

Tanfield Parish Council

MINUTES OF A PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

DATE: 28th October 2014
TIME: 19.30 hrs
LOCATION: West Tanfield Memorial Hall
PRESENT: Councillors Peter Hull (Chair), David Parkinson (Vice-Chair), Steven Houston and Chris Pennock.
IN ATTENDANCE: Iona Taylor (Clerk)
District Councillor David Webster
Ambrose Almack, Stephen Bennett and Bob Trehitt

1. WELCOME FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Councillor Hull welcomed all those present to the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

2.1 Councillor Houston.

- Item 12.2 - planning application 14/00847/FUL as he is the applicant and site owner.
- Item 14.1 – referring to the complaint against his alleged breach of the Code of Conduct.

2.2 Councillor Pennock.

- Item 8.6 – as the hedges referred to are on land owned by his employer.
- Item 9 – as the event is to take place on land owned by his employer.
- Item 14.2 - referring to the complaint against his alleged breach of the Code of Conduct.

3. QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (covered in item 6.3 below).

4. APOLOGIES – none.

5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

It was resolved that the minutes of the last meetings held on 29th July, 26th August and 30th September 2014 be agreed and signed.

6. ITEMS CARRIED FORWARD FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

6.1 Renewal of contracts for bus services in Hambleton area.

It was noted that there are no changes proposed to bus services in this area from 1st April 2015 as a result of the recently carried out Area Transport Review.

6.2 Implementation of Part 1 of the Commons Act 2006.

Information from the Open Spaces Society, circulated to Councillors prior to this meeting, was noted.

Part 1 of the Commons Act 2006 is not thought to affect this parish as it is not considered that there were any mistakes made when registering common land in this area.

6.3 Provision of de-fibrillator in West Tanfield.

Stephen Bennett indicated that there is a strong desire amongst the people of West Tanfield for a de-fibrillator to be provided for use in emergencies.

It was agreed that the Clerk should carry out further research about the potential cost of a machine and report to the January Parish Council meeting.

7. FINANCIALS

2013/14 Financial Year

7.1 External Auditor's opinion on the 2013/14 accounts.

The following comments have been received from the External Auditor:

“Section 1, Box 2, the annual precept, does not agree to the figure notified to us by the precepting authority. The figures in Boxes 2 and 3 should read £5,959 and £2,934 respectively. All grants, including Council Tax Support Grant, should be shown in Box 3, as per the guidance notes on the Annual Return.

Section 1, Box 9: Information from you indicates that the assets have been revalued to current insurance value. We note also that this follows guidance received during the 2012/13 audit. We can find no evidence on our files of such guidance being given by us. In any event please note that proper practice, as specified in the Practitioners' Guide, only requires that assets are recorded at their original cost and no adjustment is required until disposal. Where original cost is not known a proxy such as insurance value may be used but this value should remain constant throughout the period of ownership and not be revised to reflect current values. Please amend the figures for 2013/14 when submitting the Return for 2014/15.”

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7.2 Action in relation to comments included in External Auditor's opinion.

The following response from the Council's Responsible Financial Officer was noted:

- Hambleton District Council did not differentiate between the precept and Council Tax Support Grant as the remittance advice only showed 'precept'. Council tax support grant has not been paid in 14/15, so this issue will not recur.
- The review of assets values was undertaken using guidance from YLCA. This was a one-off exercise. Assets' values were not artificially inflated, but increased to reflect current insurance values. This explanation was accepted by the auditor for another Council who enquired as to what had happened. Tanfield Parish Council's auditor merely chose to comment, not seek explanation. This explanation will be provided to the External Auditor when the 2014/15 audit is undertaken.

2014/15 Financial Year

7.3 Bank reconciliation to 30th September 2014.

In response to the recommendation made by the 2013/14 Internal Auditor, the Parish Council considered the monthly bank reconciliation to 30th September 2014.

The reconciliation was accepted by the Parish Council and signed by the Chairman.

7.4 Mid-year monitoring against budget report.

This shows that the Council is operating *approximately* £122.22 over budget.

This is mainly caused by expenditure on the Clerk being over-budget. £111.29 of this over-spend is the contribution to the Clerk's new computer.

It has also happened for a number of other reasons such as having to hold a meeting every month this year, work generated by correspondence from and requests made by members of the public, and the detailed level of work required by Councillors. The over-spend on the Clerk has been slightly off-set by financial gains such as NYCC's grasscutting contribution being more than expected and the sale of the Billy Goat mower.

7.5 Mid-year balance analysis report.

This report showed that, as at 30th September 2014, the Parish Council had unallocated funds of £2,688.89. This figure is still lower than recommended and the Council should continue to exercise caution when taking decisions with a financial implication.

7.6 Financial report.

The following report was considered and approved:

<i>Bank Balances as at 22/10/14:</i>		
NatWest Current a/c - ****4884		£985.21
NatWest Business Reserve a/c - ****2668		£6,753.55
TOTAL		£7,738.76
<i>Payments to be approved and recorded:</i>		
<i>Payee</i>	<i>Details</i>	
Iona Taylor	Clerk's Expenses - July 2014	£13.07
Iona Taylor	Clerk's Wages - July 2014	£192.05
Iona Taylor	Clerk's Expenses - August 2014	£7.74
Iona Taylor	Clerk's Wages - August 2014	£34.50
Iona Taylor	Clerk's Wages - September 2014	£108.65
Iona Taylor	Clerk's Expenses - September 2014	£17.81
HMRC	PAYE - July 2014	£1.40
Farm & Land Services Ltd	Caretaker - Invoice 4142	£148.50
Farm & Land Services Ltd	Grasscutting - Invoice 4133	£432.00
West Tanfield Memorial Hall	Invoice AS/141 (Hire in Aug & Sept)	£14.00
West Tanfield Memorial Hall	Invoice AS/146 (Hire on 28/10/14)	£14.00
TOTAL		£983.72

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<i>Receipts to be recorded:</i>		
<i>Received From</i>	<i>Details</i>	
Hambleton District Council	Precept, 1st Part (April 2014)	£3,594.00
Hambleton District Council	Precept, 2nd Part (September 2014)	£3,594.00
North Yorkshire County Council	Grasscutting Reimbursement	£484.88
HMRC	VAT Reimbursement (1/5/14 - 30/9/14)	£266.11
TOTAL		£7,938.99

7.7 Internal Auditor.

It was noted that Angela Barrant, the Council's 2013/14 Internal Auditor, has recently and unexpectedly died. The Clerk forwarded condolences to her widower on behalf of the Parish Council.

The Council will need to appoint a new auditor in time for the 2014/15 audit at the end of the current financial year (31st March 2015).

7.8 Replacement of cheque 434.

It was agreed that a replacement cheque be issued as the one numbered 434 had been lost by the recipient.

2015/16 financial year.

7.9 Funding / income streams for Parish Council.

Although a number of options had been investigated by Councillor Pennock and the Clerk there were no firm proposals put forward for consideration at this meeting.

7.10 2015/16 budget.

The draft budget for the 2015/16 financial year was considered.

It was agreed that an allowance of £500 should be included for the payment of election expenses. This Council would need to pay a maximum of £2,000 if both wards were contested next May, but these costs can be spread over 4 years.

This would mean that only a £500 increase to the precept would be required.

7.11 Precept requirement for 2015/16 financial year.

It was agreed that this matter be deferred until after the outcome of item 8.4.

8. **PARISH CARETAKER**

8.1 Tasks to be undertaken by caretaker.

- Clearance of leaves along Main Street, West Tanfield.
- Repairs to chain link fence at Nosterfield play area.

8.2 Issues with reporting by caretaker.

The Clerk reported that she is experiencing issues in having the caretaker report and account for the work being undertaken. Tasks sheets are not being returned at all and invoices are not being submitted in a timely manner.

It was agreed that the Clerk should send a written letter to Farm & Land Services Ltd reminding them that it is a contractual obligation that they complete and return the task list each month. The situation will be monitored by the Council.

8.3 Damage to playground equipment by trimmers.

No response has yet been received from Farm & Land Services after this issue was raised with them by the Clerk.

8.4 Maintenance of common land.

It was noted that a meeting between Councillor Hull, the Clerk and Christopher Bourne-Arton has been arranged for Tuesday 11th November. Items to be discussed at that meeting will include:

- Confirmation of extent of boundaries of common land.
- Confirmation of responsibilities for maintenance of common land.
- Location of play equipment on common land in Nosterfield and Thornborough.
- Maintenance of trees, including tree with phytophthora at Nosterfield.
- Maintenance of Marmion Tower steps.
- Grasscutting and routine maintenance.

8.5 Maintenance of steps near Marmion Tower – to be deferred pending outcome of 8.4.

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9. **BONFIRE AND FIREWORKS EVENT (6.30PM ON 7/11/14 AT NOSTERFIELD QUARRY VISITOR'S CENTRE)**

The following points were noted in relation to the organisation of this event:

- The food has been ordered (75 hot dogs & 50 portions of pie & peas).
- Councillor Houston is in the process of ordering £500 of fireworks.
- £625 of donations have been pledged, including £500 from Lafarge Tarmac to cover the cost of fireworks.
- Publicity has been carried out.
- The local police & fire authorities and the Parish Council's insurers informed.
- A volunteer recruitment list has been placed in the village shop.
- The offer of the use of a gazebo from Abrasive Finishing Systems has been accepted.

10. **SUPERFAST TANFIELD (BROADBAND)**

10.1 Information from Superfast North Yorkshire.

Superfast North Yorkshire has advised that the Well telephone exchange, which serves the cabinet in West Tanfield, is due to be upgraded by the end of 2014. Some concern about the location of prominent items of infrastructure in the Conservation Area was noted and further information about this will be sought.

The cabinets which serve Nosterfield and Thornborough are not scheduled to be upgraded by the Superfast North Yorkshire project. These villages are deemed to be too far from the cabinets to benefit from fibre broadband.

10.2 Community broadband scheme.

In view of the outcome of item 10.1 above it was agreed that interest in a community broadband scheme in Nosterfield and Thornborough should be canvassed. This would provide a broadband service using a wireless radio signal beamed from Sutton Bank. This is then distributed wirelessly around communities. It's completely independent of BT or Superfast North Yorkshire. Expressions of interest are required from 16 properties to make a scheme viable.

11. **HIGHWAYS**

11.1 Progress with / correspondence about previously reported highways faults – no progress to be reported.

11.2 Reclassification of B6267 – no progress to be reported.

12. **PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

12.1 Consultations on applications – none.

12.2 Updates and decisions on applications, appeals and enforcement investigations received from Hambleton District Council since the last meeting.

<i>Application No.</i>	<i>Proposal</i>	<i>Decision</i>
14/00847/FUL	Proposed general purpose agricultural, livestock and storage building at Long Acres, Fore Lane, Thornborough.	Passed
14/00986/FUL	Demolition of conservatory and workshop and construction of enlarged kitchen area and rear hall at Tanfield Lodge, Park Lane, West Tanfield.	Passed
14/01142/FUL	Re-roofing of dwelling house at Oakwood, Main Street, West Tanfield.	Passed
14/01338/FUL & 14/01339/LBC	Two storey and single storey extensions, internal works and removal of structure at Village Farm, Nosterfield.	Passed

12.3 Sunflower signs in West Tanfield.

It was noted that these have now been removed.

13. **CORRESPONDENCE**

The Clerk reported on items received, including:

13.1 Parish liaison meeting.

It was noted that the next date of this meeting, between Parish Councils and Hambleton District Council, will be 6th November 2014.

13.2 Letter from Nosterfield resident, Mrs Collier.

- It was noted that the Parish Council is not involved with, and has no control over, the production of the local parish magazine. Any requests for the inclusion of Nosterfield news in each edition should be directed to the editor.
- It was agreed that the Parish Council should formally consider the provision of recreation and play facilities in Nosterfield at its next full meeting in January. In the meantime Lafarge Tarmac will be approached to discuss Mrs Collier's suggestion of providing a recreation area on land owned by them.

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13.3 Hambleton Citizens' Advice Bureau.

It was noted that the new bureau manager (Carol Shreeve) has written to introduce herself. The Parish Council will consider making a donation to the bureau at its January meeting.

14. COMPLAINT ABOUT TANFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

It was resolved that the press and public be excluded for the consideration of items 14.1, 14.2 and 14.3.

14.1 Correspondence with Hambleton District Council since September meeting, in relation to complaint made against Councillor Houston.

Councillor Houston withdrew from the meeting room for the consideration of this item.

It was noted that the complaint about alleged breaches of the Council's Code of Conduct by Councillor Houston had been forwarded to Hambleton District Council's Monitoring Officer on 1st October 2014 and receipt was acknowledged on 6th October 2014. Further correspondence with the Monitoring Officer was noted.

14.2 Correspondence with Hambleton District Council since September meeting, in relation to complaint made against Councillor Pennock.

Councillor Pennock withdrew from the meeting room for the consideration of this item.

It was noted that the complaint about alleged breaches of the Council's Code of Conduct by Councillor Pennock had been forwarded to Hambleton District Council's Monitoring Officer on 1st October 2014 and receipt was acknowledged on 6th October 2014. Further correspondence with the Monitoring Officer was noted.

14.3 Investigation of complaint against Clerk.

Councillor Hull reported that he has been in further communications with the complainant, but that he is not yet in a position to report to the Parish Council on the outcome of his investigations.

Councillor Hull has sought advice about how to proceed from the Yorkshire Local Councils Associations and from the Monitoring Officer.

It was agreed that the Parish Council should not incur any additional expense in relation to the investigation of this complaint by procuring the services of an external reviewer.

14.4 Yorkshire Local Councils Associations' advisory service.

It was agreed that the Council should continue to use YLCA's services, but that a letter expressing dissatisfaction about the recent guidance provided by the Deputy Chief Officer should be sent.

15. COUNCIL'S STANDARD FORMS & PROCEDURES

15.1 Fault / issue protocol.

It was resolved that an updated policy be approved to reflect the following amendments:

- All complaints about alleged breaches of the Council's Code of Conduct will automatically be referred to Hambleton District Council's Monitoring Officer.
- Complaints about the Clerk will be handled in accordance with the Council's complaints policy, (currently under review – reference item 15.2).

15.2 Complaints procedure.

It was agreed that, in view of recently produced guidance from the National Association of Local Councils (Legal Topic Note 9E), the Council should review and update its complaints procedure. It is expected that the Yorkshire Local Councils Associations will produce a template complaints procedure in the next few weeks.

15.3 Recording of future Parish Council meetings.

It was agreed that the Parish Council is minded to investigate recording future meetings. Information about how this is done at Well Parish Council meetings will be sought.

16. FUTURE MEETINGS

16.1 Next meetings.

The next meetings were confirmed as being on 25th November 2014 (planning and extraordinary business) and 28th January 2015 (ordinary).

16.2 2015 meetings.

The draft schedule of meetings was considered and approved.

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17. ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE NEXT MEETING

- Donation to Hambleton Citizens Advice Bureau.
- Review of play equipment and recreation provision in Nosterfield.

Meeting closed at 21.00 hrs.

These minutes were recorded and prepared by Iona Taylor, Clerk to the Parish Council.

SIGNED: (Chairman)

DATE: