

Little Smeaton Parish Council

Little Smeaton Parish Council Meeting March 10th 2021

MINUTES

In line with current emergency legislation this Parish Council meeting was conducted via Zoom 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, 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 13th January 2021, were signed as a true and correct record. Proposed by Councillor Atkinson, 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 1st March 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 the only outstanding issue was the need to record in the minutes not only budget and pay (which is happening correctly), but also the spend element which is not currently happening. Councillor Hancock has devised a proforma to assist with this which she will resend to the Clerk. Noted need to minute reimbursement of Councillor Howdle for £7.98 for batteries for the hand sanitizer, bought “over the counter” as quicker and time sensitive.

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

5.4. VAT spreadsheet, as at 1st March 2021 received. For information only.

5.5. To ratify emergency decisions made between meetings to pay, and approve the spend of £79.60 for grit in view of bad weather predicted and uncertainty about NYCC’s next delivery (Budget reference D). Proposed by Councillor Ivey and seconded by Councillor Howdle. All in favour.

5.6 To ratify payment made between meetings using the Clerk’s delegated powers and to approve the spend of £14.39 to Zoom (budget reference M) **for online meetings, and £7.98 to Councillor Howdle for batteries** (budget reference I) See minute 5.2. Proposed by Councillor Ivey and Seconded by Councillor Howdle. All in favour.

5.7 To approve future spend and pay of:

- £28.78 for Zoom (budget reference M) for online meetings in April and May 2021. This commitment does not appear in the 2021/2 budget. However, sufficient funds are available and there is a need due to the Coronavirus.
- £71.94 for dog poop bags x 2 (budget reference K). Included in the 2020/21 budget.
- Amount for Grass Cutting contract (budget reference A) approved following agenda item 5.8. See minute for item 5.8

To approve future spend of:

- £660 to First Impressions for 10 hanging baskets, (budget reference B) as per estimate received 14th January 2021. Included in the budget for 2021/2. No other supplier who will water hanging baskets found by the Clerk. Clerk to place order.
- £660 for insulation of Hillside Cottage (budget reference E). This commitment is included in the 2020/21 budget. Only one quote available. See agenda item 9
- £141.60 to Alan Macron for annual service to central heating boiler at Hillside Cottage (budget reference E). Included in the 2020/21 budget.
- £4972.50 for VAS sign.(budget reference D) Included in the 2020/21 budget and approved at the January Council meeting.

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

5.8. To consider tenders received for the Grass Cutting contract 2021. Two tenders have been received. Both were opened by the Clerk at the meeting. Tender from Danny Curnow of £3500 accepted. This to be paid in six payments, one of £583.35 in April and five subsequent payments of £583.33. This commitment is included in the 2021/2 budget to the tune of £3100. There is, therefore a shortfall of £400. However sufficient funds are available and no cheaper quote was obtained. Clerk to write to all parties who submitted a tender to thank them for their interest. Clerk to write to Mr. Curnow offering him the contract

5.9. To consider draft terms and conditions for a possible Finance Committee or alternatively to consider whether the full council should meet on a monthly basis. Following discussion, it was agreed to defer this item until the September Council meeting to ascertain if there is still a need as our financial planning improves.

5.10. To consider possible changes to the Income and Expenditure report, in view of the Budget reporting schedule to be implemented for the financial year 2021/2. Following discussion, it was agreed that, for the financial year 2021/2 no “anticipated income” or “anticipated expenditure” will appear on the Income and Expenditure report, Instead, a full budget report will be presented to the Council at each meeting showing spend to date, percentage of budget involved and anticipated spend going forward.

6. Local Government Reorganisation. Following discussion, it was agreed that the Parish Council will not respond to the Government’s consultation paper on Local Government reorganisation and the creation of Unitary Authorities in North Yorkshire. However, Councillors are encouraged to respond as individuals if they wish to do so.

7. LSPC Policies

7.1 Financial Risk Management Policy and Risk Assessment. Following discussion both were adopted with some minor alterations. In the policy wording should be changed to reflect that the debit card may be used to purchase items for the Parish Council in a number of settings not just on line. In the risk assessment, the risk that the insurance is not adequate to protect the Council is considered to be medium not high; Under contracts and tendering the word should be value not valley and the risk of not having a fidelity guarantee is considered to be high. With these alterations, adoption was proposed by Councillor Atkinson and seconded by Councillor Howdle.

7.2 Freedom of Information Policy. Adoption of the policy as written was proposed Councillor Ivey and seconded by Councillor Hancock

7.3 Review of Current Policies. A report reviewing our policies against a recommended list from YLCA, written by the Clerk, was presented to the meeting. No further new policies were felt to be required at this time. However, an audit of trees and a log of playground inspections were both felt to be good practice. The need for schedule for reviewing all policies in a systematic way was agreed, including a review of the standing orders, financial regulations and the two risk assessments to take place on an annual basis at the May Council meeting. Proposed by Councillor Ivey and seconded by Councillor Howdle.

8. General Power of Competence. Local Councils in England were given a “general power of competence” in the Localism Act 2011. This gives local councils “the power to do anything that individuals generally may do”. However certain conditions must be met before

a Council can resolve that it meets the criteria. Firstly, two thirds of Councillors must have been elected (coopted Councillors do not count for this purpose) and the Clerk must hold a

recognized qualification. Little Smeaton Parish Council does not meet either of these criteria. At this time LSPC is not actively considering the General Power of Competence as an objective for the future.

9. Hillside Cottage. At the request of the other Councillors, Councillor Atkinson has looked into the possibility of applying for a loan to undertake necessary maintenance of Hillside Cottage. A full report explaining the conditions that would need to be met to apply to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government for a loan was provided. The conclusion, however, was that currently LSPC does not have all the required documentation, nor are the Council's finances geared to meeting the annual payments. Most critically the purpose of any loan would almost certainly be classed as revenue, not capital. In view of this it was felt that there was no purpose to be gained from seeking a loan. Improvements will need to be made, therefore, on a slow and incremental basis. As a first step the Clerk reminded the meeting that the Agents had procured a quote for loft insulation of £660, but were unable at this time to provide another two quotes. This expenditure should also attract a Greener Home Grant. It was agreed to accept this one quote and to proceed with the insulation work.

10. Playground. No action is required at this time. However, it is clear that replacement of playground equipment will need to be undertaken in due course. Councillor Atkinson to draw up a prioritized program of replacement for future consideration.

11. Road Traffic signs update.

11.1 New Road The painted 40 mile an hour sign has been completed. Item closed.

11.2 Deregulation on Quarry Lane. Highways have agreed to our request to regulated speed of traffic on Quarry Lane to 40mph. However, this work will not take place until after April.

12. AJI Project. The pole for the Vehicle Activated Sign on New Road is expected to be erected tomorrow, and the sign itself shortly afterwards.

13. Drainage on New Road and Main Street. According to NYCC this work was completed on the 26th January. They have been informed that this is not correct. It is hoped that it will take place shortly.

14. Village Emergency Plan. The plan needs some small additions – the phone number of the contact for the defibrillator (Clerk to check and send to Councillor Atkinson) and the removal of one name from KSPC Councillors. Councillor Atkinson to do these alterations and then send updated plan to the Clerk so a hard copy can be printed. Support and training for the volunteers is seen as being important for the sustainability of the Emergency Plan. However, this can not take place until the Coronavirus restrictions are no longer in place. To be considered further at the September meeting.

15. Planning Applications.

- The Willows, Stan Valley. No comments sent

16. Correspondence Received. Two pieces of correspondence have been received.

- Email received from the Chair of KSPC re Wentedge Quarry requesting support from LSPC Councillors to deliver leaflets informing local residents that the quarry planning application is now expected to be heard this month and bringing the attention of residents to the damage it is believed will be done to the fauna and flora of Brockadale Nature Reserve. Councilors agreed to deliver leaflets but would like to see the planned content beforehand.
- Emails received from local residents and Chair of KSPC with regards to the littering and fly tipping currently happening in the area around the villages. Agreed to support KSPC in calling a multi-agency task group meeting. LSPC would like the relevant Councillors from Doncaster MDC and Wakefield MDC to be invited as most of the problem is in their areas.

17. Matters for Inclusion on the next Agenda

- Review of Standings Orders, Financial Regulations and Risk Assessments
- Proposed Neighborhood Plan
- Budget report

Meeting closed 20.45