

Whiston Parish Council

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Monday 15th January 2024 at 6.30 pm at Whiston Parish Hall.

Present: Councillors, Tim Stevenson (Chair) and Clive Davis, Deborah Davis, David Fisher, Elaine Reynard, Genaya Smales and Colin Taylor.

In Attendance: Simon Oldham - Clerk to the Council and Angela Harrison – RFO. Three members of the public present.

194/23 Non-attendance of Councillors – a) To receive and note apologies from councillors who are unable to attend the meeting & b) To consider reasons for absence provided by councillors who cannot attend and resolve the council's acceptance of these if felt relevant.

Councillors Tony Griffin (other meeting commitment) and Haroon Rashid (other meeting commitment). In addition, Jordan Arno- Youth Club Manager.

195/23 To consider any motion to vary the order of business (if any).

None.

196/23 To receive declarations of interest – None.

197/23 To identify items for which the press and public may be excluded (if any) - None

198/23 15 Minute public speaking session.

A local parishioner who regularly walks Worrygoose Lane complained about the state of the grass verges along both sides of the road which were churned up with all the recent heavy rainfall where cars and vans that use the shops, drive over the asphalt through puddles and park on the verges thereby causing the damage and asked what action could be taken. The Parish Council agreed to check with Ward Councillor Tony Griffin as it was believed that he may have made a referral about this recently to RMBC and if not, this could be scheduled for further consideration at next months' meeting.

Another local parishioner further to his recent email, photo images and video clip, referred to the flooding that was occurring on the road at Moorhouse Lane opposite Spencer Green as a consequence of the dilapidated road condition with water flowing off the fields along with pesticides and was hitting the retaining wall and backing up making it extremely tricky for motorists and pedestrians. He stated that he'd spoken with RMBC who had been out and cleared the gulleys but they weren't tackling the potholes and this matter could easily be resolved by simple road repairs. At present, every time it rained the retaining wall held the water and it took 2-3 days for it to clear. The Parish Council advised that this matter had already been referred to the RMBC Highways Manager on receipt of the parishioner's email and it was hoped that a reply should be given within the next 10 days.

199/23 To approve the minutes of the Parish Council annual meeting – 18th December, 2023.

RESOLVED : To approve the minutes as a true record.

(Councillor David Fisher arrived at the meeting at this point).

200/23 Strategic Priorities 2024 Member workshop 11/1/24 - feedback & to inform the budget & precept setting process.

RESOLVED : To feed in the identified priorities and required budget allocations In to the next budget & precept setting agenda item.

201/23 Determination of the budget and precept setting for 2024/25.

RESOLVED : That (1) the following strategic priorities and associated budget allocations be fed in to the overall budget allocation, as identified at last weeks' Member Workshop :-

community kitchen £5k

recruitment of a Handyperson £15k (broadly £10k Salary cost & £5k materials)

recruitment of an Admin Assistant 8 hours per week to arrange Events in the Parish Hall £7.5k

Parish Hall enhancements £10k - eg wi-fi improvements, new speakers, touchscreen TV's

Well-Being projects £5k;

(2) in light of (1) above the budget and precept for 2024/25 be set at £107094 representing a 4% increase on the existing 2023/24 budget and (3) Members received and considered the general and earmarked reserves noted in the Clerks report when setting the level of the precept.

202/23 To approve the monthly accounts – January 2024

RESOLVED : To approve the monthly accounts as presented and schedule of payments as appended to these minutes.

203/23 To receive the bank reconciliation @ 31st December 2023

RESOLVED : To note the bank reconciliation @ 31st December 2023.

204/23 To receive budget monitoring statement @ 31st December, 2023

RESOLVED: To note the budget monitoring statement @ 31st December, 2023.

205/23 Internal Audit Review & appointment of internal Auditor for 2023-24.

RESOLVED : That (1) approval be given to re-appoint the existing internal auditor to carry out the audit for 2023/24 and (2) to note from an internal controls perspective that existing arrangements for a designated Councillor to carry out a bi-monthly review of bank statements and payments as well as the Clerk also having access to each of the bank accounts for monitoring purposes, was in place and considered to be satisfactory.

The RFO invited members to consider any other ways by which they would wish to hold her and financial processes to account. A member questioned whether there was an inventory and asset register, that would enable a physical check as to condition and possible replacement that would assist future budgeting.

The RFO explained the basis on which these matters were treated in accordance with the Governance and Accountability Practitioner's guide and that these had to be accounted for at purchase price value and no account had to be taken in respect of depreciation.

The member who raised the issue clarified that this was not an issue around depreciation accounting but the ability to carry out a physical check of assets and their condition. The Clerk stated that the asset register was work in progress and the member said they would obtain the relevant information from him. The RFO then stated that she felt that she was being attacked and that this was happening at every meeting she attended. She specifically requested for this matter to be minuted.

A member then outlined how much he valued her work as the RFO and that it was important to know the basis on which she felt she was being attacked and what evidence there was to support this claim. No evidence was given to support the claim and the RFO stated that this was her perception and that it was taking place at every meeting. The Clerk agreed to present the asset register as an agenda item for consideration at the next meeting.

206/23 Youth Club update.

No update in the absence of Jordan Arno.

207/23 Update on Community Kitchen proposal - 3 month trial within the Parish Hall.

RESOLVED : That (1) to note the feedback on the meeting held with DH attended by the Clerk and Councillors Tim Stevenson, Clive Davis and Deborah Davis on 8/1/24 and approval be given to enter in to a 3 month pilot initiative commencing on 30/1/24 on the basis set out in the summary feedback report ; (2) approval be given to the acquisition of the additional kitchen equipment as circulated by the Clerk, with the exception of the proposed fridge unit, to upgrade the facility in preparation for delivery of the pilot and (3) delegated authority be given to the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council to commit expenditure from the existing community kitchen budget in support of initiatives which support getting the kitchen up and running and its viability during the pilot period.

208/23 To consider next steps re drainage/surface water impacts in Whiston further to Drainage Adviser presentation & concerns at the last meeting on 18/12/23 and scope to raise greater community awareness via a potential leaflet drop to all households, a public meeting or an online petition to RMBC calling for these matters to be properly considered.

RESOLVED : That approval be given to the proposed draft leaflet for circulation/delivery to all households in Whiston, subject to minor tweaking with a view to creating a greater awareness of the increasing flood risks faced by Whiston and seeking local residents confirmation of willingness to attend a public meeting to be held hopefully by the end of March in the presence of a local Flood Adviser and with the intention of inviting RMBC representation to discuss lobbying further for robust action from RMBC in fulfilment of its responsibilities as the Lead Local Flood Authority.

209/23 Submission of follow up FOI request to the Environment Agency - Environmental Permit (Discharges to water and groundwater) number NE/WRA8239/002 re flow data.

RESOLVED : To note the follow up FOI request sent to the Environment Agency on 2/1/24 seeking "15 minute" data as required by Schedules 3 and 4 which plot overflows at 15 minute intervals against the flow data from Whiston Brook.

(The following Councillors declared personal interests in relation to the following item as members of frequent user groups of the Parish Hall facilities - Genaya Smales (Guides), Colin Taylor (Tuneless Choir), Clive & Deborah Davis (Fitzwilliam Wine Club).

210/23 Annual review of Parish Hall hire charges & refundable bond/deposits.

RESOLVED : That (1) approval be given to increase the Parish Hall hire fees for one-off parties/events by approximately 5% (rounded) with immediate effect, to £21 per hour for the Main Hall, £16 per hour for the Conference Hall and £32 per hour for exclusive use (both Halls); (2) the refundable deposit in respect of one-off parties/event bookings be revised to £100 with immediate effect for all events irrespective of the time of day of the booking and (3) the Parish Hall hire fees for regular/frequent user bookings be retained at £15 per hour for the Main Hall and £12 per hour for the Conference Hall but in view of some existing minor discrepancies of some user groups being charged a differing rate, this be standardised with effect from 1/4/24 on the grounds of equity and fairness and respective user groups be advised accordingly.

211/23 Update on timeline to complete the Manorial Barn lease renewal.

RESOLVED : To note and approve the updated draft of the ten year Manorial Barn lease renewal with Orchard Grove Ltd and be signed by the Chair and Vice Chair of the Parish Council and witnessed by the Parish Clerk on behalf of the Council and proceed for execution.

212/23 Progressing a new lease arrangement for rental of Brook St land & garage.

RESOLVED : To note the communication with the existing temporary tenant who had confirmed a willingness to enter into a new ongoing/permanent lease arrangement on the same basis and approval be given for the Clerk to instruct a Solicitor to draft a new lease agreement to reflect the position and protect the interests of both the Parish Council as landlord and of the tenant.

213/23 Draft Member and Staff training opportunities/programme re Civility & Respect pledge.

RESOLVED : To note & support the availability of the YLCA training opportunities available to both staff and Councillors and that relevant training be recommended for Councillors to attend either the “Off to a flying start” course or the Nimble E-Learning “An introduction to local town & parish councils” , upon being newly appointed to WPC and other training opportunities be generally available upon request where a Councillor or staff member feel that they would benefit from a particular training module which will assist them in their role(s), subject to the approval by the Council and to available budgetary resource.

214/23 Duration of the meeting.

RESOLVED : That at 9.10pm and the meeting having been in progress for 2 hours 40 minutes, the remaining agenda items as follows be deferred to the next meeting on 19/2/24 :-

- RMBC – Ward councillor report
- Members items – a) To consider a charitable donation following receipts from the Christmas Festival/Lights switch-on event 2/12/23
- Correspondence/Information Items

1	YLCA	White Rose Bulletin – 15 th December 2023 & 5 th January 2024
2	YLCA	Law & Governance Bulletin December 2023
3	RMBC	Consultation - Consideration of School Term Dates for 2025/26

- Items for future agenda
- Planning Applications

1	RB2023/1716	12A School Hill Whiston	Erection of two storey side extension with associated external works
2	RB2023/1633	242 East Bawtry Road Whiston	Proposed extension to front porch and render to front elevation
3	RB2023/1722	283 East Bawtry Road Whiston	Demolition of existing single storey rear, erection of single storey rear and infill of front covered area

- Planning determinations

1	RB2023/1443	Proposed raising of roof to create additional living space including insertion of new and change of windows and doors - 4 East Bawtry Whiston	Granted conditionally
2	RB2023/1546	Application to undertake works to trees protected by RMBC TPO No. 1 1976, The Old Rectory Rectory Drive Whiston	Granted

215/23 Date & time of next meeting - Monday 19th February, 2024 6.30pm

The meeting was closed at 9.10pm

Signed

Dated

JANUARY

PAYEE	ACCOUNT	TOTAL
HSBC	Monthly bank charges (CUR/RET)	30.25
M Kostanjsek	Electrician - christmas timers	526.00
M& D Security	Christmas event - security	733.92
E Reynard	Christmas event - Elf gift	18.49
Staff salaries - Various	Salary - December	2286.42
HMRC	Tax & NICs December	619.85
Peoples Partnership	Pension Contributions	107.78
British Gas Lite	Triangle electricity	31.36
Chic Cleaning	Cleaning- hall	2550.77
Amazon	Youth Club First aid items (Reimburse JA)	23.79
Dinnington Colliery Band	Christmas event band fee	150.00

O2	Mobile phone	31.44
RMBC	Land & garage rent	29.23
Mark Middleton	Garden contract inc Cowrakes	466.70
Screwfix	Replacment locks (balance) Reimburse SO	24.00
RMBC	Quarterly allotment rent	9.38
Fireguard Limited	Hall point covers	136.20
Christmas Plus	Christmas installation	1902.60
Chic Cleaning	Hall cleaning products	139.57
The Family Works	YC Traning	400.00
Information Commissioner	Data protection fee	35.00
Microsoft	Microsoft 360 subscription	88.20
O2	Youth Club - Phone (reimburse JA	7.96
TOTAL		10348.91