

EARSWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Earswick Parish Council, held in Earswick Village Hall on Monday 12th May 2014.

Councillors Present: D Jones
K Pace
P Leveson
G Offler

Parish Clerk: J Fisher

Members of the Public Present:- P Lister, C Lister, I Jones, T Bright, S Bright, N Blackburn, L Blackburn, K Beamish, H Davey, J McTurk.

1. Apologies for Absence

Cllr Wiseman

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Minutes of Previous Meetings

Minutes for the Parish Council (PC) Meeting on 17th March 2014 were approved as accurate records by the Councillors and signed.

4. Members of the Public.

The PC informed a resident that the hedge on Strensall Road, at the Towthorpe junction, was due to be removed to help visibility for drivers.

Residents from Strensall Road/Garden Village asked if the Parish Councils from Earswick, Huntington and Strensall would have a joint meeting to show the strength of feeling against City of York Council's (CYC) proposal to 'safeguard' the land to the east of Earswick.

5. Ward Councillor's Report

No Ward Councillors were present to report. However, Cllr Jones had attended the recent Strensall Ward Meeting and reported that there is £3,260 Ward Funding available for the whole Ward for 2014-15. Parish Councils are not permitted to apply for the funding but Community Groups can apply. Application forms will be available at the next Strensall Ward meeting on 23rd July (*NB was reported as 11th June but date subsequently changed*), at 7pm (venue to be arranged). The Strensall Ward 2013-14 Grant Summary was circulated amongst Councillors (please see Appendix A).

There will also be a 'Strensall Ward Conversation' with James Alexander on 22nd October at Strensall Village Hall, 6-8pm.

6. Clerk's Report

- a. The ongoing action tracker was reviewed and the following points were made:-
- i. On 7/5/14 Dave Meigh, Operations Manager at City of York Council (CYC), emailed the Clerk to say the CYC finance department is unable to confirm the situation regarding the section 106 money (£4,008), for a few weeks, due to end of year closedown. The Clerk will pursue again in June. **Action JF**
 - ii. The contract to A Hill for maintenance services to the Public Open Spaces has been signed and he will forward a copy of his insurance documentation to the PC w/c 12/5/14.
 - iii. The contract for Mike Harland to cut the riverside hedge for three years, from April 2014, has been signed. The Clerk has reminded him to forward his insurance documentation to the PC. **Action: JF**
 - iv. Cllrs Offler and Pace met with Shane Daniels from Huntington school (on 14/4) to discuss the school's requirements for a sponsored walk across PC land in June 2014 (30th June). The Clerk has forwarded him Foss Internal Drainage Board (FIDB) details. The PC agreed to walk the route a few days before the sponsored walk to ensure the way is clear of overgrowth. **Action:KP/GO**
 - v. The Clerk has contacted the PC website provider yet again requesting the ability to enter updates under the 'Neighbourhood Watch' heading on the home page (rather than under 'Document Archive'), and requesting that they remove the 'Village Hall Events' heading as the events are shown under a sub-heading within the 'Village Hall' heading on the home page. **Action: JF**
 - vi. The River Foss Society (RFS) Interpretation Board was installed on 1st May. Reimbursement of £1,010 from the RFS has been received. Adrian Bury Assoc requested a further £50 plus VAT for the significant number of updates requested. The PC approved this amount with the proviso that peeling paintwork on the Board is addressed by Adrian Bury. The RFS has reportedly also asked Adrian Bury to change the ground bolts to ones which are tamper proof. Cllr Pace is awaiting a response to her query with Adrian Bury regarding peeling paint. **Action: KP**
 - vii. The issues of Diamond Wood Drainage, and proposed footpath through the meadow to Diamond Wood, will be discussed at the next meeting when Cllr Wiseman is present. **Action: SW**
 - viii. Cllr Pace contacted Dan Calvert at CYC for advice on tree management in Earswick. He reported that CYC do not have the resources to send someone to look. He recommended the PC obtain a quote from a tree surgeon. The PC agreed to keep the situation under review.
 - ix. Grass seed spreading around the Landing Lane bridge has been done.

x. The potholes in The Village have been filled by CYC. Repairs to the grass verge on the corner of Shilton Garth Close are expected in the next month, according to Stephen Moulds from CYC. Regarding a new footpath for The Village, Stephen Moulds has said from April all footpaths are being examined and graded. This process should take six months so the PC should know more around December.

xi. Paving slabs have been donated by Cllr Wiseman to the PC. Work to place them around the dog bin at the end of The Village is ongoing.

Action:GO

xii. Investigations into the possible installation of CCTV cameras on the Village Hall are continuing.

Action: DJ/KP

xiii. Mr Strong, the beekeeper, will place a sign warning residents of bees when he places his hive(s).

xiv. Planting Earswick Yellow for Le Tour de France was discussed. An old bike will be sprayed yellow, tied to a tree on Strensall Road, and will be used to hold plants. The Earswick planters will also be planted yellow.

Action: GO/KP

xv. The PC discussed the need to weed kill the tennis courts. The PC agreed to contact Mr Bill Gambold to determine what action was taken previously.

Action PL

The condition of the concrete base on the tennis courts was also discussed. The PC agreed to contact LJD Construction for a quote on repairing or replacing the concrete.

Action: JF

The tennis rules had been updated and circulated to Cllrs for approval. The PC approved the rules. The Clerk will email a copy to all members.

Action: JF

Other information/correspondence issues raised by the Clerk:

The PC had received a service agreement from the YLCA. Cllrs were happy to accept this. Clerk to email YLCA.

Action: JF

b. The finance reports were discussed. The PC felt there may be around £8,000 available for projects such as new play equipment (£4,008 coming from Section 106 monies due from CYC). Mrs K Beamish agreed to look into play equipment options for the sports field. The subject will be included on the next agenda.

Action: JF

The following pre authorised payments have been made since the last Parish Council meeting:-

- Mrs Fisher's salary for March and April;
- £24 to British Gas for April;
- £8.90 to J Fisher for stationery;
- £14.48 to J Fisher for stationery;

- £7.09 to Yorkshire Water;
- £112.50 to Huntcatchkill for quarter 2 mole removal;
- £120 to A Hill for gate/fence removal & boxing in standpipe in EOS;
- £50 to J Fisher – reimbursement of annual telephone charges;
- £8.10 to J Fisher for stationery;
- £6.28 to P Leveson (replacement cheque for tea/coffee expenses);
- £30 to A Hill for installation of posts in EOS;
- £17.16 to G Offler for Diamond Wood Board oil;
- £37.80 to Advance Fire Services;
- £264 to A Hill for cutting Scented Garden hedge;
- £84 to M Harland for cutting river hedge;
- £126 to J Pace – reimbursement for EOS signs;
- £271 to Yorkshire Local Council Assoc.;
- £2,634 to Adrian Bury Associates.

The following payments were authorised:

- £84 to A Hill for weed killing footpaths;
- £72 to A Hill for strimming pond area;
- £48 to A Hill for cutting river footpath;
- £780 to A Hill for grass cutting;
- £11.95 to J Fisher for stationery;
- £3.47 to J Fisher for stationery.

An invoice for £180 from A Hill, for cutting the EOS, had been received. There was a discrepancy with the maintenance contract because of the four extra cuts authorised at the meeting in January 2014. The PC agreed the maintenance contract needed adjusting to take this change into account. The Clerk will draft an amendment to the contract and ask Mr Hill to sign. In the meantime, the PC authorised the payment for £180 incl VAT.

Action: JF

The PC has received £7,125, first instalment of the annual precept from CYC.

- c. The 2013-14 Earswick Parish Council accounting statements and annual governance statement were approved.

The PC expressed its thanks to Mr McTurk for completing the Internal Audit. The observations raised by Mr McTurk in his Internal Audit report given at Appendix B were discussed as follows:

Observation 1: The current Standing Orders require a formal tender process for transactions in excess of £10,000. The PC agreed to change Standing Order 30.b from £10,000 to £1,000 ie the formal tender process will now take place for all transactions in excess of £1,000. The Standing Orders will be amended accordingly.

Action:JF

Observation 2. The PC agreed to amend the Clerk's contract of employment to reflect her salary payment on the 27th of each month and not the 30th as currently stated.

Action: JF/DJ

7. Planning Applications

The following planning applications were considered by the PC and received no objections:

- application 14/00952/FUL 6 Northlands Ave YO32 9FS (two storey and single storey side extension and dormer windows to rear),

- application 14/00982/CLU 388 Strensall Rd YO32 9SW (Certificate of Lawful Development for use as a drive),

and the City of York Council had approved:

- application 14/00184/FUL 47 Earswick Chase YO32 9FZ (single storey rear extension);

- application 14/00562/FUL 30 Earswick Chase YO32 9FY (single storey rear extension);

- application 14/00156/FUL 3 High Garth YO32 9FR (single storey rear extension);

- application 14/00878/HRN Os Field 7554 Strensall Road (remove 48m of Hedgerow at aforementioned location)

8. Monthly Equipment Check

The PC approved £556.80 for the purchase of two goal posts from Mark Harrod and £70 plus VAT to Mr A Hill for their installation.

Action:JF

The PC discussed the condition of the tennis nets and, having discussed the matter with some tennis members, felt they were adequate. No action proposed.

9. City of York Council's (CYC) proposal to 'safeguard' land in Earswick for Development

It was reported that the proposal had gone to CYC Cabinet. The PC can only act when the consultation start date is known. A number of Earswick Parish Councillors were going to a meeting with Julian Sturdy MP on Thursday 15th May to discuss the issue. An Open Meeting with Julian Sturdy MP, Ward and PC Councillors has been arranged for June 12th, at 6.30pm, in Earswick Village Hall. The PC agreed a leaflet drop for every house in Earswick.

Action:All

10. Earswick Parish Council's Insurance

The PC approved £998.70 to Zurich Insurance, which includes index linking.

The insurance cover from 1st June allows for £5,304.50 Village Hall contents. The Clerk was asked to contact Zurich Insurance to ascertain what percentage of the £998.70 annual charge refers to the VH contents. The Clerk will then contact Mrs J Cook from the VH Committee with the figures.

Action: JF

The Clerk is to ask Mrs Cook if British Gas check the carbon monoxide detector and, if so, the Clerk is to ask for a copy of test certificate. The Clerk is also to ask for a copy of the test done on the boiler.

Action: JF

The Clerk had been in touch with Mr G Tate from the Scented Garden Committee (SGC). He had confirmed that the SGC does not have insurance for their items in the shed and SG. The PC asked the Clerk to contact Zurich Insurance to see if the PC can include the SG assets as part of its policy.

Action: JF

11. Weed spraying the Scented Garden (SG)

The PC authorised £30 to Mr R Warriner for weed spraying the areas of the SG for which the PC is responsible.

12. Replacing the Village Hall Boiler

The PC is responsible for the Village Hall boiler which has broken down a number of times recently. The Village Hall Committee has apparently offered to contribute towards the cost of a new boiler. The PC agreed to obtain three quotes to replace the boiler.

Action: DJ

13. Defibrillator for the Village Hall

The PC agreed to carry this item over to the next meeting when Councillor Wiseman could invite someone from the Ambulance Service to come and talk to the PC about defibrillators.

Action: SW/JF

14. Shilton Garth Close Grass Verge

A resident told the PC that the grass cutting of the verge on the corner of Shilton Garth Close has been of a very low standard since responsibility passed from the PC to CYC a number of years ago.

Cllr Jones gave some background to the situation. Mr M Whittaker had a contract with the PC to cut the bowling green. When the green was removed he was asked to cut the verges in Shilton Garth Close and Stablers Walk in lieu of his contract. The Fosslands estate decided they did not want CYC to cut their verges so Fosslands residents pay an annual maintenance fee. Around four years ago the PC discussed this issue and decided it was unfair for all Earswick residents to pay for grass cutting when other areas in York are cut by the CYC at no extra cost to residents.

The options for grass cutting available now to residents on Shilton Garth Close and Stablers Walk are:

1. Residents could cut the grass themselves;
2. They could pay for the grass to be cut by a professional like Fosslands arrange;
3. The PC could pay for all verges in Earswick to be cut using the precept money;
4. Leave the grass cutting to CYC.

In October 2013 the PC considered this issue and decided it would leave the cutting of the grass verges to CYC because it calculated it would add another 10% (around £1,820+VAT) to the precept to pay to cut the verges. The PC felt then that it would be unfair to cut some verges and not all the verges.

The CYC use a large sit-on mower to cut the grass so there is not a lot of room to manoeuvre on small grass areas. They do not do any strimming.

It was agreed that the PC will approach the CYC to query the level of service. The Clerk will write to CYC to ask if there is any alternative to the current grass cutting method eg could they consider using smaller equipment to achieve a better finish?

Action:JF

15. Parish Council Benches

The PC had obtained a number of quotes for benches (with backs) eg Earth Anchors £431+ VAT. However, they were all much more expensive than originally anticipated. Members of the Environment Group agreed to apply for £500 Ward Funding to pay for a new bench.

Action: GO/KP

16. Grass Cutting in Diamond Wood

The PC authorised an extra cut per month in June, July and August at £100+VAT per cut. The Clerk will notify Mr Hill and prepare an attachment to Mr Hill's contract.

Action: JF

17. Review of the Standing Orders

The National Association of Local Council's updates for Standing Orders had been examined and the PC decided there was no need to change the PC's current Standing Orders.

18. Purchase of a Chainsaw

The Clerk had contacted Zurich Insurance to see if the PC would be covered should it decide to purchase a chain saw. Zurich will not cover a commercial chainsaw, only a domestic one and then they stipulated:

- Users (volunteers and members) must be competent;
- The PC must provide training and supply safety equipment;
- Users must follow instructions;

- The PC must carry out risk assessments and keep records of these.

A Husqvama domestic chainsaw would cost around £300 but the PC felt it would save a lot of money by using a chainsaw themselves. It was felt Mr A Hill could provide training. Cllr Jones offered to draw up a risk assessment. The safety equipment required would include goggles, hard hat, reinforced boots and trousers. The PC agreed to consult with Mr Offler who has used his own personal chainsaw in the past to help with Parish Council work. **Action: GO**

19. Items for Information

Councillors who had attended the Burial Bard meeting reported that fewer people are getting buried because more are being cremated. The Board may, therefore, have to review pricing. Cremation plots are available at Huntington cemetery. At the next AGM, Councillors will consider asking for a deputy.

Items for the next agenda: 'Drive slowly, children playing, sign for Garden Village; bench for Garden Village green; staple gun for putting up signs.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm

Joanne Fisher
Parish Clerk

Signed.....
Date.....

Strensall Ward 2013-14 Grant Summary

Group	Scheme	Amount
Stockton on the Forest and Hopgrove Communications and Community Strategy Committee	A grant for creation of a website.	£1600
Strensall with Towthorpe Village Design Statement	A grant for consultation with the parish community about the village design statement.	£200
* Earswick Environmental Group	A grant for replacement of the kissing gate leading from Stablers Walk, Earswick into the newly planted woodland.	£300
Strensall Community, Youth and Sports Association	A grant to fund installation of a new heater in the kitchen to improve facilities on offer to groups and organisations.	£718.05
Stockton on the Forest Toddler Group	A grant to fund a toddler safety gate at the side of the village hall to improve safety of children.	£370

1600
 200
 300
 720
 370
3190

Earswick Parish Council
Internal Audit for the Financial Year Ending 31 March 2014

I am pleased to report to Members that I completed my internal audit of the Parish Council for 2013-2014 on 11 May 2014. Members should be aware that my work cannot be relied on to identify the occasional omission or insignificant error, nor to disclose breaches of trust or statute, neglect or fraud which may have taken place and which it is the responsibility of the Members of the Council to guard against.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Joanne Fisher, the Parish Clerk, for the assistance given to me in the conduct of the audit.

Overview

Overall the Council has GOOD controls in place surrounding the key financial systems, with appropriate books of account being properly kept throughout the year; Creditor payments were supported by invoices, approved and VAT properly applied and expected income was fully received, properly recorded and promptly banked.

Internal Audit Scope

The internal audit involved such testing of and evidence of compliance with the 10 statements contained in Appendix 9 of "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils" (2008 Edition)

Observations

1. During the review of the invoices and supporting documents an invoice paid to Lewis Tree Surgery Landscape Contractors and the approved supporting minutes contained minimal information to support the payment of £2,016. Although Standing Orders do not stipulate the level of supporting documentation as the payment is between £500 and £10,000 prudent business practice would justify a detailed specification of the services provided. I would recommend that Standing Order 30.b be changed from £10,000 to £500.
2. The contract of employment with the Parish Clerk stipulates that salary payments shall be made on the 30th of each month whereas the bank has been notified in writing to transfer the payments on the 27th of each month. I would recommend that the contract of employment be changed to reflect the mandate to the bank.


James D. McTurk FCA 12/5/2014