

WARMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Warmington Parish Council Governance Committee meeting
11th March 2021 by electronic communication in a virtual setting at 7.00pm BST

1672. ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

PRESENT:, Steve Cheeseman, Cllr Christine Litawski, Cllr Nigel Rudd, Cllr Debbi Scotting (chairperson). Officer present: The clerk. Absent: Paul Stamper, but apologies followed immediately after. Members of the public.

1673. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS:

- Cllr Nigel Rudd reaffirmed his standing personal interest, for which he has a dispensation to the end of the current parish council term of office, as he is related to someone who works for the planning inspectorate.
- Cllr Nigel Rudd declared an pecuniary interest regarding contractual arrangements with a supplier and took no part in approving payments.
- Cllr Debbi Scotting declared an interest in matter relating to the Elton quarry.

1674. MINUTES:

It was **RESOLVED** to approve minutes of the council meetings held on 12th November 2020 as a true record of that meeting. The chairman will hand signed minutes to the clerk at a future stage once restrictions on social distancing are eased and it is safe for them both.

1675. RECEIVE QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:

There were none.

1676. DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING MATTERS:

- a) NE/21/00270/TPO/ | Horse Chestnut - To remove lower hanging limbs to clear access of field gate for environmental improvement works to the river | Trees Adjacent Fotheringhay Bridge Fotheringhay Road Warmington: It was **RESOLVED** that the council has no objections or further comment to make.
- b) Elton Agricultural Reservoir Discharge of conditions - 23 (Provision of Bird Hide) and 27 (Local Liaison Group) consultation: There was an update on the current situation. The bird hide remains in discussion. There was discussions as to the parish council's preferred site which it will present as the most workable and practical solution – the other sites put forward do not fulfil the stated reason for the provision of the bird hide (observation of wild birds in the reservoir shallows) and the local liaison group has still to officially meet.
- c) 19/00033/MINFUL Warmington Quarry update
- d) 20/01474/FUL | Demolition of existing redundant restaurant; Construction of new single storey coffee shop and drive thru lane with 34 car parking spaces; New entrance crossover to be installed to site | Restaurant Oundle Road and 20/01473/FUL | Demolition of the existing workshop, forecourt sales building, canopy, and car wash; <.....> Country Garage Oundle Road Warmington. It was agreed that the additional comments discussed at and subsequent to previous meetings will be submitted and a conversation with the applicants and county highways team sought.
- e) Areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONB): A communication had been received from Northamptonshire CPREⁱ launching a campaign to identify AONB in the county. It was agreed to ask opinions via the community social media groups and carry the subject forward to the new council following the elections.

1677. UPDATE OF ONGOING PROJECTS:

The tracker / report has been circulated in advance of the meeting. The streetlighting project was discussed, noting that the approval to borrow process from the MHCLGⁱⁱ is currently taking longer than usually expected because of current working circumstances because of Covid restrictions. Applications that were submitted by other public sector organisations in the third quarter of 2020 are still to be decided and published by the ministry. It was agreed that the council has sufficient funds to effectively lend itself the money in the worst possible scenario. However, it was noted that this is very much an unlikely circumstance and the delay is a matter of process rather than approval of the loan. The loan itself has been approved and set aside by Salix. However, the council's chosen partner in the upgrade project, Zeta Lighting, is facing price rises because of material costs etc. It was agreed that the clerk may, under delegated powers, negotiate a holding deposit with the supplier to secure the prices. The RFO will earmark the total amount of the project in the accounts for 2021/22.

1678. CONSULTATIONS AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS:

- Housing Needs Survey update: Council will contact the officer from Northamptonshire Rural Housing to obtain an indication as to when the survey will be ready to be sent out.
- Tree Preservation Orders – it was agreed that a working party to identify trees of amenity value would be an advantageous community project. Plotting of trees in general was agreed to be a positive action. The clerk will

write to the lead people on the maintenance gang working party along with people identified as having a knowledge of local trees and will collate the information for consideration at a future meeting.

- The annual risk assessment to comply with AGAR requirements was reviewed. The risk of ultra vires actions was discussed at some length and agreed that training and reiteration of governance documents following the elections would reinforce the fact that no decisions can be made outside of meetings, unless compliant with the delegation policy in place. The risk assessment was updated to take account of current working practices and the management of the changing room. The storage of confidential information would be prioritised going forward in case of clerk's absence.
- The internal check control to comply with AGAR requirements was reviewed. It was confirmed that actions are carried out as detailed. There was a discussion surrounding the issue of payment of invoices on short dates. It was agreed that as far as possible, payments will be detailed and approved at meetings prior to payments, but it was also acknowledged that this is not always possible as the full council does not meet every month.

In these circumstances, invoices will be passed for payment once the clerk is satisfied that the goods and/or services are lawful and have been procured in the proper way and that the council is contractually bound to pay the invoices. ALL payments must be authorised by two members of the council, not the clerk, and this adds a further level of security of payments that have not been before a council meeting prior to payment. The intention is that monthly payments will be made within 10 working days of a meeting and within 30 days of the date of invoice.

Additionally, members will continue to scrutinise procurement-to-payment processes periodically as well as checking off accounts on a quarterly basis.

- Arrangements for AGAR were noted and approval of Northants CALC IAS confirmed.
- The situation regarding meetings and Covid-19 restrictions was discussed. The future remains unclear: Current legislation allowing virtual meetings was enacted to cease on 6th May, however, in person meetings will remain unlawful under covid-19 lockdown legislation in place. As much as possible will be covered at the April meeting.
- It was agreed that the clerk should apply for a grant for phone box refurbishment.
- Community safety:

- The council has recently installed a number of benches at various sites around the village, as agreed at the December meeting. These have been warmly welcomed and are greatly appreciated by many people. However, there has been a suggestion that slightly higher seating might be more appropriate for people who have additional mobility needs. The suggestion is that the council purchase additional 'booster' seats that will be attached to the existing seats, raise the height of part of the bench seat by 12 cm (approx. 4 inches)

A risk assessment of the issues was discussed, and it was agreed that this could present a number of risks. In the case of the Surrey bench, the arm rest would not be high enough to help lever from a sitting position; an uneven seating area could result in an injury to someone who did not know it was there and sat on two levels at once; the raised seat would make the back and arm more easily accessible for children to climb onto, thus creating an increased fall risk and there would be a trip hazard on the bench too if small children were crawling or toddling on it. The council has not actually been directly approached about this matter, so the meeting was unable to assess the level of need within the village, but the fact that there is no such bench readily available on the market suggests that need is met by alternative means by others. Other ability challenges, such as reduced vision, could make the raised seats even more of a risk. Whilst the meeting sympathised with users that might benefit from this type of apparatus, the risks of installing them were felt to outweigh the benefits. The council will require evidence of need to take this matter forward and will give consideration to alternative solutions.

- Christine Litawski kindly agreed to be lead member on the emergency plan and flood risk assessment project.
- The council has been approached with a request to consider again a forest school enquiry as had happened previously. The parish council is not averse to the proposal, but could not suggest any sites other than Big Green pocket park. Orchard pocket park is not considered suitable because of the right of way and two entrances/exits. A final decision would carry forward to whole council for consideration. The previous licence, or similar, for the activity would be used.

1679. 2021/22 MONTHLY MEETINGS FOR ADOPTION AT ANNUAL MEETING:

It was agreed that the following proposal would be put forward for the annual meeting consideration. To maintain 2nd Thursday: Annual meeting May 13th, June 10th, July 8th, September 9th (LMC), October 14th, November 11th (GC), December 9th, January 13th (LMC), February 10th, March 10th (GC), April 14th

1680. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT:

The following payments were approved:

| Goods/Service | Payee | Nett | Gross |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Bin provision | East Northamptonshire Council | 437.49 | 524.99 |
| Churchyard maintenance | HughGardens | | 127.95 |
| Recreation ground fencing | JH Roofing | | 690.00 |
| Litter bin Provision | East Northamptonshire Council | 270.26 | 324.31 |
| Groundworks | Nene Valley Trees | 645.00 | 774.00 |
| Clearance works | J H Roofing | | 25.00 |
| Dog bin emptying | East Northamptonshire Council | 39.03 | 46.84 |
| | | | |
| Grass cutting | CGM | 68.00 | 61.60 |
| Tree inspection | CGM | 1,000.00 | 1,200.00 |
| Benches | Earth Anchors | 2,318.25 | 2,781.90 |
| Bench installation | J H Roofing | | 120.00 |
| Whips for hedging | Hope grove nurseries | 257.94 | 309.53 |
| Hedge works | Nene Valley Trees | 1,200.00 | 1,440.00 |
| Street-lighting maintenance | Eon | 380.92 | 457.10 |
| Hedge works | CGM | 1,470.00 | 1,764.00 |
| Water consumption rec | Anglian water | | 49.42 |
| Water consumption allotments | Anglian water | | 17.55 |
| Fire extinguisher service | Newflame | 81.95 | 98.34 |
| Groundworks | CGM | 1,127.50 | 1,353.00 |
| SLCC | Training | 67.12 | 80.54 |

1681. MATTERS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS NOT ADDRESSED ELSEWHERE ON THIS AGENDA:

There were none.

1682. CONSIDER FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS TO BE CARRIED FORWARD:

There were none.

1683. CONSIDER RESOLUTION

It was **RESOLVED** under the public bodies (admission to meetings) act 1960 to exclude members of the public present from the following agenda items as content could be prejudicial to the public interest.

1684. CONSIDER SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED FOR TREE WORKS IN THE VILLAGE AND RESOLVE TO APPOINT RECOMMENDED CONTRACTOR.

Three submissions were received in response to an identical invitation to tender. It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Nene Valley Tree Services to carry out the works.

THE CHAIRMAN DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 20.45

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|---------------------------------|--|------|
| DATE OF NEXT MEETING: TBC | | |
| Approved: Signature of chairman | | Date |

ⁱ CPRE = Campaign for the [protection of rural England](#) – “The countryside charity”

ⁱⁱ MHCLG = [ministry](#) for communities housing and local government