



Syderstone Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting Held Thursday 16th May 2024 in Syderstone Village Hall

PRESENT:

Cllr D Niemann – Chair
Cllr D Daly - Vice Chair
Cllr D Candy
Cllr S Ojelade
Cllr P Welland
Cllr S Wood
Clerk/RFO – Sarah Harvey
County Councillor M Chenery of Horsbrugh
Members of the Public – 7

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1. **Election of Chair:** It was proposed by Cllr D Candy, seconded by Cllr D Daly and carried that Councillor D Niemann be elected Chair. Councillor D Niemann accepted and signed the Declaration of Acceptance.
 2. **Election of Vice-Chair:** It was proposed by Cllr S Wood, seconded by Cllr S Ojelade and carried that Councillor D Daly be elected as Vice-Chair.
 3. **Apologies for Absence:** Apologies of absence were noted from Borough Councillor C Morley.
 4. **Declarations of Interest on Agenda Items:** Cllr S Ojelade declared a pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 14.1 Planning.
 5. The Minutes of the meeting held on 18th April 2024 were circulated before the meeting. It was PROPOSED by Cllr D Candy, SECONDED by Cllr S Wood and AGREED that the minutes were a correct record of the proceedings and signed by the Chair, Cllr D Niemann.
 6. **Parishioner's Questions and Statements (15 minutes):** A parishioner enquired about the proposed location of the 30mph speed roundels to be painted on to the highway at Docking Road. It was also suggested that speed bumps should be considered in order to slow traffic down.
 7. **To agree the appointment of Council representatives/spokespersons:**
 - 7.1 **Amy Robsart Village Hall Committee:** Cllr S Wood.
 - 7.2 **Speed Watch Co-ordinator/SAM2's:** Cllr P Welland and M Bateman (as co-opted member).
 - 7.3 **Defibrillator Co-ordinator:** M Bateman (acting as volunteer on behalf of the Council)
 - 7.4 **Playground Weekly Inspector:** Cllr D Daly
 - 7.5 **Street Lights and Fire Hydrant Inspector:** Cllr P Welland
 - 7.6 **Internal Audit Control Officer:** Cllr D Candy
 8. **To agree the appointment of Councillor's to subgroups and outside bodies**
 - 8.1 **Jack's Lane Windfarm Fund Panel:** Cllr D Candy
 - 8.2 **(SNAP) Priority Setting Meeting Representative:** Cllr P Welland
 - 8.3 **HR Committee:** Cllrs D Niemann, S Ojelade and S Wood.
 - 8.4 **Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group:** Cllrs D Daly, S Ojelade and S Wood.
 - 8.5.1 **Emergency Plan:** Cllrs D Niemann, S Ojelade and M Bateman (as co-opted member).
 - 9 **To consider and agree bank signatories:** Cllrs D Niemann, D Daly and P Welland.
 - 10 **Casual Vacancy – to note the resignation of Cllr M Bateman:** it was noted that a letter of resignation had been received from Councillor M Bateman following the April Parish Council meeting. The Council were advised that the Local Election Rules 2006 require a Casual Vacancy to be advertised on the Notice Board and Parish Council Website for a period of 14 days. If within the 14 days of the date of the notice a request, in writing, that an election should be held to fill the vacancy,

signed by ten local government electors of the Ward is given to the Proper Officer (BCKLWN), then an election would need to be held. If no such request is received by the Proper Officer (BCKLWN), the Parish Council would take the necessary steps to fill the vacancy by co-option.

11 To consider the Clerks Report (Matters arising for information only):

The Clerk advised that the internal audit would be carried out at the end of May by Roger Canwell as agreed at the April meeting.

It was noted that Freebridge would arrange for a surveyor to inspect the path leading to the bungalows at Normans Way on the 10th June to ascertain what work was necessary.

Damien Jeffries (Highways Engineer) had advised that a dropped crossing had been programmed on The Broadlands, but that a dropped crossing on the Creake Road junction would not be pursued.

12 To receive a report from County Councillor Michael Chenery: the NCC Members Briefing Reports provided by Cllr M Chenery had been circulated to Parish Councillors via email prior to the meeting. Cllr M Chenery also advised that he had money available for the current financial year 2024/25 for any highway or environmental projects via his Local Member Fund.

13 To receive a report from Borough Councillor Chris Morley: see Appendix One for a report on the annual activities of the Borough Council during 2023/24.

Cllr S Ojelade left the meeting.

14. Planning:

14.1 To consider plans at the time of publishing:

SUPPORT

24/00737/F - 1st floor domestic extension at 1 Manor Grange, The Street.

Cllr S Ojelade returned to the meeting.

OBJECT

23/01603/F - Proposed Single Storey Extension to Rear to provide accommodation for disabled son at 21 The Broadlands, The Street.

It was noted that Borough Councillor C Morley had been asked to call the planning application in so that this would be considered by Planning Committee.

14.2 To consider plans since publication of agenda: None.

14.3 To consider outcomes of planning – approved/withdrawn by the Borough Council: None.

14.4 BCKLWN, Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Proposed Site Allocations and Policy Consultation, May 2024: it was noted that Site GT67 on the corner of Tattersett Rd/Lancaster Rd was no longer listed as part of the consultation so therefore would not be taken forward as part of the proposed allocations.

15. Finance:

15.1 To approve the accounts for payment in May (list at meeting).

Clear Councils (formerly BHIB) (Parish Council Insurance Premium)	774.96	BACS
Wicksteed Leisure Ltd (Replacement Fixings for Play Area Equipment)	66.46	BACS
TTSR Ltd (Grounds Maintenance, Invoice 1 of 7)	410.62	BACS
Carole Appleby (Delivery Fee for Summer Newsletters)	15.00	BACS
PaperKlip (Printing Costs for Summer Newsletter)	210.80	BACS
Sarah Harvey (Annual Website Hosting Fee, Wix.com)	129.60	BACS
Clerk's Salary & Expenses (18th April to 15th May 2024)	370.39	BACS

15.2 To note the finance received in April 2024.

BCKLWN Parish Precept 2024/25	13,340.00
Dog Waste Bin Emptying Donations	416.00

15.3 To approve the April 2024 financial statement: it was AGREED to accept the April 2024 statement, which was signed by the Chair, Cllr D Niemann.

15.4 To approve the financial accounts for the financial year ending 31st March, 2024: Copies of the accounts which had been circulated were considered by the Councillors and were APPROVED. The Clerk advised that given that both receipts and payments for 2023/24 was greater than £25k the Council would automatically be subject to a limited assurance review.

15.5 To approve the direct debit in force for the financial year 2024/25:

NPower, Electricity for Street Lighting – Monthly direct debit.

- 15.6 **To verify the Parish CIL Annual Report for 2023/24:** It was noted that during the course of the financial year 2023/24, £567.81 had been spent on village gateways to be installed at Tattersett Road and £1,866.24 had been spent on planters to be placed alongside each of the village gateways. The remaining sum (£2,941.12) would be earmarked towards further infrastructure items which were provided or maintained by the Parish Council. The CIL Annual Report had been completed and would be returned to the BCKLWN and published on the PC website.
16. **Governance**
- 16.1 **To review and adopt the Safeguarding Policy:** it was considered and AGREED that the draft policy be adopted by the Council and placed on the Parish Council website. This would be reviewed in June 2025 or as required.
- 16.2 **To review and adopt the Equal Opportunities Policy:** it was considered and AGREED that the draft policy be adopted by the Council and placed on the Parish Council website. This would be reviewed in June 2025 or as required.
17. **Parish Councillors Reports**
- 17.1 **Village Speedwatch and relocating of SAM2 signs:** Cllr P Welland referred to the report he provided as part of the Annual Parish Meeting agenda item 4.3
- 17.2 **Attendance at the Priority Setting Meeting (formerly SNAP):** Cllr P Welland advised that the meeting scheduled for the 8th May had been cancelled and it was understood that the next meeting would take place in July.
- 17.3 **Playground Weekly Inspection Reports:** Cllr D Daly reported that the issue with mole hills was still ongoing. Cllr D Daly noted that further replacement fixings were required for the Play Area and that he would liaise with the Clerk regarding what was required.
- 17.4 **Monitoring of Street Lights and Fire Hydrant List:** no issues were noted.
- 17.5 **NCF – Jack’s Lane Wind Farm Community Fund Panel:** Cllr D Candy advised that the Fund Panel would meet on 10th June to review each of the funding applications that had been received.
- 17.6 **Defibrillator on wall of ARVH:** it was noted that the defibrillator had developed a fault, so therefore had been taken offline and marked as unavailable to emergency services. The process for both collection and repair of the defibrillator had been started with the Community Heartbeat Trust.
- 17.7 **Amy Robsart Village Hall Committee:** no report was received.
18. **Updates and on-going items**
- 18.1 **Update on Neighbourhood Plan:** Cllr S Wood reported that Steering Group members had reviewed the results from the survey and the survey format had been agreed for the public announcement to be published in The Natterjack. Pricing for both a black and white or colour four-page supplement were noted and it was AGREED to proceed with the full colour option for £47.60. It was noted that the Green Spaces policy and the Green Corridors policy were advancing well, as was the Housing Needs policy. The next Steering Group meeting was scheduled for the 26th June when the draft plan was hoped to be ready for approval before submitting this to the Parish Council and then the local authority for examination. It was hoped that this would mean that a parish referendum could be held in early 2025.
- 18.2 **Update on derelict property on The Street:** the Clerk advised that a further response had been received from Heidi Wedge (Planning Enforcement Officer, BCKLWN) regarding the property owners plans to carry out the outstanding work and that this had been circulated to Councillors via email. It was AGREED that Stuart Ashworth (Assistant Director of Planning) should be advised of the Council’s concerns that the property owners were not addressing the issues of the 215 notice satisfactorily and in a timely manner and that more assertive actions should be taken to resolve this.
- 18.3 **Update on the redevelopment of the Parish Council/Village website:** the Clerk advised that the website was now complete and was now ranking highly when searched for via Google.
- 18.4 **Update on Play Area Noticeboard:** Cllr S Ojelade advised that the artwork competition for the noticeboard would conclude on 7th June and that a prize presentation would follow by the end of term. The Clerk would liaise with Earth Anchors to ascertain a lead time on the notice board delivery.
- 18.5 **Update on Emergency Plan:** Cllr D Niemann advised that a further meeting would be arranged to progress the plan.
- 18.6 **Update on arrangements to mark the 80th Anniversary of D-Day:** it was noted that the event had been advertised on the village Facebook page for Thursday 6th June. Cllr D Daly would organise the beacon and a risk assessment for the event would be completed. Cllr D Candy would organise for some music to be provided.

18.7 **Update on arrangements for Village Planters:** arrangements for locating the planters was agreed at each of the proposed sites. The Clerk noted that Damien Jeffries (Highways Engineer) had stated that either the planters or the plants contained within them should not obscure any of the signage placed on the village gateways.

19 Correspondence

To note any general correspondence received:

19.1 **Email from Parishioner, Moss on Pavement, The Street:** contents of the email were noted and further enquiries had been made with Highways.

19.2 **Norfolk ALC, Planning Briefing Webinars by Birketts Solicitors:** noted.

20. **A resolution to adjourn the meeting for Parishioners Questions and Statements (if required):** None.

21. **To receive items for next Agenda:** None.

22. To note the date of the next Parish Council meeting Thursday 20th June 2024 at 7.30 p.m.

Meeting closed: 8.40 pm.

.....Chair

.....Dated

THESE MINUTES ARE UNCONFIRMED UNTIL APPROVED BY FULL COUNCIL

**Agendas and minutes can be found on:
www.syderstonevillageandpc.info**

Appendix One

Annual Report from Chris Morley 23/24. Independent Councillor and Member for Bircham with Rudhams and Cabinet Member for Finance.

Following the election and gaining the most Party votes, we, the Independents, set about forging a “Partnership” with the Greens and Lib. Dems and coming to an “Understanding” with Labour Members.

Our Partnership Members then set about agreeing a Corporate Plan, Objectives and actions to complete for the financial year. All of which can be found on the Borough Web Site.

The first challenge was settling the wage claim from staff in a serious cost of living crisis, compounded by, for professional and managerial staff, a serious issue with recruitment. For example, our Planning and Enforcement team was seriously under strength and we were not attracting sufficient recruits. This Borough agrees its own pay awards based upon national trends but also our specific services. After much heated debate and opposition from both the Conservative and a Labour Member the award was agreed which included increasing the upper limit of pay scales by 10%. We had the immediate budget for it and with permanent employees we will reduce the cost of Agency staff. But with a pay, insurance and pension bill of just over £20m, the need for efficiencies and productivity is of paramount importance.

We also faced a challenging financial position with our revenues not covering our costs such that, although we had the budget agreed for the pay award, we were facing having to use nearly £2.5m, for general operations, from our reserve savings. This situation is not sustainable and a Council's number 1 statutory priority is to be a going concern and we had to build that fact into our future plans.

Nevertheless, we did not withdraw any of our community help and set aside over £500k to help communities, with examples such as West Norfolk Community Transport (Go to Town), the Kings Lynn Ferry and the many festivals across the Borough, including one of the largest free festivals in Europe, Festival Too. Smaller capital and revenue grants were available via the Norfolk Community Foundation, Councillor Community Support Grants, the Defibrillator programme, Prosperity Funds and the big contributor CIL.

We suffered extra costs through the bad weather and Storm Babet which has put back our building programme and unfortunately delayed our anticipated rent revenues and capital receipts as well as increasing costs to manage. With further problems anticipated in coastal defence and flood protection. We have, however, maintained expenditure on our climate action plan.

In October Royal Assent was given to enable Councils to increase Council Tax on second homes and bring forward the surcharges on Long Term Empty Homes. The extra tax this could bring is around £18m with some £7m coming from West Norfolk. By law, 80% of this is allocated to the County with around 10% going to the Police Commission. We have started the process of negotiating, with our District Counterparts (apart from South Norfolk who do not wish to take up this opportunity) a common base position to seek return monies as grants from the County. We will be able to use these grants for whatever purpose but at present we are focussed on supporting homes for the affordable and rental markets. 2nd

home owners may wish to sell and therefore the council tax for some homes may follow traditional allocations. If some can pass criteria for converting their home into a business, the Borough, but not directly Parish/Towns, will receive revenue through business rates.

October also saw the Assent given to new Government Procurement rules following Brexit and we are getting ready to implement the changes from this October '24.

In terms of Finance decision making, we recognised that Kings Lynn had no Town Council and could not set precepts or apply for Grants. This was a result, I believe, of the 1974 Local Government changes and to a larger or lesser degree, has made this Council a little Kings Lynn centric. We have, this year, given the Kings Lynn Area Committee Executive powers under the chair of Cllr. Jo Rust.

Late last year we also secured Council agreement to a Council Tax Support Scheme for 24/25 whereby working people who cannot earn or have saved sufficient money to meet certain criteria, will receive 100% support for their council tax demand.

In February we agreed, at a tortuous meeting with last minute motions, a budget for 24/25. The financial settlement from the Government is still not sufficient for our outgoings and we still may have to use some savings but fingers crossed, we won't. We did not wish to reduce our service levels, so I asked all Members, not only to accept a cost reduction programme but to increase fees and charges within their portfolios and which are not regulated, by at least 10% or to market levels if less. The previous Administration, in an election year, had frozen fees but we could not sustain this, Our revenues from our services total around £20m, with the big contributors being our buildings lease and rent roll, the car parks and the parking admin service we offer across the County, the crematorium and various Licences. An increase on these revenues was essential with inflation at that time running at 11%.

We are also facing increased costs from the Internal Drainage Boards which, combined, levies over £3m on our cost base or around 43% of our Council Tax take. Last year we received £205K to contribute towards these costs and we await our allocation from the £3m set aside for IDB costs by the Government. At one time they supported the whole cost but have gradually reduced that support to virtually zero. The Secretary, Michael Gove, has said that a long term solution will be found but so far it remains buried. 31 small Districts, including us, have formed a Special Interest Group (SIG) to lobby for this offer to be realised; but no luck so far although we continue to press our 2 MPs.

The external audits of our Annual Statement of Accounts are very much in arrears but we have had an unqualified opinion for the 19/20 Accounts and the auditors were going to fast track 20/21 and 21/22 but that hasn't happened and 22/23 is still on the stocks. We are in the process of completing the figures for the financial year just ending and I trust the results will show that our financial prudence has borne fruit.

This is a run through of the year from my perspective as Cabinet Member for finance and no doubt other Cabinet Members would offer a different perspective. I trust it demonstrates that we have worked to support all communities and earned your support.

Chris Morley.