

WHINBURGH & WESTFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of Whinburgh & Westfield Parish Council on Tuesday, 15 November 2016 at 7.30 p.m. in Whinburgh & Westfield Pavilion, Whinburgh Playing Field, Shop Street, Whinburgh.

**Present Councillors: Roland Terry (Chairman), William Downes, John Stevens.
Julian Gibson (Clerk)**

- 1 Apologies for absence.** It was **resolved** to accept the reasons for absence offered by Councillor Anema, Councillor Hansell, Councillor Makinson, and Councillor Stevens.
- 2 Declarations of interest.** None.
- 3 Dispensations.** None.
- 4 Public Participation Session.**
 - 4.1 Village Signs.** It was reported that the Whinburgh Village Sign was in a poor state. Councillor Stevens said it was some six years since he had refurbished it, and that he would have a good look and see if it was feasible to carry out further repairs. He also said that he had noticed that that two other parishes in Breckland had recently received grants to refurbish/replace their signs. The Chairman said he would also check the state of the Westfield sign, and the Clerk was asked to put this on the next agenda.
 - 4.2 Fly-tipping.** It was reported that Field Lane (Barn Lane) had again been used for fly-tipping. The Clerk said he would report this.
 - 4.3 Dereham Transport Study.** The Chairman said he had attended a public meeting about the study which had been commissioned by Breckland Council, and the subsequent study commissioned by Dereham Town Council. The latter was very critical of Breckland's study as it omitted several serious problem areas and also failed to look at traffic at weekends and peak hours. As a result of the complaints some of these omissions will be looked at again, but it was, he felt, an inconclusive meeting.
- 5 Minutes.** The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 18 October 2016 were **confirmed** and **signed**.
- 6 Matters arising.**
 - 6.1 [10, Minutes of 20 September 2016] No smoking signs.** The Chairman reported that the signs supporting the Voluntary Code to promote smoke-free areas around public play areas had been placed on both gates to the Playing Field.
 - 6.2 [12, Minutes of 20 September 2016] Playing Field entrance.** The work on the entrance to the field has now been completed. It was agreed that this was a very good job.
 - 6.3 [4.1] Reflector posts at corner on Shop Street.** The Clerk has received an Email from NCC saying "We have inspected and are going to resolve the problem."
 - 6.4 [10] Precept referendums.** The Clerk reported that he had sent a Freedom of Information request to the Department of Communities and Local Government on behalf of the Council, asking for the number of parishioners who had expressed concern about increases in Precepts, as they stated in the *Technical Consultation Paper on The 2017/18 Local Government Finance Settlement*. This was received by the DCLG on 3 October, and should (under the Act) have been responded to by 31 October. He has chased and received an acknowledgement that they had failed to meet the legal timescale, but they did not say when they would comply with the law.

Given that this Department was responsible for imposing the Transparency Code on parish councils, the members were incensed that it should flaunt the law in this way, so the Clerk was asked to lodge a formal complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office, and to inform the DCLG that he had done so.

- 7 **Correspondence.** The following correspondence was **received**.
- 7.1 UK Power Networks: *Wayleave Payment credit advice*.
 - 7.2 *Clerks & Councils Direct* - November 2016.
 - 7.3 Barclays Bank Plc: *Your Community Account statement* - 1-31 October 2016.
 - 7.4 Barclays Bank Plc: *Your Active Saver Account statement* - 1-31 October 2016.
 - 7.5 Norfolk County Council: *Notice of closure of west section of Shop Street from 16-18 November 2016*.
- 8 **Planning. 3PL/2016/1195/VAR: Barn at Land Affronting Dereham Road, Shipdham.** Application for New dwelling & carport revised scheme 3PL/2016/0348/F. It was **noted** that the Clerk has responded "No objection" under his delegated powers.
- 9 **Former Highway Surveyor's Land, Steggs Lane.** A *Health and Safety Tree Survey / Risk Assessment* report prepared by Treecreeper Arboriculture on the trees on the Former Highway Surveyor's land in Steggs Lane, Westfield was **received**. The Clerk was asked to obtain a quotation for the cost of carrying out the work designated as High Priority for consideration at the next meeting.
- 10 **Bowls Club old green store.** Councillor Whiteley had sent a report that he had spoken to the past and present members of the Bowls Club, who said that the store was now empty, and they were intending to wait until the spring and then cut it up and remove it. However Councillor Makinson had said that she had found somebody who might be interested in purchasing it and removing it complete, and so it was **agreed** that she should explore this option further. Failing that Councillor Whiteley will offer to obtain a price from a scrap metal dealer on behalf of the Bowls Club.
- 11 **Marquee.** The Council had received a request that it consider purchasing a small Marquee for occasional use on the Playing Field. Following a full discussion, it was felt that it might not be appropriate for the Council to use the Council Taxpayer's money for this purpose, so it was **agreed** not to take this any further at this stage.
- 12 **BT.** The Clerk has reported that he had persuaded BT to credit the Council's account with them (or waive charges due) with the cost of his making abortive or wasted visits to the Pavilion on three occasions (3 May, 12 September and 22 September), and that in total he had saved the Council some £1, 074. The only outstanding issue related to BT's refusal to operate the account in the name of the Council, and requiring it to be in the name of a private individual (currently the Clerk) "Trading As" the Council, which was clearly wrong. The Council **agreed** with his suggestion that he should ask George Freeman MP, to see if he could influence BT to do the right thing. It was also **agreed** that the Clerk should claim for the additional 18 hours work involved, which BT had already funded. The Chairman said that he had installed a shelf in the Pavilion for the router, and concealed the wires for this in trunking.
- 13 **Budget 2017/18.** The Clerk presented a draft budget for 2017/18 which was **approved**. This included provision in the reserves against the possibility of the Council having to pay for contested elections. The Chairman thanked the Clerk for his work on the figures.
- 14 **Precept 2017/18.** It was **agreed** to fix the Precept for 2017/18 at £6,000, the same as for the two previous years. However the Clerk pointed out that the number of Band D equivalents in the parish had risen so parishioners should eventually see a reduction in the Parish Council part of their Council Tax bills of some 2%.

15 Finance.

- 15.1 **Other.** It was **resolved** that cheque number 100706 for £500.00 to Tom West, of Treecreeper Arboriculture be signed, in settlement of invoice dated 21 October 2016, for the Health and Safety survey at Steggs Lane. (*Public Health Act 1875 s.164 & Local Government Act 1972 sch. 14 para. 27*)
- 15.2 **Field & Pavilion.** It was **resolved** that cheque number 100707 for £240.00 (£200 + £40 VAT) to Johnson Hire & Sales Limited be signed, in settlement of invoice no. 401 for work carried out on the entrance to the Playing Field. (*Public Health Act 1875 s.164 & Local Government Act 1972 sch. 14 para. 27*)
- 15.3 **Field & Pavilion.** It was **resolved** that cheque number 100708 for £393.49 (£327.91 + £65.58 VAT) to BT be signed in settlement of their invoice I001 OG as copiously amended, for at last installing the telephone line and broadband provision in the Pavilion. The Clerk added that BT appears to have opened another account number attached to the same telephone number, which seemed to include broadband payments which they had omitted from the first bill. He said he would send the cheque to his contact in the Complaints office making it clear what the correct situation was and what the cheque was paying for. (*Local Government Act 1972 s. 111*)
- 15.4 **Stationery.** It was **resolved** that cheque number 100709 for £148.58 (£123.81 + £24.76 VAT) to Viking be signed, in settlement of their invoice no. 5664 for stationery supplied.
- 15.5 **Monthly Financial Report.** The report for the month ending 31 October 2016 was **received**.

16 Matters for consideration at next meeting.

- 16.1 Village Signs.
- 16.2 High priority work at Former HSL, Steggs Lane.
- 16.3 Grass cutting bill for 2016 and quote for 2017/18.
- 17 **Next meeting.** The next meeting of the Parish Council was **confirmed** as **Tuesday, 13 December 2016**, at 7.30 p.m. in Whinburgh & Westfield Pavilion, Whinburgh Playing Field, Shop Street, Whinburgh.

Confirmed:

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Roland Terry, Chairman

13 December 2016

Possible Future Meeting dates:

Tuesday, 13 December 2016 Tuesday, 21 February 2017

Tuesday, 17 January 2017 Tuesday, 21 March 2017

Meetings will only be called if there is business to discuss which cannot wait until the following scheduled meeting date.