

# **Minutes of the Yardley Hastings Parish Council**

*Monday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022, at 7.30pm, the Memorial Hall*

Present: Ms D. Smith (*Chairman*), and Messrs A. Willis, D. Winter, C. Pickering, J. Quilter, A. Rowton, and R. Houghton.

Clerk: Mr G. Gill                      Public: None

Councillors: Councillor Fiona Cole

## **198./21 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Mr M. Cooke, who was needing to self-isolate. These were approved.

## **199./21 Public Participation**

None.

## **200./21 WNC Councillors' Reports**

Councillor Cole reported that a major incident had recently been declared in the county by health, public and emergency service leaders, owing on the one hand to a large number of Covid patients requiring treatment and/or care, and on the other hand to a significant number of staff having to self-isolate. She observed that the recent closure of the bridge over the River Nene at Billing Causeway was due to an accident having caused significant damage to its structure. She was assured that Highways were aware of how important this bridge was to the nearby communities. They were trying to re-open it to traffic as soon as possible, but a permanent repair could take up to six months. The WNC's Budget Consultation had now been published, and various other consultations were also in progress (*see item 211 below*). The WNC's Cabinet had agreed to invest £20m to enable the immediate construction of Northampton's long anticipated "North-West Relief Road". The funding would come from borrowing, since a bid to the Government's "levelling Up Fund" had been unsuccessful. Councillor Cole noted that the Parish Council was being asked to suggest a name for the new estate road (*item 210(b) below*) and that she would also have to give her agreement to the names suggested. The Clerk observed that now that Gigaclear's installation had "gone live" the final stage of their operations in the village would be the remaining reinstatement works. Gigaclear had given an assurance that everything disrupted by their works would be reinstated in accordance with the "Specification for the Reinstatement of Openings in the Highway" – a 260-page government document which had become statutory guidance in May 2021. However he had not yet read this document and it was unclear to what extent Gigaclear would be prepared to reinstate the "golden gravel" on the pavements. He observed that other villages in the WNC District would also be having to negotiate with Gigaclear on this point, and that a united front was desirable in order to achieve the best possible result (*and see item 211(a) below*). (*Councillor Cole then left the meeting*)

## **201./21 Members' Declarations of Interest for items on the Agenda**

None.

## **202./21 Approval of Minutes of last Parish Council meeting held 13<sup>th</sup> December**

The Minutes were approved on the proposal of Mr J. Quilter, seconded by Mr C. Pickering and signed by the Chairman.

### **203./21 Matters arising from Minutes**

(Item 185./21(b)) The Clerk reported that he had personally delivered the cheque for £405 to the offices of J. Garrard and Allen on 14<sup>th</sup> December, the day after the meeting, but that it was not showing on the latest bank statement, dated 5<sup>th</sup> January. The Chairman reported that she had not as yet received any reply to the covering email which she had sent them. Hopefully the matter was now closed.

(Item 190./21) Mr J. Quilter reported that the saplings which he had been hoping to acquire from “a local source” were unfortunately no longer available. He had however ascertained that the Woodland Trust were offering saplings for sale at a cost of £35.00 for a pack of ten. It was agreed that he could initially order one pack of ten, for planting, as previously agreed, alongside the permissive footpath leading west from the end of Church Lane. **Action: Mr J. Quilter**

### **204./21 Report of RGS Arboricultural Consultants re: trees in the Recreation Ground**

Councillors noted the contents of a report received from RGS Arboricultural Consultants relating to the row of trees alongside Bedford Road West. The report did not recommend any immediate action other than the removal of significant deadwood and the severing of ivy. The Clerk observed that this report had enabled him to remove any provision for tree surgery from the proposed budget for 2022/23.

### **205./21 Finance**

(a) Approval of funding for annual Neighbourhood Watch Meeting

A sum of £15 was agreed (for hall hire).

(b) Approval of funding for Annual Playground Inspection

It was agreed to instruct The Play Inspection Company, who had carried out the inspection in August 2020. **Action: Clerk**

(c) Approval of Quarterly Financial Statement (Oct /Dec)

The Clerk circulated copies of the third quarter financial statement, observing that he had only received the latest bank statement earlier in the day. He would now give the papers to Mr M. Cooke (*not present*) for him to conduct the usual review and bring a report to the next meeting.

(d) Awarding of the Grass-Cutting Contract (Recreation Ground)

The Clerk circulated the four tenders which he had received. It was agreed to award the contract to Brown and Barden, who were offering a fee of £90.00 per cut. **Action: Clerk**

(e) Budget for the financial year 2022/23, to include the setting of the precept

The Clerk presented a revised version of the draft budget, and drew attention to the various revisions which he had made since the previous meeting. He had obtained a quote from Forde & McHugh for the cost of a structural inspection of the Council's 46 street lights, and the figure quoted was £90 per light. This was more than four times what Aylesbury Mains had charged both in 2010 and in 2016. In the absence of any other quotes he was proposing that the budgeted figure for street lighting in 2022/23 should be set at £4,000, which would allow £2,500 to be spent on an inspection and any recommended repairs. If no cheaper quotes could be sourced from elsewhere the cost might have to be spread over two years. Bearing in mind the consensus reached at the previous meeting he was proposing that the Precept requirement should be set at £17,817. This would result in a 10% increase in the Parish Council element of the Council Tax (@ £56.01 on a Band D property, up from £50.41). On the figures proposed the projected deficit for the year 2022/23 would be £546.00, resulting in a General Reserve at 31st March 2023 of c.

£17,850.00, which amount would be within the prescribed limits. If this figure seemed excessive it had to be borne in mind that in a couple of years' time the village would be faced with the prospect of funding the construction of a sports pavilion on the proposed new sports field behind The Leys. The £10,000 "windfall" payment which the Council had received in 2017, and which had originally been earmarked as a Special Reserve for that project, had instead now been spent on the Recreation Ground project. After a short discussion it was unanimously agreed on the proposal of Mr C. Pickering, seconded by Mr J. Quilter, that the proposed budget be adopted and that the Precept should be set at £17,817.00 (*copy agreed budget attached*). **Action: Clerk.**

(f) Report of payments made by Standing Order and Direct Debit since the previous meeting

SSE 19/12/21	Street Lighting – November (By Direct Debit)	NET: £103.53 VAT: £5.17	<b>108.70</b>
Brian Osborne 04/01/22	Handyman 01/12/21 – 31/12/21 (By Standing Order)		<b>349.00</b>

(g) Payment by cheque of accounts received

G. Gill	Clerk's remuneration – December		<b>306.00</b>
G. Gill	Clerks' office expenses		<b>69.93</b>
Pete Stanley	Hedge cutting – Recreation Ground	NET: £100.00 VAT: £20.00	<b>120.00*</b>

\*Not to be paid until receipt of invoice

The Clerk passed round an envelope containing the receipts for his office expenses. These were approved. Mr C. Pickering proposed, Mr J. Quilter seconded, and it was agreed that the above accounts be paid. **Action: Clerk**

## **206./21 Planning Applications**

(a) WNS/2021/2140/FUL - Construction of footpath in the grounds of The Rose & Crown Public House, Northampton Road

It was agreed that the Council had no objection to the proposed development. **Action: Clerk**

## **207./21 Village Sewerage System**

The Clerk reported that following the previous meeting he had been made aware that Anglian Water would shortly be employing some contractors to lay a new surface on the private roadway leading to the sewage works from Castle Ashby Road. This had happened over the course of two days immediately before Christmas, and Mark Henderson had sent one of his colleagues to meet up with the contractors on site. It was to be hoped that the Compton Estate, as the owners of the soil of the private roadway, would continue to engage with Anglian Water with regard to its ongoing maintenance. Mr A. Willis reported that the frequency of the tanker visits appeared to have reduced in recent days. Nevertheless the fact that any tankers at all were still having to visit the site on a regular basis was very unsatisfactory in view of the continuing disturbance to nearby residents. The Clerk said that now that the new surface had been laid on the roadway, and the Compton Estate had become actively involved, he would now fulfil his promise made at the previous meeting to write to Anglian Water on behalf of the Council with a view to opening up a proper line of communication and finding out what their long-term plans were. Councillors observed that he should take the opportunity of reminding Anglian Water about the imminent construction of the twenty new houses in Northampton Road. **Action: Clerk**

It was noted that notwithstanding the current issues with the operation of the sewage treatment works there had not been any recent sewage overflows in the High Street.

### **208./21 Engagement with Northants CALC Asset Mapping Project (AMP)**

The Clerk reported that Northants CALC had been awarded a grant of £281,625 from the Government's UK Community Renewal Fund (CRF) and that part of the money was intended to be used to map important community assets and services across the county. The aim was to undertake local research on the assets (land and property), services, and any assets of community value currently owned and provided by the West and North Northamptonshire Councils, with a view to possible future devolution to Parish Councils. Northants CALC were now asking that every Parish Council in the County should form an AMP working group of at least three individuals. It was agreed to appoint a working group consisting of the Clerk, Mr D. Winter and Mr C. Pickering.

### **209./21 Recreation Ground**

#### **(a) Signage**

It was agreed to defer discussion on this item to the next meeting.

#### **(b) Molehills in the junior play area**

It was agreed that there was no appropriate action available to alleviate the issue.

#### **(c) Miscellaneous**

It was noted that the hedge against Bedford Road West had now been cut down to a more appropriate level. There were however a few small sections which had been missed by the machine, in particular between the bus shelter and the adjacent street light column. Mr J. Quilter said he would attend to this, and also the severing of the ivy recommended by RGS's report (*see item 204 above*). It was noted that Brian Osborne's latest report was clear, apart from an observation that the dog fouling signs were deteriorating and ideally needed to be replaced. Action Play & Leisure had indicated that they were planning to instal the proposed "Timber Kick Wall towards the end of February.

### **210./21 The Leys Development**

#### **(a) Update on progress**

It was noted that the proposed "Presentation Event" would be held on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> February and that this date had been given publicity in the December edition of the Village Newsletter. The Clerk said he would publicise the event on the Council's website.

The Clerk reported that he had recently had an exchange of correspondence with Paul Johnson of Francis Jackson Homes. Back in July 2021 the Council had been sent a plan showing the number and location of the street lights which Francis Jackson Homes were proposing to install on the new estate road. At that time the Council had decided that it had no objection to the proposed number and location of the street lights, and had agreed that the design of the columns and lights themselves should be in line with the majority of the Council's existing street lights. However this decision had not been communicated to Francis Jackson Homes at the time. Paul Johnson had now forwarded a revised plan which contained the following specification: "5m high galvanised tubular steel column with side entry Philips FGS224 PL -L36W lantern and 35/18 lux photocell". It was agreed that this revised plan, with its revised specification of the column and lantern design, should now be formally approved. The Clerk was authorised to confirm this approval to the county's highway adoptions team, as well as confirming that the Parish Council would maintain the lighting after the estate road was formally adopted. **Action: Clerk**

#### **(b) Naming of the estate road**

Councillors noted an email from the WNC's Regulatory Services division dated 21<sup>st</sup> December requesting the Parish Council to provide its suggested name for the new estate road by 11<sup>th</sup> January. The suggestion would need to be in accordance with the guidance notes supplied, and

would need to have the agreement of the WNC Councillors for the Hackleton and Grange Park division. It was agreed that the Council were not yet in a position to agree any suggestions, and that further research would need to be done, e.g.: on historical field names in the vicinity or any other local historical features, in the hope that this would provide some inspiration. The Clerk was instructed to ask for an extension. **Action: Clerk**

### **211./21 Correspondence**

- (a) Letter from Mr Garth Halestrap re: reinstatement of footpaths following the recent fibre optic installation

It was noted that Mr Halestrap was keen that Gigaclear should complete their promised reinstatement by restoring the “golden gravel” on the village’s pavements, and that the Clerk had already replied to the effect that although the Parish Council were in agreement with his viewpoint, it was obvious that the original laying of the “golden gravel” had been very poorly done in certain areas. Therefore it might not be reasonable to expect Gigaclear to reinstate these areas to a higher standard than had originally been achieved. (*see also item 200 above*).

- (b) Invitation from the NNC to respond to their consultation on their draft “Statement of Community Involvement”

It was noted that this was a “neighbouring authority” consultation. It was agreed that there was no need for the Council to respond as a body.

- (c) Invitation from the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to respond to his 2022/23 budget consultation

The Chairman observed that the “Survey Monkey” questionnaire was tailored to be completed by individual Council Tax payers. It was agreed that the Council would not respond to it as a body.

- (d) Invitation from the Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue service to respond to their survey on their proposed Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2022 – 2025.

It was agreed that the Council would not respond to this as a body.

### **212./21 Emergency Plan – Report from the working party**

The Chairman reported that the visit from the independent civil engineer was still awaited. (*see items 128./20 and 154./20*). She circulated copies of a draft enquiry form which she was proposing should be delivered to every house in the village alongside the next edition of the Village Newsletter. Mr J. Quilter said he would review it to ensure that it was GDPR compliant. Subject to this proviso the form was agreed. **Action: Mr J. Quilter**

### **213./21 Highways - Update on outstanding matters**

Mr R. Houghton observed that the remaining “arisings” from the tree which had fallen over in Chase Park Road on 31<sup>st</sup> October had still not been cleared away by Highways. The Clerk observed that this would hopefully eventually be attended to in conjunction with the reinstatement of the broken pedestrian barrier (Ref: Reports 3107246 and 3130474).

It was noted that water was again seeping from the verge on the western side of the access road to the former forestry commission houses, although not to the same extent as previously. This was possibly as a consequence of some additional trenching works by Gigaclear in the vicinity.

### **214./21 Police and Neighbourhood Watch**

Mr R. Houghton reported that the “Beat Bus” had visited the village for an hour on the afternoon of 5<sup>th</sup> January. Relatively short advance notice had been given, but the visit had nevertheless been

publicised on the Parish Council's website and the "Love Yardley" Facebook Page. He had attended a SNAST meeting in the run-up to Christmas. There had not been any reported crime in the village since the previous meeting.

**215./21      Pocket Park and Millennium Triangle**

Nothing to report.

**216./21      Street Lighting**

Nothing to report (*but see item 205./21(e) above*).

**217./21      Councillors' Reports and Concerns**

The Chairman reported that an open meeting would be held in the Memorial Hall on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> January which would consider some initial suggestions for events to be held later in the year to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. An appropriate item would need to be included on the Agenda for the Council's February meeting to take the matter forward.

Mr D. Winter reported that there was a smell of gas in the section of Northampton Road between "The Views" and "Avenue Villa". He observed that this was an ongoing problem, that "No Smoking" signs had been placed in the verge some two years previously, and that they had remained in situ ever since. Other Councillors confirmed that they had also recently noticed a smell of gas in this area. Mr Winter said he had attempted to report the issue, but that reporting it in an appropriate manner was difficult since the expectation was that gas leaks should be reported by phone, quoting the postal address of the property affected. The Clerk said he would try to follow up Mr Winter's report by raising the issue with British Gas as a longer-term problem rather than an immediate emergency. **Action: Clerk**

**218./21      Future Meeting Dates**

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> February and Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March