

MORSTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday, 29th November, 2023 at the Village Hall, Morston - 7.00pm.

Present: J.Tibbetts (Chair), C.Bean, R.Hamond, C.Ward, M.Harrison, and the Clerk. Also present were V.Holliday (NNDC), PC Gower-Smith, and four members of the public.

1a. To receive and consider apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr.J.Temple. Apologies were also received from V.Egan (NT).

1b. To receive Declarations of Interest on agenda items

The Chair declared an interest in 6(e).

1c. To receive update on vacancy and co-option procedure

The Clerk informed members that permission had been given by NNDC. Electoral Services to use the co-option procedure (no by-election called). It was agreed to advertise the vacancy by placing notices on the website and notice board with a view to co-option at the next meeting.

2. To approve the minutes of meeting held 25.10.23.

The minutes, which had already been circulated, were accepted as a true record subject to one minor amendment (Prop: CB, Sec: CW). The amendment, to delete the word "looking", was at item 3c on line 12.

3a. Public Participation (requests to speak on agenda items)

There was a request to speak at 3c.

3b. To receive reports from District/County Councillors and the Police

*** Dr.V.Holliday (NNDC) had submitted a written report which had been circulated to members. It referred to (a) Sea defence work at Cromer & Mundesley (b) Blakeney Neighbourhood Plan adopted on 22/11/23 and Wells Neighbourhood Plan out for consultation (c) Second Homes council tax premium being considered subject to legislation (d) Council Tax premium also being looked at for empty homes (e) Holt Medical Practise now collating feedback re the consultation on the Blakeney Surgery (f) Update on river flooding (g) Proposal to remove emergency telephones from the coast (h) Update re food poverty and the Client Hardship Fund.

*** PC.Gower-Smith gave a verbal report. He spoke of rural crimes and the theft of machinery etc, asking members to keep a careful watch out for vehicles that were not known locally. He reminded members of the forthcoming SNAP meeting in Holt when members could report their concerns re local crime. There was a brief discussion re broken windows which had been reported to the police.

3c. To receive report from NT.

V.Egan (NT) reported via email. This email was read to the meeting by the Chair and referred to the continuation of meetings re the toilets with the Design Team. They were still awaiting NNDC's further pre-app response. VE had noted the PC's thoughts

re the toilets which had been recorded in recent minutes. Her team were following up on the car park drainage and design. The information was noted by members and the Chair raised the matter of the current toilets being closed early in the afternoons. The Clerk was instructed to write to VE making enquiries about this (Prop: RH, Sec: JPT). V.Holliday (NNDC) had arranged for a site meeting with a senior planning officer regarding the proposed toilets on the quay. The Chair, and another member of the PC would attend.

4. Finance:

(a) To approve the following payments :-

P.Bullimore £354.10 (clerks net salary), HMRC £88.40 (tax on salary)
R.Hamond £66.62 (website expenses), P.Bullimore £65.90 (clerks exp),
T.Leach £60.00 (v.hall cleaning), Countrystyle Recycling £27.00 (glass coll)
Victoria Shelley £82.50 (website exp), NNDC £231.00 (Certificate fee)

*** The above payments, as scheduled on the agenda, plus two other payments were approved (Prop: CB, Sec: CW). The other payments were S.Metcalf £586.39 for Christmas Hamper expenses and R.Longley £384.08 for village maintenance work. The Chair reminded members that invoices needed to be ideally scheduled on the agendas and should be in the Clerk's possession one week before the meeting.

(b) To consider request for financial assistance from MAGPAS

The Clerk read the information provided on MAGPAS but it was agreed not to respond on this occasion.

(c) To consider ways of supporting the First Responders

Members had agreed to assist the FRs financially and more enquiries were being made as to how the PC could assist.

(d) To consider quotation for tree work

The quotation in the sum of £450 + VAT for tree work (Jerry Cox) was accepted. (Prop: JPT, Sec: CB). This was for tree surgery on the Holm Oaks adjacent to the Bottle Bank and on the green.

(e) To receive update re the Investment Plan & Forward Financial Strategy

As reported last month the investment in Government Bonds would take place as soon as electronic banking could be arranged. The Chair reported that there had been many communication problems with Barclays Bank and she had instructed the Clerk to write a letter of complaint which referred to the numerous hours wasted by her and the Clerk on this matter.

The Clerk reminded members that the Budget & Precept for 2024/25 would need to be agreed at the next meeting.

5. Planning:

(a) To note decisions & information received from NNDC since last meeting.

PF/23/1501; Timber structure for a walk-in fridge at Morston Hall – Refused.

(b) To consider planning applications received since agenda was printed

None received.

(c) To consider the Inspectors questions on the NNDC Local Plan

It was agreed not to respond regarding this matter.

(d) CL/23/2452; To note PC's application re the "Certificate of Lawfulness"

Members were already aware of this application.

(e) PF/23/2140; Conversion & Renovation of outbuilding (Hall Farm House)

It was agreed "no objections" to this application (Prop: RH, Sec: JPT).

6. Highways and Footpath Matters:

(a) Street Lights – to receive update re the new lights.

It was agreed to have a further assessment of street lights in February, 2024. The new lights had now been connected.

(b) To further consider speeding in the village.

NCC Highways had given a cost of £6k - £7k for a speed/traffic survey. This was considered excessive and members agreed to consider a “private” survey during the spring and summer of next year. The Clerk would make a diary note.

(c) To note/consider NCC Highways Partnership Scheme 2024/25.

With no projects in mind it was agreed to remove this from the agenda with applications closing in early December, 2023.

(d) To consider marking of speed humps in Quay Lane.

It was agreed the speed humps needed marking and this would be done using local labour (Prop: CW, Sec: RH). The Chair would liaise with RL on this matter.

(e) To receive report/update re the pond (SWAMP)

The Chair reported on behalf of SWAMP stating that a five year plan had been put in place and two further grants had been applied for. Members would be pollarding the willow trees and clearing the edge of the pond during this winter. The PC agreed the transformation of the pond was looking good and the Clerk was instructed to write to SWAMP congratulating them on their progress and applauding their efforts.

7. Meetings & Conferences (announcements & reports)

Planning Roadshows were now being organised with the next one in Holt. Noted.

8. Caravan Site and Village Hall:

(a) To receive update re new licence from NNDC

The Clerk was still awaiting the certificate of lawfulness after which time he was hopeful a new licence would be issued.

(b) To receive update re wi-fi in v.hall and NCC’s Connectivity Project

Confirmation that Morston Village Hall had been accepted on to the scheme had been received. Members agreed to proceed with this project and instructed the Clerk to arrange the installation (Prop: JPT, Sec: RH).

(c) To receive further report re trial community events at the village hall.

A further games night had been arranged for Monday 11th December and people had been requested to bring their own food and drinks. Noted.

(d) To further consider montage/collection of mementos for display.

No further news. Carried forward to the next meeting.

(e) Update on Maintenance Log & Work (including west fence (Quay Lane)

The Clerk was still awaiting news from Norfolk ProBuild re the external works. Using local labour many jobs had been ticked off from the maintenance log (marked “1”) including PC seats being renovated and painted, the PC noticeboard had been re-stained etc., shed repairs, toilet redecorations, and various internal jobs in the village hall.

It was agreed that the west fence/hedge at the village hall needed major work carried out. CW would speak with a local contractor to get ideas and an estimate.

9. To receive update re proposed closure of Blakeney Surgery.

As reported at 3b the feedback on the consultation was being collated. Noted.

10. To receive further report re location of the defibrillator.

Permission had been received from the owners of the pub who had consulted their leaseholders and the Clerk was instructed to arrange a site meeting with the electricians and parties concerned to agree a suitable place outside the pub.

11. To consider concerns re feral cats in the village

The Clerk had submitted a report to members and the Chair intimated that the way forward was to set up a community group of volunteers. Local professionals would be able to advise and the PC could consider financing the project. The Chair did not feel that the problem, if it existed, was the direct responsibility of the PC and perhaps a leaflet drop to all parishioners, making enquiries etc., was the way forward.

12. Governance:- To consider Action Plan (2024/25) incl a Biodiversity Policy

The Clerk and Chair would create a draft action plan for members consideration. In order to comply with Section 102 of the Environment Act 2021 it was agreed to create a Biodiversity Policy and Plan for consideration at a future meeting.

13. To further consider Village Christmas arrangements.

The hampers were being made up and the costs had come in within the budget set. It was hoped delivery of the hampers would take place on 9th December. The Chair gave a huge thank you to Mr & Mrs.Metcalf for all their help. The Chair still needed help with deliveries.

14. To receive correspondence (not included in agenda items above)

Letters received from Barclays Bank requesting details of signatories etc..

15. Public Participation (comments/other matters)

A parishioner brought her concerns to the PC regarding an Open-Reach cover that was likely to be a "trip hazard". This was newly installed and the Clerk would report the problem to NCC Highways.

It was reported that the gulley/drain outside Gull Cottage on the A149 was blocked. Again the Clerk would report this to NCC Highways.

16. To confirm date of next council meeting & future agenda items.

This was confirmed for Wednesday, 31st January, 2024 (7pm).

Delegated authority was given to the Clerk/Chair and cheque signatories to authorise the payments in December, 2023.