

North Rigton Parish Council

Meeting held on 6 January 2016 at 7.30 at the Village School

Present: Mary Hopkins (Chairman) Barbara Massey (Vice-Chairman), Amanda Martyn, Jo Scott, Tim Bennett, John Fort (County Councillor) and Mike Richards (Clerk).

- 1. Apologies for absence** – Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Christine Ryder (Borough Councillor).

- 2. Agenda order variation and Declaration of Interests.**

None.

- 3. Approval and signing of minutes**, matters arising.

The minutes of the last meeting held on 4 November were agreed as a true record and were signed by the Chairman. The Chairman noted that internet links had been included, referring to a consultation exercise being carried out by NYCC and she thought this to be good practice which should be maintained, as it provided all readers with the ready opportunity to take part in such consultations and any other internet based project.

Reports on matters arising.

- “Speedwatch” Councillor Fort had provided the contact point to the clerk for this matter to be taken forward. He will contact the individual at County Hall with a view to making the necessary arrangements for the “Speedwatch” to be conducted in Spring;
- Dog fouling – the clerk has written to the owners of the dog in question and a response is awaited. Should a satisfactory response not be received the Clerk will contact HBC, bringing the matter formally to the attention of officers.
NB shortly after this meeting, a reply was received from the owners of the dog, giving the undertaking that the dog would be prevented from roaming free and would no longer, consequently, be responsible for any fouling in the churchyard. This response will be communicated to the church officers.
- Crime statistics – the clerk circulated the latest crime statistics, received from PC Marie Scott. Councillors noted several incidents occurring in the Parish. Further details will be sought from PC Scott.

4. Administration

4.1 Council elections. The clerk brought councillors’ attention to documents he had just received, notifying the Parish Council of the forthcoming election on 5 May 2016. All six Council seats are due for re-election and all councillors present indicated their intention to stand.

4.2 Councillor Andrew Batcup. The clerk read out a letter from Councillor Batcup, tendering his resignation from the Parish Council, as he had now moved from North Rigton and was resident in Harrogate. On behalf of the Parish Council, the Chairman formally recorded thanks to Andrew for his service, with particular regard to his hard work and effort in connection with the formulation of the Parish Plan. Councillors wished Andrew and his wife well for the future. Councillors then discussed prospective candidates for this vacancy. The Chairman asked councillors to encourage others to stand in the May elections and to put their name forward.

5. Finance

5.1 Approval of expenditure. Items for approval were:

- £1899.38 for fencing of the Village Garden – Councillors approved.

5.2 Calculation of Precept for 2016-2017 – The Clerk provided a detailed analysis of income and expenditure, highlighting the amounts raised through fundraising events (BBQ and PitG) and the estimated cost of some £2000 of a full year of additional grass cutting. Although a healthy balance was being maintained for contingencies, the proposals for improvements to the Village Garden and possible costs associated with the proposed Community Room, would incur substantial expenditure. Accordingly, Councillors agreed to maintain the precept at the previous level of £6800. This will be reviewed again for next year's calculation when all estimated additional costs are confirmed.

6. Parish Plan

6.1. Community Room – no further progress to report, but the Chairman stressed that a clear, firm protocol would need to be established, regarding the Parish Council's involvement with the project, before any potential for financial input could be considered.

6.2. Next steps – as discussed previously, a revision or update of the Plan will be considered next year.

7. Planning

7.1 The clerk circulated copies of planning permissions received since the last meeting for:

- Rigg Farm
- Alder Villas – tree felling/lopping;
- Rigton Close

- Beck Close

Parish Council's responses to the above applications had been "No objection". Planning Department decisions awaited.

7.2 The Clerk informed Councillors that he had received no further update on the appeal being submitted regarding the application to build 5 houses, situated off Rigton Hill. The Chairman informed councillors that she had been made aware of a communication from HBC to landowners encouraging applications for development applications. Christine Ryder had forwarded the email relating to this communication and the clerk will copy it to all councillors, for information.

7.3 The clerk had contacted Rebecca Burnett (HBC councillor) regarding her availability for a meeting to discuss HBC's Local Plan and its potential impact on North Rigton. Rebecca had responded, indicating her preference for an evening meeting. Accordingly, it was agreed to invite Rebecca to attend a meeting prior to the next meeting of the Parish Council on 2 March. The Clerk will make the necessary arrangements.

8. Highways, Footpaths, Verges.

8.1 Flooding. The Chairman described the flooding problems which had occurred throughout the Parish. The main cause seemed to be excess water flowing from fields due to drainage problems, although it is difficult to see how these problems can be resolved. The Chairman is to meet with HBC's Flood Officer to discuss the whole situation, identify specific issues and consider what, if any, corrective action may be taken. It was also suggested that the views of the Flood Officer should be sought over any possible negative effects in this context, should the application for the 5 houses off Rigton Hill be approved following the appeal to the Planning Inspector. The clerk informed councillors that he had been made aware of the availability of a community grant of £500, for flood damage to homes. Further information is available from Customer Services at Harrogate Borough Council. John Fort then suggested that the Parish Council could consider the possibility of financial assistance for flood defences in the Parish.

8.2. Hall Green Lane – the Chairman brought councillors attention to the installation of an additional large warning sign on the hill down towards the A658 – another consequence of the Parish Council's ongoing dialogue with NYCC Highways!

8.3. Footpaths – councillors commented on the unsatisfactory nature of the footpath alongside the A658, running from Huby to Church Hill and beyond. The footpath is becoming overgrown with vegetation even though it is well used. The same applies to the footpath up from the A658 into the village. The clerk will contact NYCC Highways requesting better maintenance of these footpaths..

9. Village Garden, Amenities and Activities

9.1 Garden developments – The Chairman reported that the new fencing had now been installed and was a significant improvement. She then circulated a handout showing the various options for the developments, previously discussed. Councillors approved the first items of expenditure which were:

- £145.06 for water supply application
- £1899.39 for fencing (already approved)
- £79.50 for removal of dead holly trees
- £750.00 estimate for fencing installation, ground works and fencing repairs.

£69.41 for installing the water supply was also approved. Councillors considered the estimates for electricity supply which were, respectively £5040.00 for up to the boundary of the Garden, or £10,800 for supply up to the proposed store. Both estimates were considered excessive and non-viable. The Chairman agreed to follow up an alternative option which would be the purchase of a mobile generator.

Estimates obtained for the other areas of expenditure were:-

- Removal of soil heap - £2,500
- Building a retaining wall - £1,500
- Building a wall to the front - £2,000
- Cost of Shelter/Store - £5,500

The above comes to a total cost of some £11,500, against which a Lottery grant of up to £10,000 should be available. Councillors felt that £2,500 for removal of the soil heap was excessive and the Chairman agreed to contact another individual who may be prepared to carry out the task at a much lower cost.

Councillor Fort informed councillors that he had access to a Locality budget and he was prepared to allocate a grant of £500 towards the purchase of a mobile generator – he also recommended that a “silent cabinet” to enclose the generator, also be purchased. Councillors welcomed this offer.

9.2 Party in the Garden/BBQ – the Chairman reported back on the meeting to make the necessary arrangements for these events. The dates had been arranged for the 11/12 June 2016 and she was pleased to confirm that plenty of volunteers had now made themselves available. There will need to be one more meeting in March/April to finalise arrangements.

9.3 Carol singing – Councillor Bennett reported on the carol singing held on 20th December. It had been even more successful this year with more than 50 villagers being involved. Councillors discussed possible developments for future occasions, such as the use of the village garden and the provision of hot food, such as sausages or burgers.

10 Any other business

10.1 External Audit. The Clerk informed councillors that, following the demise of the

Audit Commission, (the body. which appointed external auditors) Parish Councils now had the option of either appointing their own external auditor, or remaining with the Sector Led Body (SLB) audit regime and have auditors appointed in the same way as before, but by the new body, Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments Ltd. Parish Councils are automatically opted in to this scheme and no action is required therefore if councillors resolve that this is the best option. He recommended to councillors that, in his opinion, this was the best option as a) appointing a local audit firm would probably cost more and b) it would be better to be part of a nationally recognised scheme with auditors already familiar with the parish sector. Councillors accepted this recommendation and agreed to remain opted in to the new arrangements.

11. Dates of future meetings

Wednesday 2 March 2016, at the village school, commencing at 7.30pm.

The May meeting will be held on 11 May, to include the Annual Parish meeting, commencing at 7.00pm, prior to the Parish Council meeting, starting at 8.00pm

Signed

(Chairman)

Date