

Tanfield Parish Council

MINUTES OF A PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

DATE: Wednesday 13th May 2015
TIME: 20.08 hrs
LOCATION: West Tanfield Memorial Hall
PRESENT: Councillors Peter Hull (Chairman), Steven Houston (Vice-Chairman) and David Webster.
IN ATTENDANCE: Iona Taylor (Clerk)
Yvonne Griffiths and Bob Trehitt (except for item 5, which it was resolved should be considered in camera at the end of the meeting).

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

Councillor Hull declared an interest in agenda items 5.2 and 5.3 as he is the subject of some of the complaints made. It was resolved that Councillor Hull's application for a dispensation, to allow him to take part in consideration of and decisions about the complaints against him, be approved. Without the dispensation the Council would not have been quorate.

3. APOLOGIES – none.

4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was resolved that the minutes of the last meeting held on 15th April 2015 be agreed and signed.

5. COMPLAINTS AGAINST COUNCILLORS

5.1 Exclusion of the press and public.

It was resolved that the press and public be excluded for consideration of items 5.2 and 5.3.

5.2 Recommendations from Hambleton District Council's Standards Hearings Panel.

Complaint Against Councillor Parkinson

It was noted that David Parkinson did not stand for re-election to the Parish Council and is no longer a Councillor.

It was noted that the following recommendation had been received from Hambleton District Council:

"The panel concluded it had seen no evidence that Councillor Parkinson had misled the public, or by his actions contributed to the Parish Council misleading the public, about a consultation on mineral extraction in 2015.

It followed that, in the Panel's view, Councillor Parkinson had not breached the Code of Conduct.

The Panel therefore recommends to the Parish Council that the allegation is not upheld."

Complaints Against Councillor Hull

It was noted that the following recommendations had been received from Hambleton District Council:

"The Panel had seen no evidence that the Councillor had misled the public; or by his actions contributed to the Parish Council misleading the public, about a consultation on mineral extraction in 2015.

The quality of the Councillor's report into the complainant's complaint, and the Parish Council's procedures used in producing it, were not matters covered by the Code of Conduct.

In disclosing the complaint to the clerk and his fellow Councillors, the Councillor did not disclose confidential information about the complainant. It was appropriate for the Councillor to disclose the complaint in order to seek the views of his fellow Councillors and the response of the Clerk when dealing with the complaint. It was noted that Councillor Hull had not disclosed the complaint to any other party.

It follows therefore that the Panel found that there had been no breaches of the Code of Conduct.

The Panel therefore recommends to the Parish Council that the allegations are not upheld."

5.3 Consideration of allegations against Councillor Hull and David Parkinson and agreement of action as necessary.

Complaint Against Councillor Parkinson

It was resolved that the Parish Council accepts the Panel's recommendation and is agreed that the allegation against Councillor Parkinson is not upheld.

Complaints Against Councillor Hull

It was resolved that the Parish Council accepts the Panel's recommendation and is agreed that those allegations against Councillor Hull which are covered by the Code of Conduct are not upheld.

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In addition, the Parish Council considered the allegation that Councillor Hull had ‘produced a report into a complaint against the Clerk which was of poor quality and using a process which was not fair and did not adequately involve the complainant’, which the Standards Hearing Panel had found was not covered by the Code of Conduct.

The Parish Council again resolved (in accordance with its previous decision of 28th January 2015) that Councillor Hull was competent to undertake the investigation into the complaint dated 17th September 2014 and that it is content with the way the investigation had been conducted.

The Parish Council also resolved to re-affirm that the complaints against the Clerk are not upheld.

Having agreed upon the above matters the Parish Council resolved that it now considers them to be concluded and will not enter in to further, related correspondence with the complainant.

6. FINANCIALS

It was resolved that the following payment be approved:

- Iona Taylor (Clerk’s Wages - April 2015) - £261.53
- Iona Taylor (Clerk’s Expenses – April 2015) - £26.94
- HMRC (PAYE – April 2015) - £17.60

7. CONSULTATIONS ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS – none.

8. PLAYGROUNDS

It was agreed that Councillor Hull should undertake the weekly inspections of the play equipment in Nosterfield. The Clerk will, on a temporary basis, carry out the inspections in West Tanfield.

9. PARISH LIAISON MEETING (4/6/15, STONE CROSS, NORTHALLERTON)

It was agreed that the Parish Council should be represented by the Clerk at this meeting with Hambleton District Council.

10. NEXT MEETINGS

It was agreed that the dates of the next meetings will need to be changed and should be re-arranged via e-mail between Councillors and the Clerk. They will be publicised once agreed.

11. ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE NEXT MEETING

- Access to YLCA website.
- Recording of meetings.
- Hambleton District Council consultation on Size, Type and Tenure of New Homes Supplementary Planning Document. It was noted that the timing of the consultation, in relation to the date of future meetings, may prevent the Parish Council from commenting on it. An extension to the consultation period will be requested and details of the consultation will be included on the Parish Council’s website.

Meeting closed at 20.41 hrs.

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

SIGNED: (Chairman)

DATE: