

LONGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Longham Parish Council held virtually at 7.30pm on Monday 18th January 2021.

Present: Cllr Sue Douglas (Chair)
Cllr Phil Collins (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Paul O'Brien
Cllr Donna McLeod
Cllr Roddy McLeod

County Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris
Sheryl Irving (Clerk)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies from Cllr Dye were accepted, together with apologies from District Cllrs Richard Duffield and Roger Atterwill.

2. To receive any declarations of interest.

There were none received.

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 16th November 2020 and the extraordinary meeting held on 1st December 2020.

Cllr Donna McLeod proposed that both minutes be accepted as a true record of the meetings, this was seconded by Cllr O'Brien and agreed by Council.

4. Meeting open for public participation.

There were no members of the public present.

5. To receive County and District Councillors reports.

A report from C/Cllr Kiddle-Morris is attached and, in addition, he reported that NCC are now recruiting to fill the Highway Engineer vacancy. He advised Council to continue to report highway matters using the portal but that all issues were taking longer than usual, due to the lack of a Highway Engineer and Covid restrictions.

Flooding was also an issue at the present time due to the saturated ground, with more heavy rain forecast.

At this point in the meeting, C/Cllr Kiddle-Morris had to leave, due to his connection being lost.

6. Planning issues.

a) Applications for consideration.

- 3PL/2020/1456/F – The Old Rectory, Honeypot Lane - Erection of single bed annexe to The Old Rectory – Council considered this new application and Cllr Douglas proposed a response setting out concerns regarding the distance of the proposed annexe from the main dwelling, which was considered to be too far but, if the application was approved, to request that a condition of the approval be that the annexe remains ancillary to the main dwelling and cannot be later converted to a separate property. This was seconded by Cllr Donna McLeod and agreed by Council.

b) Decisions to note.

Council noted the following two applications had been approved.

- 3PL/2020/1298/HOU – Elm House, Wendling Road – proposed alterations and ground floor extension & pump house/elevations.
- Bittering Quarry, Reed Lane, Bittering – continued use of office and depot until 31st January 2030.

7. Highway issues.

a) To receive updates on matters previously reported.

- Speed Limit request – Litcham Road – Council noted this issue was still with the C/Cllr but will be progressed once a Highway Engineer is in post.
- Visibility (Tree) at junction of Wendling Road & Honeypot Lane – Council noted that the issue related to the long grass on the visibility splay, rather than the mature tree at the junction. It was agreed that Council may have to consider cutting the junctions during the growing months, particularly as County Council are likely to reduce the cutting schedule to one cut per year.

b) To receive an update regarding the pull-in on Hoe Road.

This matter will be progressed once a Highway Engineer is in post, although Council noted that other locations along Hoe Road will be looked at.

c) To consider any new highway issues.

The 30mph speed sign on New Road has been knocked over and will be reported to Highways.

8. The Playing Field.

a) To receive an update in respect of the football pitch resurfacing.

Council noted that the resurfacing works will take place in spring.

b) To consider any actions arising from the play area inspection report.

Council noted the report and were advised that most of the issues are resolved by the regular inspections. However, the report recommended a self-closing gate and Cllr O'Brien will take this matter forward and report back to Council. It was agreed that a spring-loaded closure may be too dangerous and could trap small fingers.

c) To consider any new issues.

Council noted that the moles had been removed once again.

9. To receive an update regarding the Clay Pits (a county wildlife site).

Cllr O'Brien thank the Chairman for providing information and acknowledged the work previously done to the site, but noted that little had been done recently, due to access and Covid issues. He had carried out a site visit and reported that the site was very overgrown with little access. He had also advised the neighbouring property that works will be commencing in due course and that they will be notified.

Cllr O'Brien hopes to meet a representative from the County Conservation Group to look at what needs to be done regarding accessibility, parking, the board walk, wildlife and fauna, publicity etc and prepare an action plan for the next meeting.

Cllr Roddy McLeod advised caution as the site can become overgrown very quickly and regular maintenance is required. Cllr O'Brien will address this issue in his action plan. It was hoped that local groups and schools could be invited to the site once works had been carried out.

10. To receive an update regarding the Village Hall.

Council noted the Hall was currently closed due to Covid restrictions.

11. To receive an update regarding the installation of a defibrillator.

A grant for £500 had been received and the unit ordered; it will need installing by a qualified contractor and the Chairman will investigate options. Unfortunately, face-to-face training cannot take place due to the Covid situation but a link to a training video will be provided.

12. Finance and Governance

a) To receive a financial report for the year ending 31st March 2021.

Council noted the financial report.

b) To authorise financial payments as set out below.

Cllr Donna McLeod proposed approval of the following payments, this was seconded by Cllr Dye and agreed by Council.

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|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Clerk – Salary/Allowance (Dec/Jan) | £276.78 |
| • Play Area Inspection | £72.00 (paid on 25.11.2020) |
| • Playing Field Mole Control | £387.60 (paid on 22.12.2020) |

13. Correspondence for circulation

- Transport East Survey to help shape the future of transport in the East of England – Council noted this survey and agreed no action was required.

- Street Name Query - Road from Litcham to Longham – Council agreed that the road had always been known as the Litcham Road and agreed this response to Breckland.

14. To note the meeting dates for 2021.

Council noted the meeting dates for 2021.

- Monday 18th January
- Monday 15th March
- Monday 17th May (Annual Meetings)
- Monday 19th July
- Monday 20th September
- Monday 15th November

15. To receive any new items for the next agenda.

There were no new items for the agenda.

16. To note the next meeting of the parish council will be held on Monday 15th March 2021 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall, subject to Covid-19 restrictions.

Council noted the date of the next meeting and the meeting then closed at 8.10pm.

Signed:

Date:

County Councillor for Necton and Launditch Division

Report January 2021

Budget:

The Council will set its budget for financial year 21/22 at a meeting to be held on 22nd February. The settlement from central government is broadly neutral; there has been a small increase in the Rate Support Grant and the Rural Services Delivery Grant but a reduction in the payment from new homes bonus. Despite this the Council will set a balanced budget which maintains the current level of services. However, inevitably there will be an increase in council tax; a 1.99% increase in the general rate and a 2% increase in the adult social care precept (up to 3% is permitted). As with all local authorities the Council must set a budget which is balanced over a 3-year period; the projection for 22/23 is for a tax rise of 2% plus 1% for adult social care.

Grass Cutting:

As reported in November the Councils mandatory consultation on the budget for 21/22 included a proposal to reduce the highways verge cuts on both C and U roads from 2 to one cut per year. In response to the consultation 63% of respondents agreed with the reduction, this will obviously be the subject of debate at the council tax setting meeting in February.

Members Code of Conduct:

In 2019 the Committee on Standards in Public Life requested the Local Government Association (LGA) to produce a model elected member code of conduct. The draft LGA model code was issued for consultation between 8th June 2020 and 17th August 2020. The final version of the LGA Model Councillor Code of Conduct has now been issued. The NCC Standards Committee will consider its adoption on 18th January. Governments has indicated that all councils should adopt the code with or without minor amendments so that a standard code applies across all elected local councils.

Mark Kiddle-Morris.
Member for Necton and Launditch.
Norfolk County Council.