

# **MINUTES OF THE OLD SOMERBY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**Monday 17 September 2018 at 7.15 pm at the Fox and Hounds**

**Public Forum at 7pm.**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs: Tom Jonason Vice-Chairman, Veronica Stephens, Carl Wilson, Vicky Lowndes and Chris Skelton. Also present 8 local residents, SKDC Councillor Peter Stephens and Parish Clerk David Holmes.

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## **PUBLIC FORUM:**

Anita Thompson: Expressed concerned about two cars parked close to the corner of School Lane opposite her house. She had witnessed several near misses.

**Action:** Cllr Stephens to make contact. There may be some parking opposite subject to the landowner's consent.

Mr Welsh raised several points which took up the remainder of the time of the Forum:

a) Lack of compliance with the Transparency Code for publication of draft minutes. Mr Welsh asked that the two sets of minutes not be signed off at this meeting to give more time. He felt they were both skewed.

**Advised:** The Code is followed fully now and meeting minutes were not ever meant to be verbatim.

b) Mr Welsh complained about the explanation at the last meeting given by the Vice Chairman which indicated a reluctance to provide Freedom of Information material to him.

**Advised:** Cllr Stephens had today provided the necessary information as detailed in the recent Decision by the Commissioner. The Commissioner had been informed.

c) Mr Welsh further complained about the lack of use by the clerk of the council's own email address.

**Advised:** Correct email address was now in use and noted that the clerk had only been in post since the 16 July.

d) Mr Welsh complained that the present clerk should not be in post because of possible conflict of interest as he was also a member of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

**Advised:** The Parish Council oversees the Steering Group and councillors attend each meeting. There is no conflict of interest. The clerk has the full trust of all the Parish Councillors.

When it became clear that Mr Welsh was recording the meeting a resident objected. Clerk advised under transparency rules recordings could take place.

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## **MEETING:**

### **1.0 WELCOME & APOLOGIES:**

The welcome had already been made - no apologies.

### **2.0 NEW COUNCILLORS:**

Cllrs Skelton and Lowndes both signed their Declarations.

### **3.0 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN:**

Cllr Stephens proposed Cllr Lowndes, seconded by Cllr Wilson. There were no other nominations. VOTE: Cllr Lowndes appointed Chairman with full support of her fellow councillors. Cllr Lowndes then took the Chair.

#### **4.0 DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND DISPENSATION:**

Cllr Skelton declared a pecuniary interest in item 14.0. There were no applications for a Dispensation.

#### **5.0 MINUTES OF MEETINGS 16 and 18 July 2018:**

Cllr Jonason had been called by Sally Skelton the day prior to the meeting to consider an amendment to part of the minutes dealing with questions from the floor. Cllr Skelton raised a few points on behalf of Sally around what she had said about the conduct of Nigel Ord as a previous parish councillor, member of the Steering Group and in particular his attitude towards Sally. Chris asked on behalf of Sally whether the PC had approached the Steering Group about the past conduct of Nigel Ord towards Sally and questioned whether he should be allowed to continue on the Steering Group. Cllr Skelton was assured that the issue of Nigel Ord continuing as a member of the Steering Group had been considered and all members fully supported his continued membership with Cllr Stephens having voiced her concerns.

**Advised:** Sally is to supply her proposed amendment. Any amendment to the draft minutes would be subject to the council's full agreement

Mr Welsh interjected and asked if he could also add to the minutes.

**Advised:** Mr Welsh is to supply his suggested amendments specifically to each minute from the draft. It was stipulated by the council that this shouldn't be a long rambling account. Any amendment would be subject to the council's full agreement

**Agreed:** Council is to leave the signing of these minutes until the next meeting to consider any possible amendment.

#### **6.0 MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING HELD 18 JULY 2018:**

**6.1 Grass Cutting:** Cllr Stephens and the clerk had walked the village recently. A lot of residents were cutting the grass in front of their houses. Other areas were being cut by Cllr Skelton who also offered to further cut the grass on the roundabout. Cllr Jonason had today cut a remaining area of uncut grass on School Lane. Contact had been made with the previous contractor who could restart the contract if requested to. This item dealt with further under agenda item 9.0 below.

**6.2 Speeding:** The clerk had received an email from Graham Ayto asking when the Speed Indicator would again be in use. The clerk advised he had contacted both Nigel Ord who had operated the machine for several years and Gordon Thompson who had offered to take over this task. Nigel would assist Gordon in familiarising himself with the machine and procedure and it should be up and running soon. The Councillors offered their thanks to Nigel for his work over the years and to Gordon for agreeing to take it on.

**Agreed:** The signs should be reinstated in the hope that the flashing signs would have a calming effect on traffic generally. Data will be collected and sent to the Police again toward the end of the year.

The clerk referred to the new initiative set up by the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership "*Community Speed Watch*". He explained the commitment which would involve volunteers training to use speed detection devices. Offenders would be reported to the Police who would send out warning letters. The cost of purchasing the machines fell upon Parish Councillors and could be up to £500.

**Agreed:** Due to the Parish Council's financial situation it is not appropriate to pursue this initiative at this time.

**6.3 Freedom of Information:** The information had been provided to Mr. Welsh and Cllr Stephens was thanked for her hard work in this respect.

#### **7.0 MATTERS ARISING NOT OF THE AGENDA:**

Cllr Jonason had been in touch with David Goodridge from Invicta Developments. He has agreed that Chris Skelton can cut the hedge between the bus stop on School Lane and the junction to Grantham Road. David Goodridge has been in touch with Chris and it is now in his hands as and when he is able to cut the hedge.

## **8.0 REPORT FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP:**

The Chairman gave an update explaining that at the last meeting the draft was updated as requested by our Consultant. Peter Burrows had been tasked to rewrite part of those amendments to be then forwarded to the Consultant. The Consultant is away for two weeks but upon his return he will process the amendments. The draft is nearing completion. The Steering Group is looking to set up the local Statutory Consultation in November when every resident can make their comments known over an 8 week period.

Mr Welsh enquired if Cllr Skelton had a conflict of interest in directing the Neighbourhood Plan as well as being a local landowner. Cllr Skelton said he had attended the last meeting mainly as an observer only but had supplied a copy of a map giving details of local Rights of Way and their numbering. He had only been elected some 10 days ago. The Chairman said she had every confidence in the Parish Councillors in this respect. The Terms of Reference required any member to declare an interest.

## **9.0 FINANCE UPDATE:**

The clerk gave an updated bank reconciliation showing a balance of £3295.23. There had been no response from a previous clerk regarding a claim for overtime so the balance could increase. The clerk also informed the meeting of expected expenditure of an estimated £820. It was noted that the two recent elections had cost the Parish Council a total of approx. £2770. It was likely a similar cost would fall on the PC if there was a further election necessary next May. When asked by Cllr Stephens, Mr Welsh said he was unable to say if he would then be calling for another election.

The clerk indicated that in order to improve the financial situation of the Parish Council a larger than usual increase in the amount of the Precept would be necessary later in the financial year which would have an impact on council tax payments.

### **Agreed:**

- a) Grass cutting contractor to be put on hold at this time relying on residents to cut grass in front of their houses as now and others to be encouraged to do so as well. Cllr Skelton offered to continue to cut those areas of grass as now which included the roundabout. This could save the parish council some £420.
- b) Autella account should remain open for now for any future paid parish clerk which was a cheaper option than closing it and re-opening it later.
- c) Donation to the Parochial Church Council should continue.
- d) To consider ways in which the legacy of £5000 left by the late Mary Bean, which had been previously subsumed into the general funds, could be replenished with a view to using it for a specific local project.
- e) Funding from NALC Transparency Fund of £600 for a laptop should be ring fenced for possible future use.
- f) The finances should be considered at the next meeting so that the PC can decide how much to apply for in the precept which is expected to be paid to the PC next April.

Judy Ayto enquired how the Parish Council could be expected to move the village forward with Mr Welsh constantly asking questions at meetings. The Chairman said the PC would do their best and she felt this newly constituted council were determined to do just that. Several other residents present at the meeting challenged Mr. Welsh for his repeated interruptions with questions which took up so much time at meetings including this one.

**10.0 PLANNING APPLICATIONS:** The clerk reported on the one application since the last meeting which was for a Traveller Site on a triangle of land at Cold Harbour. The residents of Cold Harbour had held a public meeting. The clerk had offered advice on the criteria to be discussed taken from the SKDC own criteria laid down in the 2010 Local Plan and mirrored in the Emerging Local Plan. Cllr Stephens and the clerk had forwarded a response to the Planning Authority based upon the response from Cold Harbour. The response showed the location of this site to be totally unsuitable as it is incompatible with the SKDC's own published criteria. Nigel Percy from Cold Harbour said that in addition to this PC opposing the application it was also opposed by the Parish Councils of Oasby, Welby, Loundthorpe & Harrowby Without. SKDC Councillor, Peter Stephens also opposed it as did

Tim Radley. Mr Percy was concerned that the Harrowby Lane site, recently granted by the Planners, might lead to travellers from there migrating to any new site at Cold Harbour. He said the 14 adult residents of Cold Harbour with 6 children would be totally overwhelmed by the likely huge number of travellers living on the site at any one time. He added that part of the road side verge in that area was a Protected Verge.

**Action:** The clerk to inform Councillors when the hearing date is set so that Cllr Stephens can attend to voice objection for planning on behalf of the Council. Nigel Percy also intends to attend to voice objection.

#### **11.0 SKDC ISSUES:**

Cllr Stephens said he was keeping a watchful eye on the progress – or lack it – on the Southern Quadrant and would keep the PC informed.

#### **12.0 LCC ISSUES:**

It was noted that Cllr Bob Adams was unable to attend.

#### **13.0 THE WELL HEAD:**

Nigel Ord had emailed the clerk regarding the Well Head which had been donated to residents of Old Somerby many years ago. He suggested the Parish Council should consider registering it with the Land Registry as it is currently unregistered. Cllr Skelton had already agreed with the suggestion during the Neighbourhood Planning Meeting on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> September. All areas in white shown on the map in the possession of the clerk including the footpath leading from it to Grantham Road should be registered by the Parish Council. Cllr Skelton would maintain the fence on the other side.

**Action:** The clerk is to make enquiries as to legal costs and procedure and report back.

#### **14.0 ACCESS TO RIGHTS OF WAY:** (Cllr Skelton had declared a pecuniary interest).

Nigel Ord had emailed the clerk regarding access to two Rights of Way footpaths which run from Grantham Road roughly South West at either end of the village. The email asked if the Parish Council could consider the limited accessibility to the footpaths due to the styles present. The feeling of the letter suggested that the styles act as a deterrent to walkers and people wanting to walk from the Fox and Hounds Pub.

**Action:** Cllr Stephens to follow up with Cllr Skelton and report back with possible alternatives if relevant at the next meeting.

#### **15.0 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS:**

Simon Lowndes is still responsible for the upkeep of the local Defibrillator situated at the pub. He was thanked for his continued involvement. The clerk commented that the Red Cross had previously carried out a training session for parishioners and asked if this could happen again.

**Action:** Cllr Stephens to follow up with the Red Cross.

**16.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** This was fixed for Monday 26 November 2018 7.15pm at the pub with a Public Forum at 7pm.

