

Little Smeaton Parish Council

Little Smeaton Parish Council Meeting November 25th 2020

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, Cllr R Brown (Clerk), Cllr C. Atkinson, 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,

Councillor Hancock declared an interest as the scheme will include drainage outside her house.

3. Minutes from previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd September 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. Appointment of Internal Auditor. The meeting resolved to appoint Paul Clarke as LSPC internal auditor for 2020/21. Proposed by Councillor Ivey, seconded by Councillor Atkinson. All in favour.

5.2. Bank reconciliation as at 1st November 2020, 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 that these were true and correct and advised the Chairman to sign.

5.3. 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. The need to ensure that bank account details were included on any expense forms was noted. The need to minute, with an explanation, any variations between amount budgeted and amount paid was agreed. The difficulty of getting delivery notes for on-line purchases was noted and it was agreed to remove this requirement from the Financial Regulations. Thanks, were offered to Councillor Hancock for the work undertaken.

5.4 Current Income and Expenditure sheet to be signed as a true and correct record. Received and accepted as correct. Proposed by Councillor Atkinson, seconded by Councillor Howdle.

5.5. Updated Banking Mandate. An updated banking mandate was received from Councillor Hancock. Noted that the receipt of bank cards etc has not, as yet been recorded and signed. This needs to be actioned. Otherwise update accepted. Proposed by Councillor Ivey, seconded by Councillor Atkinson. All in favour.

5.6. Review of Current Financial Regulations. Report received from Councillor Brown (Clerk) highlighting some confusion that has emerged with the implementation of the Financial Regulations and the possible delays that will arise when the regulations are correctly implemented. Agreed to seek to simplify the regulations, including ensuring that in future all authority to spend is communicated by email rather than WhatsApp, only the Clerk to make purchases and Agendas and Minutes to record reasons for any monies spent. Councillor Hancock and Councillor Brown to review regulations and bring to the January Parish Council meeting. Councillor Atkinson to explore the possibility of an online authority to spend slip. Proposed by Councillor Ivey, seconded by Councillor Atkinson. All in favour.

5.7 Valuation and Advice on selling land adjacent to Hillside Cottage. Advice received from Estate Agent that the value of the land would be enhanced if planning permission was granted first. Clerk to make enquiries about the process and cost of obtaining planning permission.

5.8 Draft Budget for 2020/21. The draft budget prepared by the Clerk was considered. It was agreed that reserves of approximately 30% of average expenditure should be held at all times by the Parish Council. Expenditure on Hillside Cottage should be ringfenced to 50% of received income. Currently projected expenditure exceeds projected income and an increase in the precept is likely to be required for 2021/22 if LSPC is to deliver against the expectations of local residents. Clerk to enquire from SDCC when we should expect the papers regarding the precept and what deadline will be set for submission. Various alterations to the draft budget were discussed. A final budget will be prepared by the Clerk and presented to the January Parish Council meeting.

5.9 Grass Cutting Tender Document The revised tender document presented to the meeting by the Clerk was approved. The tender documents to be circulated as widely as possible in January 2021. Clerk to request inclusion, as well, in the Village magazine and place on notice boards. All Councillors to inform the Clerk of any firms of which they are aware that may be interested in bidding for this work.

5.10. Ratification of financial decisions taken in between meetings. All payments approved:

- £ 22.50 YCLA training
- £25.98 Hand sanitizer container x 2
- £23.99 Hand sanitizer gel
- £86.40 Playground Inspection
- £25.00 Wreath for British Legion
- £90.00 EPC for Hillside Cottage
- £15.00 YCLA training
- £19.98 Christmas Baubles
- £87.80 Christmas lights

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

5.11. Other possible future expenditure approved.

- £22.90 for dog poop bags
- Up to £250 for Christmas tree and decorations

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

5.12. Greener Home Grant. Councillor Hancock has looked into the possibility of the Greener Home Grant for Hillside Cottage. This grant is available for all landlords where the property concerned has an EPC of E or under. LSPC would, therefore, qualify. 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 which must be spent by 31st March 2021. Insulation of the roof, quoted for us in the survey as costing £1500 would be appropriate work and would then require us to contribute £500. Quotes from 3 certified installers would be required, one of which must be a Greenhomes Grant Installer. Clerk to ask Agents for advice.

5.13. LSPC Asset Register. The updated asset register was adopted by the Parish Council. Proposed by Councillor Ivey, seconded by Councillor Howdle. All in favour.

5.14. AJ1 Road safety project. Councillor Atkinson informed the meeting that, whilst our application had been successful, the PFCC office has now, because of the large numbers of applications, required match funding which LSPC can not afford. Councillor Atkinson to enquire whether it would be possible to proceed with one rather than all three projects.

5.15. Tesco Grant Decision taken not to pursue this. Item closed.

6. LSPC Policies

6.1 Grievance Policy. A revised Grievance Policy was presented by the Clerk. This was adopted as a policy of the Council. Proposed by Councillor Ivey, seconded by Councillor Howdle. All in favour.

6.2 Publication Scheme. Report prepared by Councillors Atkinson and the Clerk presented to the meeting. LSPC is required to publish certain information. All recommendations accepted. Clerk to email Councillors as necessary to take forward the actions as required.

6.3 Cookie Statement Councillor Atkinson has inserted a Cookie Statement to our Website as required by legislation. We are now, therefore, compliant with the statute. The statement was formally adopted by the meeting.

6.4 Review of Current Policies. The Clerk informed the meeting that all policies required by statute are now completed and are being put on our website by Councillor Atkinson. However, to comply with Audit requirements LSPC should have a Risk Assessment and Management Policy which is currently not in existence. The Clerk to draft and bring to the January meeting. Councillor Atkinson will assist.

7. Facebook group membership. Currently we have to approve anyone who requests to become a “Friend” of the Parish Council on Facebook. Facebook are changing this, so it will no longer be possible to decline an application. LSPC receive requests from all around the world, requests we currently refuse unless we can see a connection. It is possible to make our Facebook page unsearchable, but the meeting felt this would be counterproductive.

8. Signage about Fly Tipping. The meeting decided to not pursue this matter further. It is, therefore closed.

9. Quarry extension application. The application to extend the quarry has not as yet been heard by North Yorkshire County Council Planning Committee. No date for the hearing is available.

10. Road Traffic signs update. The sign warning about horses has been erected. No information is available about the painted 40 mile an hour sign.

11. Playground Inspection Report. The report from ROSPA was received by the meeting. The Clerk and Councillor Atkinson have visited the playground to look at the recommendations made. The missing Bolt Caps have been replaced by Councillor Atkinson. These were provided free of charge by Wicksted. The potential Finger Entrapment is actually part of the play equipment design and no action to remedy this is felt to be possible. The gate action appears to be within acceptable limits and no further action is suggested. Councillor Atkinson will oil the bearings on the Fantasy Fun Run. It was noted that the ground surface may need patching next year. The Clerk to ensure monies are available for this in the budget.

12. Highway Drainage on New Road and Main Street. The Clerk has contacted both the NYCC staff member responsible and County Councillor McCartney about this but no progress has been made. The Chair has raised the issue with the Leader of the County Council but has been referred back to Councillor McCartney. She will contact him again, and mention the damaged sign on the corner of New Road and Main Street at the same time.

13. Hillside Cottage

13.1 EICR report. The satisfactory report was noted. It was agreed that the improvements noted in the report would be taken forward as part of the larger project once funding is identified.

13.2 Surveyor’s Report. This was received by the meeting. Following discussion it was agreed to apply for a loan and that Councillor Atkinson would complete the necessary forms to submit to YLCA. This is required in order to gain the Secretary of State’s permission to obtain a loan.

14. Village Emergency Plan. The Plan has been updated but still requires more information about the facilities available at the Church and the School. This information to be obtained and the final plan to be presented to the January meeting to be formally adopted.

15. Letter to new residents. The Clerk has drafted a letter and information sheet to be delivered to all new residents wherever possible. This was accepted by the meeting. All Councillors to alert the Clerk to “Sold” signs. Clerk will deliver to the two, currently unoccupied houses, that are known to have been sold.

16. Planning Applications. Actions taken to comment on applications noted.

17. Correspondence Received. The Chair has received communications from the Leader of Selby District Council and the Leader of North Yorkshire County Council about their separate submissions to the Government concerning the future Unitary Authority. NYCC have put forward a proposal for one new Unitary Authority covering the whole of North Yorkshire. This will leave York as a separate Unitary Authority as is currently the case. York supports this proposal. However, the seven District Councils have proposed to Government two new Unitary Authorities split East West. This would have York joining with Selby, Hambleton, Scarborough and Ryedale. York opposes this proposal but the Chair was informed that the Government could impose it on York despite their opposition. If this proposal was successful the current Council Tax arrangements would need to change to bring each part of the new Unitary Authority in line. Currently Selby Council tax is in the middle so little change is expected for Little Smeaton residents.

19. Matters for Inclusion on the next Agenda

- Budget
- Loan for Hillside Cottage
- AJI project
- Risk Assessment and Management Policy

Meeting closed 21. 15