

EARSWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Earswick Parish Council, held in Earswick Village Hall on Monday 11th January 2016.

Councillors Present: D Jones
P Leveson
S Wiseman
G Offler
G Tate
B O'Connor

Parish Clerk: J Fisher

Members of the Public Present: Cllr P Doughty, Cllr H Douglas, B Rigg, S Brown, J Ridley, F Jones, F Martin

1. Apologies for Absence

None

2. Declarations of Interest

None

3. Minutes of Previous Meetings

Minutes for the Parish Council (PC) Meeting held on the 16th November 2015 were approved as accurate records by the Councillors and signed.

4. Members of the Public

A member of the public queried whether it would be fair and transparent to reduce the number for a quorum, of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party, from six to four (agenda item 10).

5. Ward Councillor's Report

Ward Cllr Doughty reported:

1. Significant work was being carried out regarding Bootham Park. A 'place of safety' has been opened again for temporary, urgent admissions. Peppermint Ct, with 23 beds, is being adapted for Mental Health care and is to open in six to eight months' time. Until then, patients will be cared for in Middlesbrough and Darlington. The Teeside NHS Foundation Trust intend to build a new mental health hospital in York for 2019.
2. City of York Council (CYC) has been working hard to deal with the flooding of six hundred homes and businesses over the Xmas period.

3. The Ward Grant applications have been submitted to Sally Burns for signing off. Successful bids will be awarded at the end of January 2016. Applicants will be able to carry the expenditure using these grants into the 2016-17 financial year - provided there is proof that 'wheels are in motion' before the end of the 2015-16 financial year. The grants awarded include:
 - Strensall History Group - £1,000 for a historical information board;
 - Earswick Scented Garden - £1,083.83;
 - Strensall PC - £1,750 for defibrillator;
 - £2,470 grant money to be used to subsidise grounds maintenance across all wards;
 - Earswick PC - £2,250 for safety fencing around pond (provided the PC match this sum in contribution to the fencing's full cost);
 - Strensall PC - £575 for community tools and equipment
 - River Foss Society awarded grant for another information board;
 - The balance of the grant money outstanding will be made available for Stockton-on-the Forest to apply.

4. Public consultation on the Teardrop site is ongoing until the 24th January 2016.

Ward Councillor Douglas has been busy working on the West Yorkshire combined authority (devolution), taxi and explosive licences, and the York Ambulance Service's First Community Responder.

6. Clerk's Report

The following pre authorised payments (incl VAT where appropriate) have been made since the last Parish Council meeting:-

- J Fisher's salary for November and December ;
- £780 to A Hill for grass cutting in October;
- £624 to A Hill for cutting hedges and shrubs;
- £300 to A Hill for cutting the flower meadow;
- £48 to A Hill for river footpath cut in October;
- £134.40 to York Sign Company Ltd for Dogs on Lead sign;
- £10 to J Fisher for printer paper;
- £36.06 to J Fisher for ink and stamps;
- £8.79 to J Fisher for stationery

- £86.13 to J Fisher for overtime in April & May (authorised 16.3.15);
- £334.35 to Earswick Village Hall fund for room hire;
- £70 to M Whittaker for repairs to Village Hall Car Park fence;
- £72 to A Hill for grass cutting to the side of hedge in Diamond Wood;
- £5.59 to Yorkshire Water;
- £156 to Playsafety Ltd for play area checks;
- £103 to Society of Local Council Clerks.

The following amounts have been received by the PC:

- £17.88 RBS interest to 30.10.15 on the current a/c;
- £22.90 RBS interest to 30.11.15 on the current a/c;
- £798 from Zurich Municipal for claim against damaged information board;
- £0.71 from RBS interest on the tennis account;
- £198.49 from the Earswick Village Hall fund for rent (2014/15) and insurance contribution (2015/16).

The following payments were authorised:

- £15 to J Fisher for ink pack;
- £2 to J Fisher for stationery.

Regarding the PC's current financial position, there was reportedly only a £119.80 surplus available for any additional expenditure. Otherwise, funds held in provisions would need to be utilised.

7. Planning Applications

The Clerk reported that City of York Council (CYC) had approved applications:

- 15/01695/FUL 240 Strensall Road YO32 9SW (Two storey side and single storey rear extensions)
- 15/02227/FUL 141 Strensall Road YO32 9SJ (Single storey rear extension and erection of boundary wall with railings to side).

8. Monthly Equipment Check

The pond fence has collapsed. A question was raised as to whether a new fence would need to be positioned further back from the water to avoid rotting. Further to the award of the ward grant for £2,250 (to be issued at the end of January 2016), the PC will match this figure from its provisions to replace the pond fence. The PC will obtain at least two quotes (to include concreting the fence base) and make a formal proposal at the next meeting. **Action: GO**

The RoSPA report on Earswick's playground areas identified no problem areas. The tennis courts had become very slippery and dangerous since the Xmas floods. Someone unknown to the PC has placed an additional chain around the tennis court gate. The PC will have to have it removed in due course but as the courts are closed until they have been cleaned (see item 23 below), the PC agreed to leave this chain in place.

9. Repairs and Clear Out of Centenery Wood Ditch by City of York Council

The PC approved £600 to City of York Council as its contribution towards the cost of the above-mentioned work carried out in 2015. **Action: JF**

10. Neighbourhood Plan

The Parish Council Chairman gave a report on the Neighbourhood Plan (NP). The CYC has approved Earswick's application for a NP area. The completed residents' survey is on the PC website. The NP Working Party (NPWP) held a public meeting at the start of December to present the survey results. A newsletter will follow a meeting with CYC at the end of January when survey

results will be discussed. Feedback from CYC will determine what happens next.

There are currently eight members of the NPWP following the resignation of a ninth member. One of the remaining members indicated that he would not be available for meetings until early 2016. This effectively reduces the NPWP to seven. This makes it difficult to form a quorum of six people at each NPWP meeting. Bill Gambold, Chair of the NPWP, had requested a reduction in the quorum figure to four. In the next newsletter there will be a request for a resident from either Willow Grove, Strensall Rd or Garden Village to join the NPWP. The PC agreed to the proposal to reduce the number required for a quorum to four, for the NPWP, with a caveat that if a further resident joins the NPWP then the quorum number will be reviewed again. **Action: DJ**

11. Consultancy Services to the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party

The PC approved £2,040 to Yourlocale for the above-mentioned services – the funding of which will come from a grant of £3,950 already received. **Action: JF**

12. Changes to The External Audit Regime

The Clerk had circulated an email from the Yorkshire Local Council Assn outlining the option for Parish Councils to opt out of the Sector Led Body for audit purposes. She summarised the email as follows:

The Audit Commission ceased to exist on 1/4/15 and a new company – Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments Ltd – has been created to take over the appointment of external auditors and the setting of audit fees for smaller authorities from 2017.

This company was set up on behalf of the Dept for Communities and Local Government by the National Assn of Local Councils (NALC), the Society of Local Council Clerks and the Assn of Drainage Authorities.

This Co. will formally appoint external auditors on the PC's behalf - much as the Audit Commission did, for a five year period from financial year 2017/18.

The fee for a PC with an annual turnover between £25,001 and £50,000 will be in the region of £200. The fees have not been set for those whose turnover is less than £25,000. Earswick PC's turnover fluctuates around the £25,000 figure so it is anticipated our fee would be around £200. Earswick's audit fee for 2013-14 was £240. Last year it was £120. The PC agreed to remain with the Sector Led Body for audit purposes.

13. River Debris and Uprooted Plant/tree Matter

During the Xmas floods, Landing Lane bridge was submerged which could have weakened it. The Foss Internal Drainage Board (FIDB) will look at the bridge. CYC Highways Dept are responsible for the bridge.

Debris and logs have been deposited by the floods on either side of the riverside hedge and in other areas of open space. It was hoped that volunteers, and possibly the Payback Team, might clear some of the debris once the weather improves.

Some trees have lost branches but nothing dangerous has been spotted.

In Diamond Wood, slabs in front of the kissing gate are under mud. Any wood chippings to spread in various areas in the open space would be very welcome.

14. Footpaths by Dog Bins

The footpath belonging to CYC, and curving down to the dog bins at the end of The Village, is giving way. The PC asked the Clerk to arrange a site meeting with the Rights of Way Officer, CYC, to discuss the way forward.

Action: JF

15. Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 Agreements

Cllr Wiseman is a member of a liaison group from York Local Council Association (YLCA) which is examining outstanding Section 106 monies (levies payable by property developers) dating back to 2010.

There is a new system proposed whereby Section 106 monies will only be due for developments of ten homes or more. With this new system the money will not go to the PCs. CYC have not agreed the new levy system yet as there is a current court case on the matter.

Parish Councils which are still owed monies are worried they may not get their outstanding Section 106 payments. Dave Meigh at CYC is responsible for Section 106 payments. Every one of these payments is triggered differently. The liaison group has requested a spreadsheet detailing all the outstanding payments.

16. Ward Grant Applications

Please see Ward Cllr Doughty's report at item 5 above.

17. Transparency Fund

The Transparency Code issued by the Secretary for State for Communities and Local Government is a code of recommended practice as to the publication of information. It applies to authorities such as Parish Councils with an annual turnover not exceeding £25,000. As mentioned at point 12 above, Earswick PC's turnover fluctuates around the £25,000 figure.

The Fund is primarily there to help smaller authorities like PCs set up and run websites. We already have a website but we can claim for website running costs, and staff time in updating the website. The Clerk had contacted YLCA to see if it could put in a claim as its turnover last year exceeded the £25,000 because of grants and section 106 monies. The NALC guidance suggests one considers the budget for the purpose of making a claim. Earswick PC's budget does not exceed £25,000 so it is able to make a claim.

The PC agreed to submit a claim for £297.42.

Action: JF

18. Precept Notice

The Chairman and the Clerk signed the Notice requesting a precept of £15,675 for 2016-17.

Action: JF

19. Additional Payment for Repairs to Village Hall Car Park Fence

The PC had previously approved £70 to Mr Whittaker for the above-mentioned repairs. However, Mr Whittaker had submitted an invoice for £72.40. The PC had already paid £70 of this invoice and agreed to pay the further £2.40.

Action: JF

20. Replacement of the River Foss Information Board

The PC agreed to order a replacement board from Leach at a cost of £561.60. £368 has been claimed and received from Zurich Municipal to go towards replacement costs. The PC agreed to fund the remaining £193.60.

Action: JF

21. Repayment of £430 Overpayment to Zurich Municipal

Zurich Municipal had issued a cheque for £798 towards the cost of replacing the information board (because it included installation costs which the PC had already decided to do itself), despite the Clerk only claiming £368. The Clerk cashed the cheque and was seeking a repayment of the £430 to Zurich Municipal which the PC authorised. The Clerk will also return a subsequent cheque issued by Zurich for the correct amount of £368.

Action: JF

22. Fixed Term Deposits

The deposit of £85,000 in Lloyds matures on 26/1/16. The amount protected by Government has been reduced to £75,000 per bank. The PC agreed the Clerk will investigate options available.

Action: JF

23. Tennis Courts Clean Up

The tennis courts were under water and sewerage during the Xmas floods. The Clerk had spoken to York Pressure Cleaning. A verbal quote of £550 for cleaning the courts and £75 for moss clearing was given. The PC agreed to authorise these amounts to York Pressure Cleaning for cleaning and moss clearing. For health and safety reasons (slippery and potential sewerage issues) the courts will remain closed until they have been cleaned. The PC agreed to apply for a grant from Sport England for reimbursement of cleaning costs.

Action: PL/SW

Martin Whittaker did not place the spare chain which has mysteriously appeared on the tennis gate but will remove if required. The PC agreed to leave it in place until after the courts have been cleaned.

During the floods a manhole cover was displaced, with sewerage coming out of the drain. Cllr Tate agreed to draft a letter to Yorkshire Water on the matter.

Action: GT/JF

24. Items For Information

- The YLCA is arranging for an expert to do a talk on work-based pensions for Clerks.
 - At a recent FIDB meeting the issue of flooding was discussed. The FIDB was not party to the Environment Agency's (EA) decision to raise the River Foss flood barrier. Reportedly, Tang Hall, Heworth and Central York would have flooded if the flood barrier had not been lifted. The FIDB is busy dredging becks. The FIDB is going to write to the EA to suggest the use of farm land for flood plains.
 - The floods overtopped the Earswick Village footbridge. The volume of water surrounding the bridge for so long has contributed to the bank coming away at the foot of the Earswick side of the bridge. The fencing around the pond was also partly submerged.
 - The Burial Board's income has exceeded expenditure. Childrens' graves at Huntington cemetery were badly flooded because there is no drainage. The Burial Board Clerk will obtain a quote for new drainage. In the meantime, the water is to be pumped out.
 - One hundred pounds in donations was raised at the coffee mornings, just before Xmas, for SNAPPY. There is to be a 'lunch gathering' of twenty-eight coffee morning attendees on the 1st February. Poppy Catering will be supplying the lunch.
 - PCSO Jimmy Hannon will be leaving the Earswick 'beat' shortly. The Clerk was asked to send him a message of thanks on behalf of Earswick PC. PCSOs Percy, Gibson, Lumley-Holmes, Dale and Smith will be overseeing Earswick.
- Action: JF**

25. Earswick Parish Councillor Vacancies

The PC accepted Barry O'Connor's request to be co-opted onto Earswick Parish Council.

Action: JF

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.

Joanne Fisher
(Parish Clerk)

Signed.....

Date.....