

# Little Smeaton Parish Council

## Little Smeaton Parish Council Meeting January 13<sup>th</sup> 2021

### MINUTES

In line with current emergency legislation this Parish Council meeting was conducted via Skype due to the Coronavirus pandemic and the need for social distancing.

**Present – Cllr G Ivey (Chair), Cllr R Brown (Clerk), Cllr C. Atkinson (Vice Chair), Cllr A. Hancock, Cllr J. Howdle**

Councillor Ivey opened the meeting, wished everybody a happy new year, and thanked all Councillors for their attendance.

#### **1. Apologies**

None

#### **2. Declarations of interest.**

##### **Item 15. Highway Drainage scheme New Road and Main Street, Little Smeaton,**

Councillors Hancock, Brown and Howdle declared a non-pecuniary interest as the scheme will include drainage outside their houses.

#### **3. Minutes from previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020, were signed as a true and correct record. Proposed by Councillor Hancock, seconded by Councillor Howdle. All in favour.

#### **4. Public Forum. Questions and concerns raised by the public.**

No members of the public were present

#### **5. Financial Matters**

**5.1. Bank reconciliations, as at 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021, to be signed as true and correct.** The two reconciliation reports were presented to the meeting, one that had been reconciled to the Income and Expenditure Report and one to the Bank Statements. The meeting received confirmation from Councillor Hancock that these were true and correct and advised the Chairman to sign.

**5.2. Internal Control Checklist.** Received from Councillor Hancock, who reported to the meeting that, whilst there were some issues, these were generally minor with no significant concerns, and that, as the Regulations are used, compliance is improving.

**5.3 Current Finance Sheet, as at the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021, to be signed as a true and correct record.** Received and accepted as correct. Proposed by Councillor Atkinson, seconded by Councillor Howdle. All in favour.

**5.4. VAT spreadsheet, as at 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021 received.** For information only.

**5.5 To approve and resolve to adopt the revised Financial Regulations.** The Financial Regulations, updated by Councillor Hancock following decisions made at the Parish Council meeting in November 2020 were presented to the meeting. Supporting documents and forms have also been updated by Councillor Hancock. Resolution to adopt proposed by Councillor Ivey, seconded by Councillor Howdle. All in favour. Advice received from YLCA was emphasized by the Chair. YLCA states clearly that all payments (other than in an emergency) should be authorised at a Parish Council meeting. The Clerk to ask YLCA for details of the legislation concerned so we can ensure we are complying fully. It was noted that the Financial Regulations are due for a further review in May 2021. Clerk to agenda.

**5.6 To approve and resolve to adopt the draft budget for 2021/2.** The draft budget, prepared by the Clerk following discussions at the September and November 2020 meetings, was presented to the meeting. The budget, as presented, allows for an increase in expenditure for, for example, Christmas decorations as requested by local residents. Adoption of the budget was proposed by Councillor Ivey and seconded by Councillor Hancock. All in favour.

**5.7 To approve the Precept for 2021/2.** Following the agreement of the budget at 5.6, it was proposed by Councillor Atkinson and seconded by Councillor Howdle, that the Precept should be set at £4229.94. This would equate, for a Band D property, to an annual payment of £30.20. All in favour.

**5.8 To ratify decisions made between meetings to pay:**

- Batteries for Christmas Tree £10.99
- Christmas tree lights £87.80
- Dog Poop bags £33.78
- Hillside Cottage roof repairs £95.00
- Sanitizer Gel £16.99

Proposed by Councillor Howdle and Seconded by Councillor Atkinson. All in favour.

**5.9 To approve future payments of:**

- Wix Premium Plan £122.40
- Blue Flame Heating and Plumbing for Hillside Cottage £186.00
- Ties and Batteries for hand sanitizer dispenser £12.98
- VAS sign £5471.92 (see Agenda item 5.12)
- Antivirus software. £12.00 (See agenda item 16)

Proposed by Councillor Ivey and Seconded by Councillor Hancock. All in favour

### 5.10 To approve previous payments not previously minuted:

- JRB Enterprise Ltd £51.66
- Specialist Glazing UK £298.42
- Grass Cutting £3000.00 (£1500 of this payment previously minuted)

Proposed by Councillor Atkinson, seconded by Councillor Howdle. All in favour.

**5.11. Greener Home Grant.** This grant is available for all landlords where the property concerned has an EPC of E or under. LSPC would, therefore, qualify for Hillside Cottage. The Government will pay 2/3rds of energy efficiency improvements up to a total of £5,000. This payment would be in the form of a voucher. The Government has extended the scheme until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. Quotes from 3 installers are required but need not now be certified. The letting agents are currently seeking 3 quotes for us for insulating the roof.

**5.12. AJ1 Road safety project.** An update was provided by Councillor Atkinson. The PFCC office have agreed to us proceeding with one project, namely the installation of one Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) and have provided £2940 as their contribution to the expense. YLCA have questioned whether it is legal for Parish Councils to purchase and install such signs. However legal advice from NYCC states clearly that this is lawful. This advice and Councillor Atkinson's research had been circulated prior to the meeting, and it was proposed by Councillor Brown and seconded by Councillor Howdle that we proceed with the installation. All in favour. Two quotes had been obtained by Councillor Atkinson from the only two companies certified in North Yorkshire to provide and install VAS equipment, and circulated prior to the meeting. However only one supplier is able to provide the equipment against the specification recommended by NYCC highways. It was, therefore, resolved, in principle, to proceed to purchase the VAS sign from TWM, provided that it costs no more than the budgeted amount namely, £5471.92 Councillor Atkinson and the Clerk to confirm the price. Proposed by Councillor Ivey, seconded by Councillor Howdle.

## 6. LSPC Policies

**6.1 Publication Scheme.** A short document making clear what documents are published by LSPC and available to the public was circulated by the Clerk prior to the meeting. The meeting resolved to accept the draft and to publish it on our website. Proposed by Councillor Hancock, seconded by Councillor Howdle. Councillor Atkinson to place it on the LSPC website.

**6.2 Risk Management and Assessment.** An assessment had been undertaken by the Clerk using the YLCA model document, and circulated prior to the meeting. Councillor Hancock requested that the Internal Control checks undertaken before each meeting be included in both the financial and banking sections. The assessment highlights some concerns, in particular the lack of secure filing, although all documents are kept in a secure building, and the playground where, currently, LSPC only have one inspection a year. Agreed that Councillor Atkinson will undertake a quarterly inspection for obvious wear and tear. With these amendments the meeting resolved to accept the assessment. Proposed by Councillor Ivey and Seconded by Councillor Howdle. The Clerk to draw up an action plan to take forward the issues identified.

**6.3 Review of Current Policies.** A financial risk assessment is also required and the Clerk will draft one and agenda this for the next meeting. Following this work LSPC also requires a Freedom of Information Policy. Clerk to include on the agenda for March 2021

**7. Census 2021.** A census is to take place in the spring of 2021, and the Parish Council has been asked to promote this. It will be primarily undertaken on line, and the Government has set up a support system for residents who cannot access the internet. The Clerk will contact the local Census Engagement manager to see how we can help, and will also print out posters and postcards. Councillor Ivey to include in the next magazine.

**8. Safer Streets Project.** The most recent update was shared with the meeting. It was noted that farm upgrades had commenced on the 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021. It is expected that it will take three weeks to complete the c64 farms. All registered residential properties in Smeaton have been visited. It was agreed that no further action by the Parish Council is required at this time.

**9. Road Traffic signs update.**

**9.1 New Road** The painted 40 mile an hour sign is expected in the next two weeks, weather permitting.

**9.2 Deregulation on Quarry Lane.** It was noted that, since New Road became 40 miles an hour, Quarry Lane moves from 30 miles an hour, to deregulation and then to 40 miles an hour in about 100 yards. The Clerk to contact NYCC Highways to raise the issue.

**9.3 Further Traffic Calming measures.** It was agreed that, once the VAS has been installed and working for some time, LSPC will assess the need, if any, for further traffic calming measures.

**10. Drainage on New Road and Main Street.** The order for this work was raised in October and should be implemented imminently.

**11. Hillside Cottage.** In this financial year it is hoped to insulate the roof using the Greener Homes Grant. Councillor Atkinson will explore the possibility of a loan to undertake further work during 2021/2

**12. Village Emergency Plan.** The meeting resolved to formally adopt the plan. Proposed by Councillor Ivey, seconded by Councillor Howdle. As a living document it was agreed that it could be updated without formal approval by the Parish Council. The Clerk and Councillor Atkinson will include the details of our contacts for the defibrillator. A “practice run” is required once the pandemic restrictions allow, possibly in the Autumn. The Clerk to agenda for the September meeting.

**13. Planning Applications.** No planning applications have been received. It was noted that Selby District Council is no longer going to write to relevant neighbours to inform them of planning applications. Councillor Ivey will include this in the next edition of the magazine.

**14. Correspondence Received.** Two pieces of correspondence have been received.

1. Letter from Keir Campbell requesting repeat permission to measure the flow in the River Went just above Hillside Cottage. The meeting resolved to give this permission, and the Chair will sign. The clerk to inform the tenants as a courtesy.
2. The Chair has received an email from Nigel Adams bringing to our attention a Yorkshire Water fund for raising awareness of their Priority Service. No action required.

**15. Matters for Inclusion on the next Agenda**

- Loan for Hillside Cottage
- AJI project
- Financial Risk Assessment
- Freedom of Information Policy
- Review of Income and Expenditure report
- Action plan from Risk Assessment
- General Power of Competence

**16. AOB.** As earlier this week LSPC email was subject to an attempted phishing attack the Chair agreed to this matter being discussed. It appears that the Parish Council website was scanned by a webbot searching for email addresses. This webbot harvested the email addresses of all Councillors. Our website was not hacked, no email accounts were compromised and no data breach was suffered. However, Councillors were concerned and options for making it less likely to happen in future were discussed and will be pursued. This includes the need to purchase improved security for the Council laptop.

**Meeting closed 21. 15**