

East and West Barkwith Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held at 8.00 pm. on 19th March, 2020, in the Village Hall.

Present: Mr. A. Platt, Mr. C. Wilson, Mr. D. Ward, Mr. N. Battell, Mr. C. Fincham.

There were no members of the public in attendance.

1031. **Apologies for absence.**

Mrs. T. Brady and Mr. J Stamp were not attending meetings due to the Coronavirus risk to family members. Ms. K. Breckons was working.

The County and District Councillors were at other meetings.

These apologies were accepted and approved by those present.

Mr. S. Goodacre had sent a letter tendering his resignation from the council due to pressures of work and family commitments. This was accepted and the clerk will notify East Lindsey so that the process can begin to find a new councillor.

1032. **Minutes.**

Minutes of the meeting of 16th January, 2020 had been circulated prior to the meeting.

They were approved by the meeting and signed by the chairman.

1033. **Matters arising.**

There were no items on this occasion.

1034. **Planning.**

a) Applications and Decisions - There were no items to report on this occasion.

b) Coronavirus - Covid 19 - Efforts to limit the spread of this virus already include recommendations for people to work from home wherever this can be arranged, for everyone to avoid close contact outside the immediate household and for older and vulnerable people to stay at home as much as possible. Further measures will inevitably require more constraints on freedom of movement and on public gatherings, which will impinge on Council meetings, particularly the required timings for the Annual Parish Meeting and the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

Prior to the meeting, the clerk had circulated an outline of the situation, the latest advice and instructions, and the council's options for maintaining its work. Copies were also available at the meeting. After a brief discussion of the main points, it was agreed that the prime consideration was the health and safety of the council members and staff and that of the general public.

It was then formally proposed, seconded and agreed by all present that the council should hold no further Council or Committee meetings after this, for an initial period of four months.

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As this action would affect the council's statutory meetings and working practices, the following measures were formally agreed for the duration of the current emergency:-

- a) All meetings of the council and its committees will be cancelled for an initial period of four months, to be reviewed then, or earlier if the situation improves.
- b) The Annual Parish Meeting, due in May, will be re-arranged as soon as Government advice permits.
- c) The Annual Parish Council Meeting, also due in May, will be held as the first council meeting when circumstances allow.
- d) Until that time, the current Chairman, Vice-chairman and committee members and representatives will remain in post.
- e) The clerk will continue to be the Responsible Financial Officer until that next Council Meeting.
- f) Council business will continue electronically and by telephone calls, with suitable records being kept by the clerk, until such time as meetings can be resumed. At that point a full report will be made of the work done for formal approval and ratification.
- g) That, in addition to the normal duties, the clerk is empowered :-
 - i) in the case of any consultation documents, to seek councillor's opinions via e-mail and to collate and report on the collective views based on the majority response.
 - ii) to make any payments which would normally fall due during the coming four months, either by the usual cheque or by using the council's bank card if the clerk deems that a safer method to avoid close contact. All such payments will be fully recorded in the usual manner and will be reported to the next meeting for ratification. Payments which are noticeably higher than in previous years, or are outside the regular listing, will first be referred to the chairman or any two other councillors for approval.
- h) A Public Statement will be issued to inform residents of the decision and the reason for the suspension of meetings, and a summary of the council's work will be posted on the web-site at intervals not less than the period between the posting of the usual minutes. This is to maintain some degree of transparency and accountability.

The question of community support was considered. The Ward family, from the shop, have already circulated a small notice offering help with shopping and other errands, and other individuals are thought to have been contacting neighbours. It was felt that the council could not usefully add to these arrangements at present but that the Public Statement should repeat some contact details in case a need should arise. These would be for the clerk, for the chairman and for Cllr. Wilson.

Signed by the Chairman

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1035. Correspondence.

General information and dates - as listed for circulation

Other items were mainly of information so were listed for swift review:-

East Lindsey have sent an up-date to the Electoral Register showing 1 addition.

Lincolnshire County Council has acknowledged and registered the new Grass-cutting Agreement. They will require confirmation of continuing Public Liability Insurance when the policy has been renewed.

CPRE have lost the sponsorship which has funded the Best Kept Village Competition so they will no longer organise this. An alternative may be arranged at a later date.

Keep Britain Tidy have postponed the Great British Spring Clean until September.

The Pensions Regulator has acknowledged completion of the formalities for Workplace Pensions. No further action will be needed until 2023 unless circumstances change.

Quantum Air Fibre have sent an e-mail offering 'Fibre to the Premises'. This looks like a scheme for free replacement of the current copper cables with fibre to the homes and businesses in the parish if enough people are willing to sign up to a monthly subscription to the company for its use, plus the same regular bills from their existing service provider.

The clerk will forward the e-mail to councillors for consideration, but it may be better to hold off on any action until the general situation improves.

LALC have sent numerous e-mails with information on the developing situation with the coronavirus. This was summarised for use in the earlier discussion. (Item 1034b)

1026. Reports

a) Village Hall. Cllr. Wilson reported that he had a quote for the replacement front doors of the Village Hall, in the sum of £1,286, plus £257.20 in VAT which can be reclaimed. Payment would be required on completion of the work and it was agreed that the amount could be released from the reserve of the grant fund.

Most of the regular users have cancelled their meetings for the next couple of months but there is a booking for the funeral tea of a local resident at the end of this month. It was agreed that the council would recommend to the Village Hall Committee that the funeral tea could go ahead, barring any new restrictions, but that the hall should then be closed for an initial period of 3 months.

Cllr. Wilson accepted this recommendation in his capacity as Chairman of the Village Hall Committee, as committee meetings have been suspended for the next few months.

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b) Neighbourhood Watch. Property crime seems to be abating, to be replaced by online and telephone scams taking advantage of the current situation. Residents should be very wary of unsolicited contact quoting the coronavirus as the reason for some ‘special offer’ or service.

c) Play Area. There will be no committee meetings for the next few months but the cleaning and maintenance tasks will be completed as and when the weather permits. For the moment, the Play Area will remain open as it is in the open air and there are not usually any periods of heavy use which would bring people too close together. However, this may have to change in the light of further government instructions.

d) Countryside Committee. The grass-cutting problem has been resolved in that Mr. T. Elliott has agreed to deal with the verges on Panton Road and Mr. S. Champion will cut those on Lincoln Road. It was agreed that, as last year, Mark Woodcock will be cutting the small areas. The formal agreement with the County Council has been submitted and acknowledged, subject to providing a copy of the Public Indemnity insurance certificate when the policy has been renewed.

e) Dog Watch Co-ordinator. There was no report on this occasion.

f) History Group. Meetings have been cancelled for the next few months, leaving members to work on their own projects.

1037. Amenities.

a) War Memorial. The winter pansies have begun to pick up with the better weather and the seeds have been sown for the summer plants. The posts will be re-painted when conditions permit.

b) Web-site. There was no report on this occasion.

1038. Highways.

The contractor’s documentation for the work on the Bus Shelters has now been checked and a start date should be available shortly.

Two additional passive speedwatch notices have been placed in their initial positions, the other two being held in reserve.

The grant form was completed and submitted. It has raised one or two questions for clarification but has now been accepted and there should be further news shortly.

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1039. **Finance.**

a) Receipts - Donations for the Play Area have been received from:-

Donnington on Bain School PTA	£40
Scrap Metal Sale	£30
Payment for printing from Barkwith Gardeners	£17

b) Bills - The following items had been approved for payment on receipt of invoice -

Payee - For	Cheque no.	Net	VAT	Total
Life's a Breeze - 2 Lincolnshire Flags	CARD	£10.95	£1.66	£12.61
Lincs County Council - Speed signs	000852	£40.00	-	£40.00
George Lodge - Mower Parts	CARD	£19.14	£3.83	£22.97

Bills approved at this meeting -

LALC - Annual Subscription	000853	£149.13	-	£149.13
HMRC - PAYE payment	000854	£137.00	-	£137.00
Mrs B. Theairs - Net Salary	000855	£578.00	-	£578.00
Mrs B. Theairs - Clerk's expenses	000856	£111.90	-	£111.90

Also approved, in principle, for payment on receipt of invoice -

Village Hall Doors	CARD - quoted at £1,286 plus £257.20 VAT = £1543.20
Grass-cutting bills	for fuel etc and for Mark Woodcock
Essential Office supplies	for paper & ink
BHIB Insurance	Expected to be approximately £500
Internal Audit Fee	Expected to be £90
Quarterly Salary payments due in June - at the rate agreed in November 2019, to take effect from April 2020, a total of £1,092 for the quarter from 1st April to 30th June.	

The above payments include those which would normally be approved at the May meeting now cancelled. Accordingly, the clerk has been authorised to make those payments which fall within the usual expectations for the next four months, and to consult with the Chairman, or any two other councillors, should the sum required be higher than expected, or for any additional items.

c) End of Year - The 2019/2020 accounts will be completed as soon as the Bank Statement arrives for the end of March, and the draft Asset List for March 2020 was approved for Audit. It was agreed that the documents should be referred to Sophy Warren for internal Audit. The arrangements for the external audit are currently being reviewed.

1040. **Any Other Business.**

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8.50pm.

Signed by the Chairman