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## Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council (AGM) held on Tuesday 4 May at 7.30 pm by Video / Audio Conference

**Present:** Cllrs Bremner, Collins, Cooper, Dingle, Fausset, Forster, Prendergast, Pudney, Shirley-Smith and Weston.

**Also in attendance:** District Cllr Burn for some or most of the meeting, the clerk and 4 members of the public.

- 05.04.01 Election of Chair** – Cllr Weston was unanimously proposed to be re-elected as Chair. The Chair signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
- 05.04.02 Welcome** – The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Attendees were reminded of the virtual meeting protocol. It was confirmed the meeting was not being recorded.
- 05.04.03 Apologies** – County Cllr Fleming had other meetings to attend that evening. Cllr Sneddon had connectivity problems and was unable to join the meeting telephonically but had intended to be present.
- 05.04.04 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations** – There were no declarations of pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest declared. Councillors were reminded of their obligations under the Suffolk Code of Conduct and to ensure their Register of Interests online via the BMSDC website are kept up to date.
- 05.04.05 The following appointments were unanimously agreed -**
- 1 Vice Chairman- Cllr Pudney. The Vice Chair signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
  - 2 Responsible Financial Officer - the clerk, Caroline Emeny.
  - 3 Personnel Committee – Cllrs Weston, Fausset and Dingle.
  - 4 Cemetery Committee - Cllrs Weston, Sneddon and Pudney, Phil Dyer as Cemetery Administrator and Jane McClintock as agreed in February 2021.
  - 5 Remaining roles unanimously agreed as follows:  
Diss and District Neighbourhood Plan Working Group (DDNP) – Cllr Dingle with Cllr Pudney as her substitute. It is noted that we still require 1 more representative who need not be a Councillor.  
St John's Liaison Group – Cllrs Cooper and Weston  
Bank signatories remain as Cllrs Weston, Cooper and Prendergast, all of whom also have internet banking access.
- 05.04.06 Public Forum** - There were no further reports for information not already covered at the Annual Meeting of the Parish (APM) earlier that evening.
- Members of the public – questions were raised in the public forum in regard to The Green. For the sake of clarity, these are covered under agenda item 05.04.13 (a) where this was discussed in detail.
  - Members of the public – further questions had been received by the Clerk in regard to the Green protection plan, and these too, are covered under agenda item 05.04.13 (a).
- 05.04.07 Minutes of 8 April 2021** - The minutes of the meeting of 8 April 2021 were unanimously approved and signed remotely by the Chair.
- 05.04.08 Matters arising not covered elsewhere on agenda** – There were no outstanding matters not elsewhere on the agenda.
- 05.04.09 Meetings Calendar** – Dates were agreed for the forthcoming twelve months as per the Meeting Calendar. This will be uploaded to the website and displayed on the notice board.
- 05.04.10 Matters relating to Planning -**
- a) The following planning applications were discussed:  
Resubmission of DC/20/05763 due to revised site layout and landscaping re use of land to site 4 off grid holiday units @ Land at Ling Road – The Parish Council voted to object to this revised application for the same reasons as their original objection. No new information had been received that would affect the decision to object.  
DC/21/02467: Erection of single storey rear extension @ Yew Tree, Lows Lane – The Parish Council voted to approve this application.  
DC/21/02413: Erection of 1 x single storey 2-bedroom dwelling with turning and parking spaces and new sewage treatment plant @ The Nook, Priory Road – the Parish Council voted to object to this application

for lack of enough detail to give it full consideration and the use of poor basic design principles.

b) To note any planning determinations received from the local planning authority: *none received*

c) There were no other planning matters requiring attention.

#### **05.04.11 Suffolk Highways (SH), Speeding and Road Related Issues -**

a) There were no further updates regarding the Highways projects. The Lion Rd bends signage works at St Johns is now complete. The remaining 3 projects remain in hand and we await further updates.

b) SIDs update – the battery has been flat several times at Lion Road. Clerk to re-check with Cllr Sneddon who agreed to report this to Cllr Fausset. Awaiting data report from Upper Rose Lane in a month or so to forward to our local police contact.

c) There were no other Highways matters.

#### **05.04.12 Quiet Lanes –** Cllr Fausset confirmed we will have no costs to bear on this project.

#### **05.04.13 Open Spaces and Village Green and the Environment**

The Village Green purchase: The Clerk has received several quotes to carry out a valuation to purchase The Green. A local company quoted £375 +VAT. The Chair is awaiting a response from another contact. A motion was put forward and voted AIF to appoint an estate agent to provide a valuation up to the cost of £500 & VAT. The Chair cautioned we would have to insure the Green if we were to buy it and there would be ongoing costs associated with that ownership.

**Action:** Clerk to chase Chair for o/s quote and then instruct the appropriate agent to value on our behalf

Protection Plan – A letter was hand delivered to all residents around The Green, outlining the plan to enhance its protection. Several comments have been received by email and phone from concerned residents, all of which were previously distributed and sent on to Sharon Berry of BMSDC who has been asked for an update post meeting with her line manager. She noted the proposal for small wooden bollards at Church Terrace is proving controversial and intends to talk to a colleague at SCC about this as well as the track/path in front of Church Terrace is publicly maintainable highway and also a public footpath. Note her comment in answer to some residents' concerns: *It might be worth reiterating at tonight's meeting that the District Council in its role as Scheme of Regulation Manager will not sanction any work to prevent vehicular access to the Green without first ensuring that the emergency services and waste collection service have been consulted.*

A resident spoke during the Public Forum of his concern at the proposed bollards and raised the question of the often mud enhanced school playground. The Chair briefly explained how complicated the school situation was. The School know and appreciate they are not allowed to do anything on the land because it is a designated Village Green which has very strong protection in law and is out of our remit. The Chair acknowledged that the state of the school playground was unacceptable.

When the original bollards were put in about 20 years ago, the east side near the School was included in the scheme but never carried out because of the proposed Access Road works. Had they been put in then, there may not be an issue today. If cars did not park on the green, there wouldn't be any damage. Cllr Shirley-Smith has spoken with residents approx. 5 times asking them not to park on The Green. If we do purchase The Green, it may be easier to find a solution. Regarding parking spaces, there are public spaces near the two flint cottages.

**Action:** Clerk to ask Sharon Berry for update and if a solution can be found re the muddy playground

#### **05.04.14 Ditches, grass, hedges and footpaths –** The three buddleia bushes down The Lows were quoted at £180 & vat to lop back to 9". The work was unanimously approved. It was confirmed the contractor could scatter the chipped remains over the ground to the right of the path.

**Action:** Clerk to initiate work as above

#### **05.04.15 Cemetery and Churchyard –** Notification received from DDNP confirming the Cemetery will be listed as a Local Green Space in the DDNP. As the owners, we will be invited to take part in a consultation in the summer to make a formal representation if we wish to do so.

Cemetery gates/gateposts – work being done. Asked contractor to take an additional look at the rot in the vertical sections off the gate which he did not quote for, and revert with an additional price to include this work.

Churchyard wall – all repairs done.

#### **05.04.16 Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan (PIIP) –**

a) An updated PIIP Document, previously circulated, was presented for review and approval. Carried forward to the June Meeting.

b) Updates as follows on current projects:

Lows Ditch project – complete

Lows Bench project – bench being made by a parishioner. Clerk experienced great difficulty in obtaining quotes for the base so a resin base was suggested, details of which had been previously circulated to all. Cllr Shirley-Smith to view the resin drive near The Lows and respond to all post meeting. If it is acceptable, it was unanimously voted to approve the works up to value of £400 & vat.

Note post meeting; Resin based approved by all

**Action:** Clerk to initiate works and update landowner. Ensure PIIP is on agenda for review in June

Bird and Bat boxes – awaiting response from the Diss charity re stock.

#### 05.04.17 General Governance –

1. The Annual Accounting Statement for the year ending 31 March 2021 was unanimously approved.
2. Section 1 of the AGAR (Annual Governance Statement) and Section Two of the AGAR (Accounting Statements) were approved and signed by the Chair for the year ending 31 March 2021.
3. The full report from the Internal Auditor was distributed and the contents noted.
4. The Explanation of Variances of the AGAR, previously circulated, was noted and approved.
5. The amended asset register to include the recent printer purchase was approved and signed.
6. The Schedule of Annual Regular Payments was unanimously approved. Cllrs Weston and Fausset to sign.

#### 05.04.18 Finance

a) The following payments were approved for paying online by bank transfer:

£ 596.00	Caroline Emeny	Clerks remuneration and holiday pay
£ 16.50	Caroline Emeny	Clerks expenses
£ 400.00	Diss Town Council	DDNP Parish Contribution as agreed at budget
£ 1056.00	Excite Solutions	Invoices 1528 & 1531 being March and April grass cuts

Cllrs Cooper and Dingle confirmed to sign the Monthly Schedule of Payments re the above payments.

c) Receipts – precept first instalment of £8000.00; CIL payment of £11,092.87; additional Parish grant of £284.00; cemetery £75.00.

d) The Financial report /bank reconciliation for the period ending 28/4/21 was presented for approval. Cllr Bremner to sign the document.

e) To review online banking – it was agreed that online banking was working well and was the way forward.

**Action:** Clerk to arrange remote signatures asap of documents listed under a and c above. Clerk to ensure our policies reflect enough detail regarding internet banking for review in June if necessary.

#### 05.04.19 Clerks Report –

The clerk had nothing specific to report except to highlight that her April hours have substantially overrun which were carried over to May. This was mainly due to the APM and AGM being brought forward a week thus encroaching into April's hours. She was sure this would level out over the next few months. She updated everyone on the current legislation regarding future meetings which must physically take place from 7 May onwards, but must be Covid safe. She will make enquiries with the PDCC bookings secretary re use of the hall for the initial meetings before the summer break. She continues to attend online webinars and meetings to enhance her learning.

To receive items of correspondence for noting only – it was confirmed that all relevant emails had been passed onto Councillors where applicable.

**05.04.20 Palgrave Star** – issues to include are agreed as: bird / bat boxes, Lows project, more info re The Green.

**05.04.21 Date of next meeting** – The next meeting of the Parish Council will take place at 7.30 pm on Thursday 10 June 2021 in the hall of the PDCC.

The meeting closed at 9.20 pm.

#### FINANCIAL REPORT – 28 April 2021

Current account Unity Trust Bank Account No. .... Sort code .....Statement dd 28/4/2021

	Bank statement balance	£62,789.76
	No payments outstanding	
	RECONCILES WITH ACCOUNTS BALANCE AS PER SPREADSHEET	£62,789.76