

LONGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Longham Parish Council held virtually at 7.30pm on Monday 16th November 2020.

Present: Cllr Sue Douglas (Chair)
Cllr Phil Collins (Vice Chair)
Cllr Donna McLeod
Cllr Roddy McLeod
Cllr Paul O'Brien

District Cllr Roger Atterwill
District Cllr Richard Duffield
County Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris
Sheryl Irving (Clerk)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies received from Cllr Dye were approved.

2. To receive any declarations of interest.

Both Cllr's McLeod declared an interest in item 6c).

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21st September 2020.

Cllr Douglas proposed that the minutes be accepted as a true record of the meeting. This was seconded by Cllr Donna McLeod and agreed by Council. The Chairman will sign the minutes in due course.

4. Meeting open for public participation.

There were no members of the public present.

5. To receive County and District Councillors reports.

C/Cllr Kiddle-Morris provided a written report and this is attached. In addition, he updated Council on the following matters:

- Item 7a – the speed limit request remains on hold as the Highways Team continues to be very much reduced.
- Item 7a – the clearance works should have been completed. The Chairman queried what could be done about the tree near to the junction which obstructed visibility and both C/Cllr Kiddle-Morris and Cllr Roddy McLeod will investigate.
- Item 7b – the monies allocated for a circular walk around the Creaking Gate plantation, which was not put in place, had reverted to local footpath improvements in Longham, Wendling and Beeston with Bittering parishes. NCC had consulted on the works with the local parishes, and the projects were then completed.

D/Cllr Atterwill reported that the response to the Planning White Paper, which objected to much of the paper, had been agreed across the board at Breckland. A decision from Government is now awaited.

Extra money is available for local businesses in the current lockdown, with additional help being provided to independent businesses, many of which are struggling at present.

D/Cllr Duffield reiterated the all-party support for the Breckland response to the Planning White Paper which, if implemented, would take decision-making away from local areas.

6. To discuss planning issues.

a) Applications for consideration.

There were no applications to consider.

b) Decisions to note.

There were no decisions to note.

c) To note the following application: Bittering Quarry (Plant site), Reed Lane, Bittering) – continued use of surfacing office and depot until 31st December 2031 without compliance with condition 1 of permission ref: C/3/2018/3007.

Council noted the above mentioned application which related to the offices currently on site, extending the time they are permitted to be there until 2031.

7. To discuss Highway issues.

a) To receive updates on matters previously reported.

- Speed Limit request – Litcham Road – see item 5 above.
- Visibility at junction of Wending Road & Honeypot Lane – see item 5 above.

b) To receive an update from the County Councillor regarding possible footpath monies available from County Council.

See item 5 above.

c) To consider any new highway issues.

There were no new highway issues raised.

8. To discuss any issues relating to the Playing Field.

a) To receive an update in respect of the football pitch resurfacing.

The Chairman reported that the initial works had commenced but the new earth and seeding works would not take place until the spring.

b) To consider any actions arising from the play area inspection report (if received).

Council noted the inspection had taken place the previous week and the report is awaited.

c) To consider any new issues.

There were no new issues raised.

9. To discuss issues relating to the Clay Pits (a county wildlife site).

a) To receive an update regarding the pull-in.

Council noted that the Highways Team had relocated the pull-in to the opposite side of the road, which was highways land, due to the steep slope at the Clay Pit. Council agreed this would be beneficial as there is a high volume of traffic using the road.

b) To consider an offer of interest of purchase of the Clay Pits.

The Chairman stated that she would not like to see the site sold as it was an asset to the village and, once access was reinstated, works to clear the site to make walkways and install signage could be carried out. The local conservation group were on standby to help and there were people in the village who were also keen to assist.

Consideration was also given to renting the plot but it was agreed this would not be advantageous for the village. Council were in agreement that they did not wish to sell the plot.

Cllr O'Brien volunteered to assist Cllr Douglas in taking the renovation project forward, which was gratefully received.

c) To consider any new issues.

There were no new issues raised.

10. To discuss any issues regarding the Village Hall.

The Village Hall is currently shut due to the Covid lockdown and there was nothing to report.

11. To receive an update regarding the installation of a defibrillator.

The Chairman had submitted a grant application to Breckland for match funding and a decision is awaited.

12. Finance and Governance

a) To receive a financial report for the year ending 31st March 2021.

The financial report was noted and there were no questions raised.

b) To appoint an internal auditor for the year ending 31st March 2021.

Cllr Douglas proposed that Mr Bergin be appointed as internal auditor for the year ending 31st March 2021, this was seconded by Cllr O'Brien and agreed by Council.

c) To consider the budget and set the precept for the year ending 31st March 2022.

Cllr O'Brien queried how much a Council was advised to hold as a general reserve and was informed that the current amount was appropriate, being approximately one year's expenditure. Council are also able to hold as much as required in funds allocated to individual projects.

Cllr Douglas proposed that the precept remain at its current rate of £6,000 for the year ending 31st March 2022, this was seconded by Cllr Collins and agreed by Council.

d) To authorise financial payments as set out below:

Prior to the payments being authorised, Cllr O'Brien reported how useful his recent training course for new councillors had been and he now felt much better informed in respect of Council matters.

Cllr Douglas proposed approval of the payments listed below, this was seconded by Cllr Donna McLeod and agreed by Council.

• Clerk – Salary/Allowance(Oct/Nov) & Arrears	£278.62
• HMRC	£13.20
• SLCC Membership (Brisley PC)	£19.75
• Norfolk PTS (Training for New Cllr)	£50.00

13. Correspondence for circulation

- Boundary Commission Review – C/Cllr Kiddle-Morris reported that any changes will not be implemented until the next election, which was due to take place in 2025. No changes were proposed for Longham.
- Breckland Planning White Paper Response – this had been dealt with at item 5.

- NCC Budget Consultation – Council agreed to submit a response to the consultation, objecting to the reduction in grass verge cutting from two cuts per year to just one, on the grounds of highway safety.

14. To receive any new items for the next agenda.

There were no new items received for the next agenda.

15. To note the next meeting of the parish council will be held on Monday 18th January 2021 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall, subject to any Covid-19 restrictions.

Council noted the date of the next meeting and the meeting closed at 8.12pm.

Signed:

Date:

County Councillor for Necton and Launditch Division
Report November 2020

Covid 19: In advance of any serious second wave please remember to contact those people who needed support during the last lockdown to reassure them of support in the future if required.

Flu: Flu causes the death of around 15,000 people in the UK each year. The most vulnerable group are those people over 65, the same group that are at most risk from Covid 19. There has been an increase in the take up of the flu vaccine this year, but the message must be to all those who are at most risk i.e. those with underlying respiratory conditions plus those over 65 to get a flu jab.

Budget: There is still considerable uncertainty in what government funding will be available for financial year 21/22. Additionally, the government has not stated whether the allowed percentage increase in the general precept will remain at 2% or be amended. There is also uncertainty as to whether a rise is permissible in the adult social care precept. Despite this uncertainty NCC are obliged to consult on its budget proposals for 20/21 making suppositions as to governments intentions. The consultation runs until the 14th December, details can be found on the NCC website. The Council will set its council tax at its February 2021 meeting.

Grass Cutting: As part of the budget consultation (above) it is proposed to reduce grass verge cutting on "C" and "U" roads from 2 cuts per year to one. Also, it is proposed to reduce urban cuts from 5 to 4 per year.

Boundary Review: The second Boundary commission consultation on proposed changes to the Councils Division boundaries closes on the 23rd November. A change from the initial consultation is that Brisley is added to the new Division "Launditch". Due to a delay in the process due to Covid any changes will not take place until the 2025 Norfolk Council elections.

Parish Partnership: A reminder that bids for 50% funding for small highway improvements under the Parish Partnership scheme need to be submitted by the middle of December. If you have any queries please contact me in the first instance.

County Farms: The County Council is committed to maintaining the County Farm Estate in excess of 16,000 acres. The tenanted farms which vary in size provide a thriving and progressive estate which supports individual businesses and enables economic growth into the county's agricultural sector and indirectly into numerous related businesses. Any capital receipt from the sale of redundant buildings and land are reinvested in the estate. The County Farm estate was recently increased through the purchase of 163 acres.

Grants: Pubs and restaurants providing a takeaway service will not be eligible for a government grant, but I understand that those that do close completely may be eligible for a Breckland grant. More information to follow in due course.

Mark Kiddle-Morris.
Member for Necton and Launditch.
Norfolk County Council.