

SUBJECT TO RATIFICATION AT THE 13th JULY 2020 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes of the North Muskhams Parish Council virtual meeting held on Monday, 8th June 2020

Present: Councillor I Harrison, in the Chair
Councillor P Beddoe
Councillor S Dolby
Councillor N Hutchings
Councillor D Jones
Councillor D Saxton
Councillor M Talbot

And County Councillor Mrs Saddington

NM176-20 Apologies for absence

There were none.

NM177-20 Declarations of interest

It was AGREED that any declarations of interest would be stated by Members as required during the meeting.

NM178-20 Minutes

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday, 11th May 2020 were accepted as a true and correct record.

NM179-20 Update on Issues

Members received and noted the updated issues document, attached to the minutes as Appendix 1.

The Clerk had moved the community shop as the project was currently on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Data protection will be dealt with by the new website.

After discussion it was AGREED that the item on the DVSA be removed.

The Chair referred to the item relating to Foopath No 1 and correspondence between a resident, Network Rail and the Rights of Way team at the County Council.

Cllr Mrs Saddington was aware that the footpath needed to be addressed and would raise directly with the Rights of Way team. The Chair confirmed that the Parish Council were of the opinion that the footpath should be closed over the railway track, and a suitable diversion put in place.

NM180-20 Public 10 Minute Session

There were no issues raised.

NM181-20 District Councillor Session

The Chair suspended the meeting at 7.05pm to allow Councillor Mrs Saddington to present her report.

The Clerk had been advised of anything that needed notifying to Members as they arose. The one current issue was the arrival of caravans at Toll Bar House that had been subject to a Certificate of Lawful Development application in 2019, which had subsequently been refused.

The Chair advised that 11 caravans had arrived on site in the last week, all were empty and still on their wheels. They appeared to be being stored.

Planning Enforcement had been advised and would monitor the site.

Councillor Mrs Saddington confirmed that refuse collection was near enough back to normal now, plus the brown bin collection had now recommenced. Recycling centres were now opening proper hours.

The Chair thanked Councillor Mrs Saddington for her report and reconvened the meeting at 7.10pm.

NM182-20 County Councillor Session

No report was presented.

NM183-20 COVID 19 Pandemic

The Chair confirmed that some orders had been delivered to people in need in the village and had been very well received. The recipients were those still self-isolating. There were still some 35-40 people self-isolating or shielding, with most being looked after by relatives or friends. The village continued to do its best and generally comply with Government requirements.

The Chair referred to a request received from the Muskham Playgroup for financial support, as they would have a financial deficit of £895 a month up to the Summer Term, as some parents were not wanting to return their children before that time. Details had been sent to Members for consideration.

Members were asked for their views on whether to provide any financial assistance. After discussion it was proposed by Councillor Dolby, seconded by Councillor Saxton and unanimously AGREED that the Clerk ask for further financial information from the Playgroup. Members would like to see a copy of their balance sheet and what amount was held in reserve, supported by a business plan projecting income from September onwards.

Members were conscious that there could be other organisations in the village that may need financial assistance when the pandemic was over.

NM184-20 Planning

(a) Land at Junction of A1 Roundabout

The Clerk updated Members on the position with the land at the junction of the A1 roundabout. Planning Enforcement had a live enquiry logged with Highways England to try and establish

ownership.

At the moment the entrance had been blocked off with help from a local resident who were happy for the equipment to remain in place for the time being.

NM185-20 Parish Council Matters

(a) **Local Improvement Scheme – Progress Update**

The Clerk confirmed that the designer had been advised funding was awaited from the LIS Scheme. It had been agreed at the last meeting that Members would allow the scheme to progress naturally and not pay from reserves.

After discussion, Members AGREED that the invoice be paid so that the project can progress. Sites had been approved by Via and the designer would be asked to advise the Clerk when the signs were ready for installation.

(b) **Parish Council Website**

Confirmation had been sent across to the developer that the Parish Council wished to proceed with the new village website.

The Clerk to liaise with organisations in the village for details to include or hyperlinks to their own websites.

Members to be kept updated on progress.

(c) **Section 130A Land – Licence to Parish Council**

The return of the counter-signed agreement was awaited from the County Council.

The Rights of Way Officer had agreed to contact and remind the three adjacent residents of the agreement that now existed between the Parish Council and the County Council regarding maintenance of the area.

(d) **Annual Parish Council Conference 2020**

At District Council level, the organisation of the Annual Parish Council Conference had passed back to Democratic Services.

An enquiry has been received asking if the Parish Council would want to host the event again in October or November 2020, depending on what restrictions were in place with regard to social distancing.

After discussion Members AGREED that, while the Parish Council were happy to assist with helping to put together the agenda, they would not want to host the event and were happy for it to return to the District Council.

(e) **Increase in Parish Council Members**

Following on from the previous meeting, the Clerk had contacted Newark & Sherwood District Council regarding the possible increase in Members.

Advice had been received that a Community Governance Review would need to be undertaken. The review would need to conclude with an election (contested or uncontested) so this would preferably need to be combined with another poll, ideally May 2024. If an earlier review was requested then the term of existing members would have to be cut and all would have to submit nomination papers to re-stand and possibly face an election. The Parish Council would have to meet the cost of any election.

Papers regarding a review undertaken at Caythorpe Parish Council to increase their members from 5 to 6 had been circulated to Members for information.

The Clerk confirmed that the Parish Council could not co-opt to increase numbers past 7, however, there was the ability to invite individuals to assist with specific projects.

After discussion it was AGREED that no review be requested at this time.

The Clerk to contact individuals who had expressed an interest in co-option to advise there was no immediate possibility of increasing the size of the Parish Council but there may be specific projects where their expertise would be valuable.

NM186-20 Environmental & Community Issues

(a) **Skatepark and Play Area Update**

Play Area

Members noted receipt of two quotations for the extension of the play area that had been sent to one of the play area fundraisers. The Clerk had been seeking the transfer of the balance of the funds raised by the play area committee to the MRCC. The deadline of 31st May had not been achieved. Members agreed they could not consider or review the plans until the balance of funds had been transferred.

The quotations received so far, together with the copy of the plan which had been super-imposed on to the playing field by Councillor Hutchings, to be forwarded to the MRCC for information. It was noted that the plans came close to residential boundaries.

The current play area remained closed in line with Government guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Skatepark

Councillor Beddoe advised that the position with the skatepark remained the same as no progress could be made during the lockdown.

The Clerk's conversation with Skateboard England was noted and it was useful to have the contact details shared.

With the easing of lockdown Councillor Beddoe proposed that, with a group of volunteers, the extent of repairs required to get the skatepark through a safety inspection be investigated. Once an investigation had been undertaken a report could be brought back to the Parish Council on what work was required and a decision taken on whether to proceed. This could give a 12

month breathing space to allow a longer-term solution to be agreed.

After discussion, it was AGREED that Councillors Talbot, Beddoe and Hutchings meet on site to investigate what work was required and, if it was considered repairs could be undertaken by a volunteer group. Given Councillor Talbot's background he could supervise any repairs.

It was noted that there was £1,000 in the budget for repairs.

Members noted that, signs advising that the structure was closed continued to be ignored and removed and replacement hedging had been destroyed by people coming through from the A1 roundabout. The Clerk to liaise with the village handyman to replace the signs.

(b) **Affordable Housing Development & Community Land**

The Clerk confirmed that GEDA had been contacted regarding the completion certificate for the community land, works outstanding to clear the site, a utilities plan and water supply. A response had been received that GEDA were currently not working due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Members were aware that the 4 market value properties were still available. NCHA had been contacted to ask if consideration could be given to converting these to shared ownership. A response had been received that this was being reviewed and NCHA would come back to the Parish Council in due course.

It was noted that residents were moving in to the rental properties, but concern was expressed that the site was looking uncared for with a skip still on site.

Members were conscious that the completion of the site had been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, but with the easing of restrictions the Parish Council considered progress should now be made. Photographs of the area had been sent across to NCHA so they could see how the site looked currently.

Councillor Talbot asked whether there were any plans in place for the developer to put up a boundary fence. The Clerk advised there was nothing in the Transfer that dealt with the boundary. There hadn't yet been a formal handover of the community land due to the work that needed to be completed.

It was AGREED that the Clerk continue to liaise with GEDA regarding the community land and condition of the site. The item to be placed on the agenda for the July meeting.

(c) **Capturing Memories**

An update had been received from the Capturing Memories Project who had been determined to continue it work during the lockdown.

It was felt important to record the weeks of the corona virus as they unfolded. Consequently, all relevant items that have appeared on the Muskhams Messenger have been stored, photographs have been taken of changes to village routines and a note kept of how Government announcements have affected the village.

A number of residents have provided some excellent photographs of the VE Day celebrations and of the 'buddies' scheme in operation.

It was intended to continue to store the material until the crisis is judged to be 'over'. Ideas will then be sought about how photographs, stories and events might be shared. Consideration was being given to a hard copy publication or a whole section devoted to the lock down on the *Capturing Memories* or Village websites or a music-slide presentation of the photographs to be shown at a social event.

(d) **Work to Tree – Mackleys Lane**

A request had been received from a resident regarding a crown lift of a tree at the bottom of Mackleys Lane. The Clerk had initially thought this was adjacent to the dog waste bin and had raised with the Rights of Way team as it was on the footpath. This was not the case, however, and the Chair confirmed it was on the river bank but the boughs were overhanging the footpath. The Clerk asked Councillor Saxton if he could take photographs so that the tree could be clearly identified.

The Chair referred to a number of incidents on the footpath between The Ferry and the nature reserve to the north, which involved dogs. Signs had been put up asking people to keep dogs on leads, plus to pick up dog fouling, but they continued to be ignored by some dog owners.

Discussion took place on whether the Parish Council should seek to implement a dog control order which will require people to have their dogs on leads along the footpath, north from The Ferry. It was acknowledged that this would be unpopular with residents that were responsible dog owners.

It was AGREED that the Clerk liaise with Newark & Sherwood District Council to identify what steps were required to introduce an order.

It was further AGREED that the Clerk request support from the Community Protection team at Newark & Sherwood District Council who had the power to issue fines to owners not clearing up after their dogs. It was considered that the only way to reinforce the message was if owners realised fines were being issued. The Parish Council would be prepared to meet the costs of additional visits by the team if that was an option.

The Chair asked that the Clerk identify how a prosecution can be initiated. If someone witnesses an owner allowing their dog to foul and passes that information on and is prepared to make a statement, would that allow a prosecution to take place.

Councillor Hutchings was happy to do a poster campaign on lamp posts around the village to reinforce the message.

The Chair noted that Toxocara was still prevalent in dog faeces and could cause blindness if the work gets to the back of the eye, and breathing problems if it gets in to the lungs.

(e) **Change to Village Policing**

The Clerk advised that PCSO Crowhurst had been transferred and would be replaced by PCSO Dunn, at a date to be confirmed. Details would be circulated to Members and posted on the noticeboards and website as soon as they were notified.

NM187-20 Highways

(a) **Highways Log**

Members received and noted the highways log.

Councillor Hutchings reported that the potholes had been circled, but not repaired although an email had been received advising that the work was complete. The Clerk to log on the portal again.

The potholes on Main Street had been repaired, but not very effectively. After discussion, it was AGREED that the Clerk request an on-site meeting with the Area Inspector and County Councillor Laughton to establish a way forward for the surfacing.

The Clerk was asked to log the potholes at the junction of The Grange and Main Street. The white lines had been re-painted, but contractors painted over the potholes.

(b) **Request for Changes to 20mph Zone**

At the previous meeting, Members considered a request received from a resident regarding an extension to the 20mph zone on Main Street.

Via East Midlands (with responsibility for the adopted highway on behalf of Nottinghamshire County Council) had been contacted and investigated the request. A response had been received and circulated to Members for information.

In considering the request on Main Street Via had looked at whether a lower speed limit would be well-respected by drivers and also at the following factors:-

- the history of accidents
- the layout of the road e.g. width, bends, accesses and junctions
- whether the road is used frequently by pedestrians and cyclists
- the roads function (main road, through traffic, local access etc)
- existing traffic speeds the road environment (rural, level of road-side development, shop frontages, schools)
- the impact of traffic speeds on residents.

As Main Street is lined with residential frontages as well as a varying number of parked vehicles along its length throughout the day, current design guidance and research has shown that in these circumstances the majority of drivers subconsciously adjust their speed according to the surroundings, i.e. driving more slowly in built up areas with high number of parked vehicles. Furthermore, there is no accident data which indicates a road safety issue along the street.

Taking into consideration the above factors, Via had advised that on this occasion the request to change the speed limit from an advisory one to statutory limit would not be pursued as the location does not meet the necessary criteria.

The Clerk was asked to advise the resident who had requested the review.

NM188-20 Financial Matters

(a) Accounts for payment:

The Chair referred to the accounts for payment. It was AGREED unanimously that the following accounts be agreed for payment:

- Clerks wages – May - £248.88
- Payment to HMRC for Clerks wages – May - £62.22
- Mr D Shaw – Internal Audit Fee - £75
- Village Handyman – May - £151.46 plus £182.43 insurance
- Newark Town Council – COVID-19 Support - £236.48

(b) To note any Receipts:

There were none.

(c) Financial Report to 31st May 2020

Members received and noted the financial report as at 31st May 2020.

The Chair was pleased to note that the village handyman was now back at work after the easing of the COVID-19 restrictions. Work had been undertaken tidying and cutting grass.

The Chair advised that the noticeboard at the north end of the village was broken and asked that it be repaired. A new post was required. The Clerk advised that a request had been made for all noticeboards to be reviewed on the handyman's return and would now follow that up with him.

Councillor Talbot enquired what the Parish Church Clock Fund was held for. The Clerk advised that it was a historic account held by the Parish Council. Councillor Talbot advised that the Church now had a fully automated clock, with a sub-division in the accounts for the Church Clock.

After discussion, the Chair proposed that this account be closed and funds transferred to the Church, this was seconded by Councillor Hutchings and AGREED.

(Councillors Talbot and Saxton declared a personal interest and did not participate in the vote).

(d) To note the completion of the Internal Audit

Members noted completion of the internal audit of the 2019/20 financial year accounts.

(e) To consider the Annual Governance Statement as at 31st March 2020

Members received and approved the Annual Governance Statement as at 31st March 2020 and AGREED that it should be signed by the Chairman.

An updated All Risk Register to be presented to the July meeting.

- (f) **To consider the Accounting Statements as at 31st March 2019**
Members received, noted and agreed the Accounting Statement as at 31st March 2020 and AGREED that it should be signed by the Chairman.

The statement would now be submitted to PKF Littlejohn for review and the notice for the public inspection posted.

NM189-20 Correspondence

There was nothing to consider.

NM190-20 Date of Next Meeting

Monday, 13th July 2020

The meeting closed at 8.25pm