

MINUTES of the MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

held on Monday 5th February 2024 at 7pm in the Miner's Institute, Barwick in Elmet.

PRESENT:

Councillor	Stella Walsh (Chair)		
Councillors	Debbie Gilmore	Kinga Ragg	Paul Walsh
	John Hayton		

In attendance: Five residents, Ward Cllr. Robinson and the Clerk.

1 APOLOGIES. Cllrs. Dales, Remmer and Williamson.

2 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were five members of the public in attendance who raised the following points;

- A resident raised concerns about the beech trees on Parish Council (PC) land the branches of which overhung her property. The Clerk had written to the resident as agreed at the December 2023 meeting of Finance and General Purposes (F&GP) Committee (see section 6e, page 102). The resident was unhappy with the reply citing the recommendations of the Leeds City Council (LCC) tree officer and the fact that the PC paid for works to the tree in 2019. She felt that work done solely on the branches overhanging her drive would unbalance the tree and asked if the PC had a rolling programme of works. The Chair agreed to review this and this would be an agenda item for the next F&GP Committee meeting.
- A resident commented on agenda item 7.12 suggesting that the PC had turned down an offer of playground equipment for Scholes. The Chair advised that the equipment in question had been offered by Ward Councillors to Scholes (Elmete) Primary School without reference to the PC & that concerns had been expressed to Ward Councillors about lack of liaison with the PC.
- Another resident asked for updates on the consultation done a year previously with Scholes residents regarding playground equipment for older children. The Chair advised that on 31st January 2024, she had met with Ward Cllrs. and members of the LCC Parks Department to consider proposals and that this would be an agenda item in due course.
- The resident had had a written reply to his questions raised during the Public Participation at a previous PC meeting which he felt told him what he already knew. He felt that an 8% increase in precept was not appropriate when the Consumer Price Index was 4% and felt that all the increase was being paid for by precept payers. Work was being done on a 3-year budget plan.
- Two representatives of the Barwick and Scholes football team reported that the goal posts were up. The contractor doing the work expressed concerns about effective drainage. Mount Saint Mary's football club (having padlocked their goals together) had now removed the padlocks allowing Barwick and Scholes football team to use the Barwick pitch the previous day. They had marked the pitch. The club were still awaiting a league referee to inspect the Scholes pitch. There had been an approach from an under-fourteen's girls' team and they asked where this club were from (Garforth).
- Ward Cllr. Robinson reported that following communication with Cllr. Remmer, he was looking at the effect of the East Leeds Orbital Road on the Parish and traffic counts and measures of light pollution were in hand for both Scholes and Barwick in Elmet.
- Ward Cllr. Robinson reported that work had begun on the East Leeds Extension (ELE) and that there had been reports of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) going through Scholes and over the former railway bridge. The contractor had been made aware but wanted evidence that the HGVs were associated with their building work.
- Ward Cllr. Robinson also reported on road crossings in Barwick in Elmet and had asked officers to look into this as part of the annual crossing review, however finding a suitable location for a crossing point was proving challenging due to short sightlines and parked vehicles. There would be an article in the newsletter.

3 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST.

None.

4 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING.

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the meeting of the PC, 7/2023, held on 4th December 2023 (763-766) held on 15th January 2024 having been circulated, be approved and that the Chair be authorised to sign.

Regarding the minutes of extra-ordinary meeting held on 15th January 2024 (767), it was noted that Cllr. Gilmore arrived after the completion of the main agenda item and as such, was not present. It was **resolved** that subject to this correction, the minutes, 8/2023, be approved and that the Chair be authorised to sign.

5 CORRESPONDENCE

The list of correspondence items 3279-3291 was presented to the PC and the Clerk reported on each item and the PC response where appropriate. Matters of concern were;

- A freedom of Information request for recordings of all Parish Council meetings from May 2023.
- Verge creep.
- New legislation clarifying the position for Parish Councils supporting churches.
- The constant flow of water down Long Lane.
- Proposals by Gigaclear to dig up sections of pavement for broadband improvements (this had been put on hold).
- Missed bin collections on Schoolgate (smaller vehicles for collection were being considered).
- Hedgehog highways.
- Various highways issues such as white lines not being reinstated after resurfacing works on Elmet Road, a blind spot at the Richmondfield Avenue/Long Lane exit and road crossings for Main Street, Barwick (see Public Participation above).
- Garforth Neighbourhood Plan
- A muddy access to the public right of way near Scholes Cricket Club Pavilion.

These had been all responded to and forwarded elsewhere as necessary.

6 ACTION TRACKER

The Action Tracker had been circulated to all.

- a. The issue of Christmas lights in the tree at Green Court still being switched on would now be considered as completed and proposals for a storage container for the Pavilion would also be considered completed as the need for this was no longer there (following a major clear out of the Pavilion changing rooms).
- b. The Pavilion cleaner had used her key fob on three occasions since the December 2023 meeting.
- c. The Clerk had been investigating sharing venue booking software with the two Village Halls and had spoken to the developer of the PC website who suggested alternative software which would be cheaper and better (including one with a one-off payment).
- d. Bench. The flagstones for the bench on Belle Vue Avenue had been made level. An invoice was awaited.

Some of the items on the Action Tracker were agenda items in their own right (see 7.1 and 7.12)

7 OTHER ITEMS

7.1 Barwick and Scholes football club.

- It was noted that Barwick and Scholes football club had signed a twenty-four-month agreement to use the pitch and changing rooms at Scholes, the goal posts were now up and Legionnaires checks had been carried out.

- The Clerk had written to the club as agreed at the January F&GP Committee meeting (item 7, page 106). The club had replied querying the charging of the full contract amount for the September to December 2023 period as they had not had use of changing rooms and had paid for grass seeding at Scholes. It was accepted that the PC was in breach of contract regarding changing rooms and it was **resolved** that no fees be payable for the above period, all in favour.

7.2 Request from a girls' under fourteen's football team to use Scholes pitch.

An approach from a representative of a girls under fourteen's football team to use Scholes pitch was considered. It was agreed to defer this until more information could be gathered and it was suggested that a meeting should be set up. Any agreement involving sharing a pitch would need to be robust enough to ensure a harmonious relationship between the two clubs. There was a reminder of the bi-monthly Playing Fields Committee which allowed representatives of different clubs to meet.

7.3 Review of the rent charged to Mount Saint Mary's Football Club.

It was noted that Mount Saint Mary's (MSM) were on a licence running from 1st January 2021 to 31st December 2030 and that the licence fee could now be reviewed due to a clause allowing the fee to be reviewed every three years. The licence gave them exclusive access to the changing rooms but not the pitch. More information was needed, in particular a comparison with Scholes. Detailed costs would be needed, and the club would be asked to provide a set of audited accounts. MSM had invested heavily in the facilities since they arrived, the changing rooms had been in a poor state of repair and they had refurbished this and invested in the cess pool. This item would be deferred and the club asked to provide more information.

7.4 Grant application to the Urban Tree Challenge Fund.

It was **resolved** to make a grant application to the Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCf), all in favour. The minimum amount was £10,000 and applicants had to contribute a minimum of 20%. The application also required suitable locations to be put forward and it was agreed that Jack Heaps Field, Scholes Lodge Field and the Sports field at Scholes all be included.

7.5 Christmas Lights.

It was **resolved** to set up a working party to look at options for Christmas Lights in future years and that Cllrs. Hayton and P. Walsh be members of this, all in favour. Cllr. Ragg offered to support as necessary.

7.6 Biodiversity policy.

It was **resolved** to adopt the draft biodiversity policy which had been circulated ahead of the meeting and that this be reviewed in six months' time, all in favour. The final sentence below paragraph 7.5 would be deleted.

7.7 Pavilion hire charges for 2024.

It was **resolved** to accept a recommendation of the F&GP Committee that Pavilion hire charges for 2024 be unchanged and that there be a limited period promotional offer of 50% discount for ad-hoc bookings running from March to May 2024, all in favour.

7.8 Christmas lights competition.

It was **resolved** to accept a recommendation of the F&GP Committee that gifts to the value of £25 be awarded as prizes to the winner in each village for a Christmas lights competition and that this be done using Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

- 7.9 "His Majesty the King's Portrait Scheme".**
It was **resolved** to make an application under "His Majesty the King's Portrait Scheme" for a portrait of His Majesty King Charles III noting that this offer was limited to one per Parish Council. As the list of Chairs had been put in the John Rylie Centre, it was felt that this should go in Manor House in Scholes.
- 7.10 Hedge cutting at Barwick Allotments.**
A quotation for hedge cutting at Barwick Allotments was considered. The Clerk would try to get a couple more quotations.
- 7.11 Tree removal at Barwick in Elmet Village Hall car park.**
It was **resolved** to accept a quotation of £500 for tree removal at Barwick in Elmet Village Hall car park, all in favour.
- 7.12 Playground equipment in Scholes School.**
It was noted that Ward Councillors had agreed to place the excess East Leeds Orbital Road playground equipment in Scholes School and that the PC were not included in the discussions (see Public Participation above).
- 7.13 Swings in Scholes Playground.**
It was noted that LCC had replaced the swings in Scholes Playground which had been vandalised.
- 7.14 Neighbourhood Plan update and boundary changes.**
Cllr. S. Walsh would clarify whether there had been any changes to the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan and in particular, whether the area in the south of the Parish beyond the M1 motorway was now included.
- 7.15 Statutory changes needing to be reflected in the Financial Regulations.**
It was noted that the procurement thresholds for Contracts Finder had been raised to £30,000 with effect from 21st December 2022. It was also noted that the thresholds for public procurement had changed from 1st January 2024. Public contracts, with an estimated value of over £214,904 (previously £213,477) for goods or services and over £5,372,609 (previously £5,336,937) for public works must comply with the full requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The Financial Regulations would be amended accordingly (Paragraph 11.1b and the second footnote on page fourteen).
- 7.16 Use of Jack Heaps Field as an overflow car park for a funeral.**
A decision of the Clerk under delegated authority to allow the use of Jack Heaps Field as an overflow car park for the funeral of a former Councillor was noted.
- 7.17 Reports of meetings/training attended.**
The Chair had attended several events as follows; 22nd January, Yorkshire Local Councils Associations (YLCA) Chair's meeting, 29th January, National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Women Councillors meeting, 29th January Staffing meeting (with Cllrs. Remmer and Williamson), 31st January, a meeting with Ward Councillors and LCC Parks Department to discuss Scholes Playground (Cllr P Walsh also in attendance), 2nd February, Peace Flame Meeting to discuss the flag which they are planning to have it ready for 6th June D Day (80th Anniversary) and she attended the funeral of John Tinker on 2nd February.
- 7.18 Website report**
A report of website usage had been circulated to all Councillors. There was a significant increase in several of the categories (the number of users today, the number yesterday, the number in the last seven days and in the last thirty days etc.)

7.19 Safeguarding report.
There was nothing to report.

8 PLANNING MATTERS

The Planning Committee had not met since the December 2023 PC meeting. However, the Clerk had replied using delegated authority to planning application 23/07397/FU, 33 Richmondfield Lane (demolition of existing bungalow and erection of two detached dwellings).

9 FINANCE

9.1 Cash book and bank reconciliation for and Formal approval of invoices and payments to be made for February/March 2024.

- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) had circulated the cash book, bank reconciliation and budget monitor showing all income and expenditure up to 30th January. There were seventeen items of income totalling £3,435.66. There were forty-four payments totalling £12,090.17 (twenty-six automated payments totalling £3,842.85 and eighteen manual payments totalling £8,247.32). There was discussion about a payment of £4.99 for a key fob.
- The RFO presented a list of twelve payments for February totalling £961.40 to be made by bank transfer.
- There were also six automated payments due to be taken in March 2024 totalling £1,610.06 (there was a query about some of these as the RFO had incorrectly shown some with a February date).
- Since the papers had been circulated, two new invoices had been received being a Royal Mail invoice for a postage paid reply (70p + VAT) and one for the fitting of the goal posts (£480). The amount taken by direct debit for the Sainsbury's Credit Card (used by the Clerk) was less than anticipated, three payments totalling £41.53 had missed the deadline for inclusion and as such, these payments would be taken in March and the monthly fees for Microsoft 365 (due to increase from 1st February) had still been taken at the old rate.
- It was **resolved** to approve these payments.
- Automated payments due in February had been approved at the previous meeting.

10 CRIME REPORT

Cllr. Gilmore had attended a Police And Communities Together (PACT) meeting held in Harewood on 4th January 2024. Many of those there were members of the farming community who had concerns about rural crime committed by criminals using quad bikes (six trailers were stolen) and felt that the Police should invest in similar equipment for an effective response. Residents were advised **not to try to stop** such criminals as they were often armed. There were 51 crimes in the area including 18 car thefts. Cllr. Gilmore needed a crime reference number if anyone had a particular issue they wished to raise.

11 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Parish Council – 4th March 2024, 7pm, in Scholes Sports Pavilion.

Planning Committee - 7th February 2024 in the Miner's Institute, Barwick in Elmet at 6:30pm.

Finance and General Purposes (F&GP) Committee – 11th March 2024 at 7pm in Scholes Sports Pavilion.

Note: The wording of agenda items to be submitted in writing to the Proper Officer at least ten clear days before a meeting.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:35pm.

Signed

Chair
4 March 2024