

Rockland St Mary with Hellington Parish Council

Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 7th June 2023 in The Parish Room, Rockland St Mary

(Subject to amendment until signed by the Chair at the next meeting)

Parish Councillors present	Nikki Stone, Janet Rogers, Paul Francis, Juliette Harkin
Absent	Joanne Norris, Jack Trutch and John Sayles
County Councillor	None
District Councillor	Vic Thomson
Also in attendance	Charlotte Rust – Parish Clerk and Steve Gildersleeve – Caretaker
Members of the public (MOP)	Six

23.22 To receive and approve apologies for absence.

Apologies received for Cllr J Norris, Cllr J Trutch and Cllr John Sayles.

23.23 To approve minutes of Parish meeting of 10th May 2022.

Approved and signed by Chair.

23.24 Reports from:

23.24.1 District Councillor, Cllr Vic Thomson

Cllr V Thomson provided an overview of his report, with a full copy available on the Parish Council website:

- After the May elections all new Cllrs have now been trained.
- South Norfolk Council are now in the Broadland offices. There has been a 84% in costs across the two previous sites, as the car park is covered in solar panels and there is a ground source heating pump.
- Pride in Place grant available, with details to follow.
- Launch of a new app for the leisure sites across South Norfolk.
- Cllr P Francis asked Cllr V Thomson whose responsibility it is to maintain public footpaths on land owned by farmers. Cllr V Thomson believed it is the responsibility of NCC but advised to contact Cllr K Mason-Billig for confirmation. Cllr P Francis to action.
- Cllr P Francis raised the on going issue of flooding on Low Common, Clerk informed the PC that she sought guidance on this and the Parish Council should contact NCC to arrange works. Clerk to action.
- Cllr N Stone asked for guidance from Cllr V Thomson regarding having School Lane swept as there is lots of debris on the road, that when there is heavy rainfall again this will cause the drains to become blocked again. Cllr V Thomson asked for an email to be sent to him with details. Cllr N Stone to provide the Clerk with photos and Clerk to email Cllr V Thomson.
- Cllr J Rogers asked for it to be noted that the white lines on School Lane and on the corner of Rookery Hill have been reinstated.

23.24.2 County Councillor, Cllr Kay Mason-Billig.

None.

23.24.3 Parish Clerk

The Clerk provided her report covering:

- Registering the defibrillators in the village.
- Confirmed she had raised the requested Highways enquiries and had passed them on the Parish Ranger also.

- Correspondence had been sent addressing the overgrown hedges within the village and had received responses confirming action will be taken.
- Completed the paperwork for Barclays debit card as agreed at May's meeting.
- Clerk is to complete the Green Spaces for greater Norwich survey and distribute to Cllr's for review before submitting.

23.24.4 Cllr N Stone – Green Lane Playing Field and Rockland St Mary Primary School.

None.

23.24.5 Cllr J Trutch – Footpaths.

None.

23.24.6 Cllr J Norris – Risk Assessments.

The Clerk had been provided the Parish Council with the Risk Assessment for Blackhorse Dyke undertaken by Cllr J Norris which is read out in her absence:

'The car park and green area are generally in a good state of repair.

However the timber marker posts are now buried in the hedge on the right hand side of the car park (looking from The Street into the carpark) and some of the signage on the left hand side is becoming hidden and algae covered. With the fencing and typically overgrown vegetation around the dyke/pond, there is no access to the pond and it is also not visible to view. The small bit I could see looked stagnant and silted up.

Personally I think the timber posts are surplus to requirements as the hedge is a good barrier in its own right.

The signage just needs some of the vegetation clearing to make it visible again (appreciate it is that time of year when everything is at its peak and slightly out of control).

The pond vegetation although not a health and safety risk to any users of the car park, would be good if it could be restored. I know Paul was looking into it, but it wasn't mentioned at the last Council meeting.'

The Parish Council asked Steven Gildersleeve (SG) to check whether the posts are stable to remain in place as concerns were raised that if the posts weren't there that a car may roll backwards in the ditch. SG to update the Parish Council.

23.24.7 Cllr J Harkin – Environmental and wildlife matters.

Cllr J Harkin made the Parish Council aware of the '5 Mile Network', a monthly gathering for local gardeners, producers, farmers to share seeds, plants, ideas. The group meet at Bramerton Village Hall on the first Monday of each month at 7.00pm. More information on the Alderfen Marshes website and village noticeboards.

Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT) began their Churchyard Challenge in cooperation with the Broads Authority (BA). A wildflowers workshop was held at St Mary's Church. Thanks to Steven Gildersleeve for arranging a sympathetic area for a wild flower patch. NWT and BA are doing wildflower surveys in churches in the area during summer and those interested in volunteering can contact andrew.farrell@broads-authority.gov.uk

South Yare Wildlife Group held its annual Wild Patch open gardens day on Sunday 11th June – details of other events are available on the website.

Cllr V Thomson added that he can pass on details of NCC master composter initiative to the PC. Cllr J Harkin will forward details on wildflowers to the Clerk to add to the Parish Council website.

23.24.8 Cllr J Sayles and Steven Gildersleeve (SG), Caretaker – Blackhorse Dyke and Staithe Car Parks, defibrillators.

SG will place the signs on the two defibrillators.

23.25 Adjournment for Public Participation (15 minutes allowed for). This provides an opportunity for members of the public to raise questions about and comment on items on the agenda before the Council make decisions.

A parishioner expressed their disappointment at the ruins of St Margaret's Church, which they feel are unkept, as they believe the ruins to be an asset and tourist attraction to Rockland St Mary. Another parishioner mentioned that there may be possible funding available to restore the ruins however due to Covid 19 this project has been deferred to a later time.

23.26 Motion to request the Parish Council holds a Public Meeting to ask if the Community wants to replace the bird hide. NB the Clerk asked if anyone present would mind if she could record the discussion relating to this item as to refer to it for accurate minutes being documented.

Peter Armitage, member of the Bird Hide Action Group (BHAG) provided a brief history of the bird hide as they were involved in the original installation over 25 years ago. They feel it is an important asset to the Rockland Broads conservation as it provides fresh water, vegetation and uniquely owned by the Parish. Since the flood wall was implemented there has been disabled access. The loss of the bird hide would be a tragedy. RSPB do not have the funds to restore the bird hide and believes that there is enough interest in this project to fund raise enough. They support the motion to hold a public meeting and would like the PC to take responsibility.

Another parishioner seconded the previous parishioners comments saying the disabled access to a bird hide is a wonderful benefit and she is regularly asked about the bird hides fates and believes the restoration would bring more tourism to the Rockland Broads.

Cllr N Stone raised concerns on the maintenance as the current bird hide should have lasted more than 25 years. Another concern was that on the COF grant application, the applicant needs to provide proof of income/revenue stream and how this would be shown.

Cllr N Stone raised the following questions:

- Are the BHAG planning on applying for one grant or multiple grants?
- What is BHAG's timeline on this project?

Peter Armitage confirmed there would be multiple grants applied for and that the timeline would be approx. 2 years.

Cllr V Thomson advised that should a public meeting be held that the BHAG and Parish Council must be prepared with all the answers. He confirmed that there are no grants for insurance or maintenance on this type of structure.

Cllr J Rogers reiterated that the purpose of the public meeting would be to see if parishioners wanted the bird hide to be restore and to see if they have relevant skills to move the project forward.

Cllr J Harkin broadly supported the motion as it would be used as a sounding board exploring and brainstorming options.

Cllr P Francis supported the motion as it would allow the BHAG and Parish Council to gauge the level of support which he believed there would be.

There were suggestions of canvassing the village and preparing questionnaires to obtain the level of interest.

The motion is to be deferred until July's meeting as no vote was undertaken, as concerns were raised regarding further information being needed to present to parishioners a fuller picture, to ensure the Parish Council can afford the ongoing potential additional costs and examine any potential cost implications to parishioners, as to be completely transparent. There will be a public meeting to discuss the bird hide when all the relevant information is pulled together to give a fuller overview for parishioners. It was also noted that as a PC we need to make sure we attempt to engage all households with the information pulled together as a public meeting will likely only engage a minority/handful of households.

Cllr J Harkin suggested it would be useful if the Parish Council have a terms of reference for the public meeting, which was seconded by Cllr N Stone. The terms of reference will include things like, the aim of the public meeting, the issue at hand, new developments, etc.

OUTCOME: The BHAG are to provide terms of reference to the Parish Council – including rough costs, proposed plans for the bird hide (like-for-like structure or different), confirmed timeline for the project, to details to be provided to the community for their buy in.

Cllr N Stone and the Clerk are to research into insurance, peppercorn lease, ongoing maintenance, Health & Safety and other ongoing costs.

Peter Armitage to look into the costs of previous maintenance.

23.27 Correspondence:

23.27.1 SAM2/Speed awareness group.

The Clerk had received correspondence from a parishioner raising concern over speeding in the village. The Clerk asked for a bit of history on the previous Speed Awareness Group and SAM2. Cllr N Stone confirmed there had been a group previously however it was no longer running. The Clerk is to request expressions of interest for volunteers to reinstate the Speed Awareness Group. Cllr J Rogers requested Highways to be contacted for further SAM2 post on Lower Road. Cllr J Harkin offered to undertake training and lead this project should the Parish Council receive the volunteers needed.

23.28 Policies for review:

23.28.1 Grant Awarding Policy.

Approved and combined with 23.28.2 into one policy.

23.28.2 Community Grant Application.

Approved and combined with 23.28.1 into one policy.

23.28.3 Financial Regulations.

The Clerk asked to defer this to July's meeting as this needs to cover a debit card on the account.

23.28.4 Equality & Diversity.

Subject to the amendments this is approved.

23.28.5 FOI and Publication Scheme.

Approved.

23.28.6 Data Audit 2023.

Approved.

23.29 Planning:

23.29.1 To receive any new planning applications and make comment.

23.29.1.1 2023/1284 -Subdivision of the site and the construction of a three bedroom bungalow.

The following points were raised and all Cllrs agreed with these points:

- Overdevelopment of the site? The site is not particularly large with little garden space and removes open space within the village (albeit private front garden)
- Visibility - I cannot see how they can achieve the required visibility splay from the entrance to the plot without the removal of the existing 1.8m hedge which does not look like it is within their ownership.
- Setting a precedent - Would this set a precedent for other properties on The Street to develop their front garden?
- They have made no mention of nutrient neutrality
- They have made no mention of how they are planning on dealing with surface water - Whilst this can be conditioned by the local authority you would usually be expected to at least advise of your proposed strategy
- The required visibility splay is not shown on the drawings so we are unable to see if it is compliant - This is something that the Highways Authority would usually comment on, but we can raise it too - I don't think they can achieve it without taking out hedging but it is not possible to tell without it being marked on a drawing

- They make no reference to the visibility splay so this is something we should raise.
- They have however raised a good point that the applicant has not demonstrated that you can turn on the drive and exit forwards, highways will not allow development that required you to reverse out of your drive onto a classified road.
- The tarmac area is shown as owned by the homeowner, which the Parish Council do not believe to be correct.

Based on the above Members agreed to object the application. Clerk to notify SNDC.

23.29.2 To receive the results and updates on any outstanding applications.

None.

23.30 Finance:

23.30.1 To sign debit card application form.

Signed by the Chair.

23.30.2 To note the bank balance.

General account - £15,990.03

RSM CIL - £3457.22

Cllr J Rogers raised the following queries:

- Where is the King's Coronation grant received from SNDC shown as income.
- Increase in the amount of the dog bin invoice

The Clerk confirmed she will investigate why the grant isn't showing on the running budget statement.

The Clerk viewed the invoice provided by SNDC for 9 bins, which Cllr N Stone confirmed is now correct as there had been the incorrect number invoiced for in previous years.

23.30.3 To note any receipts.

TO NOTE INCOME						
31.05.23	Salvation Army - April	BACS	£31.41	£0.00		

23.30.4 To note any grants.

None.

23.30.5 To approve any payments of invoices and other expenses received since last meeting.

23.30.5.1 See June's Payment Schedule.

FOR APPROVAL						
	DATE	EXPENDITURE	PAYMENT METHOD	TOTAL	VAT	P/R NO
Roydons Charity	06.04.23	Hall Hire: Jan- April 23	BACS	£40.00	£0.00	
S. Gildersleeve	14.04.23	Bin for Green Lane	BACS	£4.25	£0.71	
S. Gildersleeve	08.06.23	Caretaker May Invoice	BACS	£383.25	£0.00	
PC Website	15.05.23	Domain renewal 08.23-08.25	BACS	£105.60	£17.60	
Norfolk ALC	06.06.23	Cllr J Harkin Training	BACS	£72.00	£12.00	
C.Rust	18.06.23	Clerk June Expenses	BACS	£17.52	£0.00	
TO NOTE PAYMENTS MADE OUTSIDE MEETINGS						
C. Rust	28.06.23	Clerk Salary & WFH - June	BACS	£395.88	£0.00	

23.31 To discuss items to add to the agenda for next Parish Council meeting.

Parish Council Reserves

Bird Hide update

SAM2

23.32 Parishioners final word.

A parishioner thanked the Parish Council for providing refreshments.

23.33 To confirm next meeting on Wednesday 5th July 2023 at 7.30pm at The Parish Room, Rockland St Mary.

Confirmed.

The meeting closed at 21:25pm

DRAFT