

EAST BRENT PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of East Brent Parish Council held at the Village Hall on Monday 3rd March 2014 at 7.30pm, when the following business was transacted.

Present

Councillors; Cllr E. Champion,(Chairman) Cllr V. Rawles, Cllr A.Gilling, Cllr W. Walker, Cllr J. Bowden, Cllr B. Woodward, Cllr Y. Roscorla and Cllr B. Bees, together with the Clerk Mr M. Shobbrook.

Apologies for absence and declarations of interest

Apologies were received from Cllrs J. Webb, S. McGreavy and N. Lloyd-Jones, and from Mr Bob Filmer. A declaration of interest was made by Cllr Gilling in relation to the Planning matter on the Agenda (in view of his position on the Development Committee at SDC).

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on Monday 3rd February 2014, were signed by the Chairman as being a true reflection of the business carried out by this Parish Council on that date, following minor corrections made by Cllrs. Gilling and Woodward.

ONGOING ISSUES

Minute 04/13 : Review of the funding of the Parish Magazine - As the three Councillors who have had direct contact with Mrs Molly Richards regarding the future of the Village magazine, were not able to be at the meeting, the Chairman recommended that this item should be deferred to the next Council meeting. In notes given to the Clerk regarding this meeting by Cllr Lloyd-Jones (in view of his absence), he made a recommendation that a donation of £500.00 should be given to the running costs of the magazine. He reminded the Committee that it had agreed to continue to sponsor the running costs of the magazine for a further period of time, to ensure its continuance. This was seconded by Cllrs Bowden and Rawles and then unanimously approved by the whole Committee. There was nevertheless a reticence amongst the Committee to hand over the cheque until further details of production costs have been ascertained. The Chairman agreed to hold the cheque and to liaise with Cllrs Webb, McGreavy and Lloyd-Jones to obtain details of the printing arrangements, together with the delivery schedule. It was noted that the latest edition of the magazine had arrived at many addresses in the Village after the events it described, had occurred. It also contained very few adverts, thus limiting the potential revenue the magazine could produce. This needed to be investigated.

Minute 24/12 : Defibrillator Equipment - The Chairman suggested that further discussion on the siting of the second Defibrillator and associated topics, should be deferred until the next meeting, as Cllr Webb (who has personally steered the entire project to date), was not able to attend tonight. Cllr Woodward told the Committee that she had been told by the Doctors Surgery that they were prepared to house the second Defibrillator at the Surgery. In addition they would provide a free electricity supply to it. Cllr Webb has spent a considerable amount of time negotiating with several electricity supply companies, for a new electricity connection to be established at the old telephone kiosk. One quote was for £1,400, alone. A review of this new proposal will therefore be debated at the next meeting.

Minute 30/12: The completion of the pavements adjacent to the building site at The Laurels, Old Bristol Road, East Brent - Cllr Gilling told the Committee that he had spoken with Ian McWilliams' superior, about the outstanding work needed to the pavement. He has been told that there is no bond in place to support the Road Making Agreement, which the developer entered into with SDC; before the development construction commenced. This has lead to SDC being unable to invoke the terms of a bond, which would normally have been available. The Developer appears to have either ceased trading or is no longer contactable. Enforcement of the outstanding planning consent provisions, is therefore proving to be difficult. Cllr Gilling will continue to investigate all possible lines of action available and he will report to the next meeting.

Minute 03/13: The Horse Chestnut Trees on the "Village Green" - Cllr Lloyd-Jones had advised the Clerk that he has so far been unable to arrange a meeting with Janette Burton of SDC, to arrange a site meeting to discuss the trees and their associated problems. He will try to set this meeting up as soon as he can and he will report back to the Committee at a later date.

Minute 08/13 : Playing Field Project at Pill Road, Rooksbridge - Cllr Gilling had previously declared his interest in the land in question. Cllr Lloyd-Jones (through his notes given to the Clerk) told the Committee that the RL3 agreement has been completed, signed by all parties and released to the Clerk. In addition, the award of £6242.00 has been transferred into the Parish Council's bank account. Cllr Lloyd-Jones was also pleased to report that his application to the Nuttall Trust for another award

towards the setting up costs of the playing field project, has been successful. A further payment into the Council's bank account of £1500.00, will therefore be received shortly. Negotiations with Harley Cook concerning the goal post layout has been concluded. A single large goal will be installed.

Cllr Gilling told the Committee that his solicitor will release a draft lease to the Clerk during the next week. This will be reviewed immediately, to ensure momentum in the progress of the project. The Chairman concluded by saying that he and the rest of the Committee recognised the extensive efforts and time expended by Cllr Lloyd-Jones, on behalf of the P.C. in this matter. He has been very successful and should be thanked for all his hard work.

Minute 12/13: Community Warden Scheme - Cllr Gilling addressed the meeting and said that Brent Knoll Parish Council has withdrawn from joining the scheme. He said that West Huntspill P.C. might agree to join the existing group, together with Pawlett P.C. and Burnham Without P.C..

Cllr Gilling will report back to the Committee following the next proposed meeting on the 27th March 2014.

Minute 14/13: Planning Appeal relating to the Pilrow Wind Farm - Cllr Walker addressed the meeting and advised that the Planning Appeal Inquiry relating to the West Huntspill has been approved by its Inspector, but subsequently rejected by the Secretary of State. In view of this development, and another similar case, the Inspector dealing with the Pilrow Enquiry has once again adjourned his Enquiry, in order to allow all the parties ten working days to lodge any further comments they may have. Cllr Walker said that the further comments of the No Pilrow Group can be viewed on the Parish Council's website as and when they are finalised and posted.

Minute 16/13: The Village War Memorial - The Clerk advised the Committee that all the contracts have now been signed and dated. Approval for the commencement of the restoration work has now been given by the War Memorial Trust and this will commence on Monday 12th May 2014. It is thought that the work will take about two weeks to be concluded. An update of progress will be given by the Clerk, as it occurs. Cllr Webb had given the Clerk details of her negotiations with regard to the continuance of the British Legion contingent within the village and plans ensure the retention of the "standard". She had done this to enable the Committee to be updated, in her absence. She has been in contact with Brigadier David Godsall MBE DL, Unfortunately, he has so far been unable to deal with her request for information and so no firm details are currently available. The Chairman suggested that the matter should be deferred until a subsequent meeting.

Minute 01/14: Setting the dates of Parish Council meetings during the next financial year- The Clerk produced a list of suggested dates to the Committee. These were the dates which coincided with the first Monday of each month, nevertheless making allowances for Easter and other Bank Holidays. No objections were foreseen to any of these dates and the Chairman suggested their adoption. This was agreed by all. Cllr Gilling asked the Clerk to circulate a large format of these dates to the Committee members and to the Village magazine, in order to ensure they are not overlooked or forgotten.

Cllr Bowden suggested that names of possible speakers to address the Annual Parish Meeting should be considered, as it was not far away. He suggested County/District Councillor, John Denbee. He was invited to last year's meeting and it was felt that he represented the Parish very well. Cllr Gilling suggested that an engineer from the local Drainage Board might be another guest speaker. In view of the flooding problems encountered during the last four months, this would be very topical. In addition, he said, it would give the Parish an opportunity to thank the Drainage Board for the work it carried out in the area which has led to an avoidance so far, of further flooding in the Village. The names of Ian Sturdy and Nick Stephens, were mentioned and the Chairman agreed to approach them to see if one of them could attend.

Minute 02/14: Annual review of the Clerk's salary- The Chairman said that Cllr Lloyd-Jones as Finance Officer for the Parish, had prepared a set of figures relating to the Clerk's present salary, which had not been reviewed since 2012. He had circulated these to the Chairman and to Cllr Rawles and they had collectively considered them. The figures showed the allowances the Clerk was eligible to claim in addition to his salary (5% of the Council tax he pays on his property: £0.45p per mile for travelling and Printing costs). Since his appointment in June 2012, the Clerk has never claimed any of these. Cllr Lloyd-Jones, the Chairman and Cllr Rawles recommended that the hourly rate of pay for the Clerk should rise from £8.74p to £9.00 (£0.26p increase). This would equate to an increase of 1% of the Precept receipt. When calculating the budget for the forthcoming financial year, Cllr Lloyd-Jones had anticipated an increase of possibly 2% in the Clerk's salary and therefore the suggested figure was within those figures and would not result in a deficit in this regard. A proposal to adopt these new figures was made by Cllr Rawles and seconded by Cllr Bowden. A unanimous vote in favour, then followed by the Committee.

The Clerk was asked for his comments and he told the Committee that he was not personally looking for an increase in his salary, as he felt his services to the Parish gave him the opportunity to "give something

back" to the community. He nevertheless recognised that it was sensible to continuously review the Clerk's salary, as if it became necessary to advertise the vacant position of Clerk to the Parish, it would be a prerequisite to offer that person, "the going rate at the time". If the Clerk's salary was to fall behind even with figures for inflation, it might be difficult to recruit his successor without substantially increasing the salary.

The Clerk added that he will however, continue to avoid claiming the additional expenses he is entitled to receive.

PLANNING MATTERS

The Chairman said that there were currently no decisions available relating to previous applications.

He then addressed the present application shown on the Agenda (matter 24/14/00003- Mrs. S. Harrison, 20 Rookery Close, Rooksbridge and he invited Cllr Rawles to advise the Committee of her findings following site meeting which she and Cllrs. Walker and Lloyd-Jones, had made to the address. She outlined the details of the application and concluded by saying that they could find no reasons why the applications could not receive the support of the Parish Council, after reviewing the criteria the Council must follow. Cllr Rawles therefore recommended approval of the applications should be sent to SDC. A proposal of support was then made by Cllr Walker and seconded by Cllr Rawles. A unanimous vote in favour of this, followed. The Clerk was directed to pass this to SDC.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

The Clerk referred to the proposed payments listed on the Agenda. No questions were raised and a proposal for payment of them all was made by Cllr Bowden and seconded by Cllr Gilling.

A unanimous vote was carried by the whole Committee to pay these items and cheques were subsequently signed by the Chairman and Cllr Rawles.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Chairman read the email received from Mrs Yvonne Hopkins regarding the proposed diversion of a bridleway adjacent to her property at Dolhurst Farm, Lympsham, dated 3rd February 2014.

Before any debate followed, Cllr Bowden offered to retire from the meeting as he owns the land adjacent to Mrs Hopkins property. The Chairman said that he had no objection to Cllr Bowden remaining in the meeting. However, Cllr Gilling suggested that he should retire as there was a possible conflict of interests. Cllr Bowden did retire from the meeting during this discussion.

The Chairman told the meeting that Mrs Hopkins was asking the Parish Council for its support in her attempts to get the Public Right of Way diverted. East Brent Parish Council had approved the original planning application for this back in 2008 and there was no reason why it should not continue to support Mrs Hopkins now. Somerset County Council are objecting to it, because of the length of the proposed diversion. Cllr Walker told the meeting that the PROW goes past Mrs Hopkins' house and she wants to divert it around the edge of a field, to make the house more private. In addition, it would enable her to construct a lambing shed. She has already been given planning permission to build a new house on neighbouring land she owns. Cllr Rawles said that the Parish Council should support Mrs Hopkins and then leave her to pursue her battle with SCC, on her own. Cllr Walker offered to contact Chris East, to find out why SCC is specifically against the application. He will report to the next Parish Council meeting, before a response is given to Mrs Hopkins. Cllr Gilling said that the cultivation of crops in the field affected, would influence the width of the PROW, as different crops require different widths of paths. The same applies to the different types of livestock being kept in the field.

MATTERS OF REPORT

Cllr Woodward reported that she has spoken with Policewoman Pauline Dixon about the parking problems near the surgery in Church Street. She has been told that the white lines at the edge of the road are only advisory lines and they have no legal requirement to stop the parking of vehicles. Therefore, nothing can be done to alleviate the problem.

Cllr Walker referred to the Solar Farm which might be built off Pilrow. He said that this might be on land under the control of Cllr Gilling. Cllr Gilling replied that he has not declared an interest to the Committee, since no planning application has yet been submitted. There is currently no definite plan to develop the Solar Farm.

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.30pm.

The next meeting of the East Brent Parish Council will be on Monday 7th April 2014 at 7.30pm at the Village Hall.