal duties will follow in due course.

11. Finance

Members received the latest financial statement (Appendix 1) and noted Receipts and Payments made since the last meeting on 19 May 2015. Requests for payments were detailed and cheques duly authorized.

The Clerk confirmed that the charging regime for this years grass cutting contract had now been confirmed by the contractor after 2 cuts had been completed to evaluate the new scope as defined by the council. This is lower than budget projection but it was noted that the 'red dot cluster' in Ruston, which has been clearly defined as the responsibility of NYCC, had not been cut. It was noted that Wykeham Estate had done a cut to this area to make it more presentable. The members expressed concerns that NYCC had removed funding for the upkeep of this area and not discharged their responsibility although areas on the A170 had been serviced.

It was also noted that the becksides on West Gate also looked untidy under the new regime and it was AGREED to ask the contractor to quote for this to be included in the remaining cuts this year and Cllr Day agreed to follow up on this aspect.

Whilst the appearance of the 'cluster area' was of concern, the members felt that parish council funds should not be used to cut this area.

The Clerk referred to the increase in precept that had been agreed to support the grass cutting budget and that the present charging regime would give rise to a underspend against the budget plan.

It was AGREED to monitor the situation and review at the next meeting.

The Clerk also referred to the recent queries and associated cost of production of the newsletter with particular reference to the new transparency code and public visibility of the affairs of the parish council. It was noted that some residents rely solely on the publication for details of the parish meetings but also that the council could not fund an 'open ended' arrangement whereby the printing costs escalated above the present level. Current legislation now dictates that the draft minutes are to be available online within a month of the meeting and it was AGREED to provide the editor with an electronic copy of the minutes every time they are updated to the website and allow the editor to consolidate whatever content is available at the time of publication which in certain circumstances could be two meetings worth of data.

12. A170 Maintenance

It was AGREED to forward a request to NYCC Highways department for

- a) the removal of the barrier outside the village school as it no longer served any practical purpose.
- b) trimming of over hanging trees.

13. General Parish Maintenance Issues

Cllr Day reported that the renovation of bus shelters and seats had not yet been carried out by community payback scheme. It was AGREED that the outstanding work would be brought to the attention of SBC and Cllr Day offered to progress this.

Cllr Colley had been approached by a resident concerning the condition of Ruston Beck and asked who was responsible for the maintenance thereof. It was noted that this had arisen before and Wykeham Estate had been identified as bearing the responsibility. Some over zealous weed control spraying was also reported and it had been noted that a new machine operated on behalf of the Estate had been in the area. Cllr Day stated that he did think that any spraying had been done by the grass contractor. Cllr Colley AGREED to take up the matter with Cllr Sword who had now left the meeting.

14. General Correspondence

Members received the following general correspondence for consideration :

YLCA - Copy of the YLCA Annual Review for 2014/2015.

North Yorkshire

Fire & Rescue - Letter detailing consultation of proposed restructuring of resources in North Yorkshire.
The Clerk to review online data and report at next meeting.

NYMNPA - Possible funding opportunity under Tourism Grant scheme.

Came & Co
Insurance -

Quarterly Update publication containing some examples of recent claims (fallen trees, damaged street lighting, building fire, playing field injury). The Clerk suggested that members appraise any local comparable situations and the only area of any concern was the community area in Ruston where horses are led through the public area. Whilst the land is not owned by the parish council, it was agreed to make Cllr Sword aware of the potential risk so that representations could be made to horse owners and confirmation sought that adequate insurance cover was in place. This action removes any perceived liability for the council as it identified a potential problem and raised awareness of it.

15. Public Question Time

Nothing to record as no members of the public present.

16. Date and Time of next meeting

Confirmed : Council Meeting
Monday 5th October 2015 at 6:00 pm
St John's Office, Wykeham

Proposed : Council Meeting
Monday 7th December 2015 at 6:00 pm
St John's Office, Wykeham

Duly signed by Lady Downe (Chairman) 5th October 2015