

**Minutes of a meeting of Scarning Parish Council held in
Scarning Village Hall on 15 April 2024 at 7.30pm**

Councillors present: F Bradford (Chair) T Abel, M Blackburn, S Bunn, C Hewson, M Steward.

In attendance: N Hartley (Parish Clerk), Cllr L Turner (Breckland Council). One member of the public.

Public Participation

It was noted that more plants have been taken from the flower box on the edge of the lay-by near the church.

The meeting went into session.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs P Hewett (Breckland Council) and W Richmond (Norfolk County Council).

2 Declarations of Interest

None.

3 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2024 as a true and accurate record. The minutes were signed by the Chair.

The meeting was adjourned for five minutes while a non council related item was discussed.

4 Matters Arising

The Council noted a letter of thanks had been received from Dereham Cancer Care for the Council's donation.

The Council will continue to chase Westcotec for an update regarding the solar light at Dereham Road/Chestnut Road and to source an alternative contractor to make the repairs.

Cllr Abel noted that he had collected the village sign from Bunnings and that it would be reinstalled as soon as the drilling out of the central cavity was completed, which was proving difficult. The Council thanked Cllr Abel for his efforts.

The Clerk noted that he is chasing Top Garden Services to carry out the agreed work to the two oak trees by the Shipdham Lane Playing Field.

With regard to the Planning Application at Blackthorn Drive, Cllr Turner (Breckland Council) said that she and Cllr Hewitt are seeking a full response from the Planning Department

regarding covenants on properties, and the point of covenants if these play no part in the planning process.

5 Report of District Councillor

Cllr Turner (Breckland Council) noted she had nothing to add to the report delivered to the Annual Parish Meeting.

6 Planning

6.1 The Council considered the following Planning Consultation:-

Dereham Town Council 3PL/2024/0176/F
Installation of new play equipment at the Recreation/Playing Field adjacent to car park at 7 Old Becclesgate

It was **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council had no objection.

7 Finance

7.1 It was **RESOLVED** to make the following payments in accordance with the Council's budget:-

N Hartley, clerk's salary, £990.99
HMRC, clerk's Paye, £5.80
N Hartley, reimbursement for keyboard and riser, £45.88
SCS Accounting, payroll services, £18
Norfolk Parish Training & Support, annual subscription, £440
Norfolk Parish Training & Support, attendance at Essential Update Seminar, £54
Harry Stebbing Workshop, replace four locks on noticeboard outside Village Hall, £120
Mansfield Fencing, supply/install part for toddler tower (Blackthorn Drive) £60
Scarning Fuel Allotment Charity, grant for Tree Survey, £255
Npower, unmetered street light supplies, £536.89
NGF Play Ltd, replacement Air Skier (Blackthorn Drive play area) £2,296.80
Scarning PCC, reimbursement re litter pick refreshments, £7
Scarning Pre School, grant for dishwasher and microwave, £433.82

8 Accounts and Annual Return

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the Council's unaudited accounts and to complete and sign the Annual Return.

9 Community Grants Scheme

It was **RESOLVED** to approve a new Community Grants Scheme. The amount set aside into the Scheme was agreed at £2,000.

10 Grants Policy

It was **RESOLVED** to approve a revised version of the Council's existing Grants Policy.

11 Scarning Pre School Grant Application

The Council considered further information provided by Scarning Pre School. The Parish Council had previously voted to ask the Pre School to fundraise for the requested dishwasher and microwave, and agreed to make up the shortfall to the full amount requested on receipt of evidence of fundraising activities being undertaken. The Pre School had raised £60 from a cake sale. It was therefore **RESOLVED** to approve a grant of £433.82 and to make immediate payment to help with the necessary purchases (see 7.1 above).

12 Parish Partnership Scheme Bids

This was carried forward to the May meeting, as the Council is awaiting an update from Norfolk County Council.

13 Annual Asset Report

The Council received the annual Asset report. It was **RESOLVED** to carry out the following actions:-

To clean/stain the bench by the Village sign and to repaint the sign at Podmore Ford.

To clean/stain the noticeboards at Dereham Road/Cooper Terrace, Dereham Road/New Inn Lane (this also needs to be reset) and outside Scarning Village Hall.

14 Earmarked Reserves

As part of its Reserves Policy, it was **RESOLVED** to apportion the following into earmarked reserves:-

£11,000 to new play equipment (Blackthorn Drive)

£9,200 to the new Shipdham Lane car park.

£3,100 to Scarning Playing Field Committee (maintenance grant)

£2,000 to new Air Skier (Blackthorn Drive)

£4,000 to new fencing (Ted Ellis Walk play area)

£2,000 to tree works (Shipdham Lane playing field oaks)

£2,000 to the Community Grants Scheme

£2,200 to the Parish Partnership Scheme bids

£1,000 to the new Shipdham Lane car park

£1,000 to new play equipment (Blackthorn Drive).

15 Sale of land at Daffy Green

The Council was in contact with Cruso Wilkin regarding the sale of land at Daffy Green that includes the former Highway Surveyors land. Cruso Wilkin acknowledged that the land was

the responsibility of the Parish Council and asked if the Parish Council would be prepared to let the land to whoever purchased the field.

Following detailed discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to offer the land for sale, subject to the approval of the Charity Commission. The Clerk will obtain a valuation of the land and contact Cruso Wilki in relation to this.

16 Tree Management Policy

The Council reviewed its Tree Management policy. There were no amendments.

17 Blackthorn Drive Play Area Update

Cllr Bradford noted that the Council is awaiting the results of the online survey. It was noted there had been 65 responses. Based on the survey, the Council will decide which items of equipment to purchase and will apply for grants.

18 D Day Beacon Lighting

It was agreed to light the Beacon at the nationally agreed time of 9.15pm. Cllr Bradford will liaise with Chris Farnham. Cllr Blackburn will be the First Aider. Cllr Abel offered to put up tape and posts to cordon off the immediate area under the Beacon and to liaise with Chris Farnham in filling/lighting the Beacon.

19 Invitation to the School's Head

It was **RESOLVED** to invite the school's Head or Deputy Head to the Council's May meeting, and to meetings thereafter.

20 Representatives' Reports

Cllr Abel asked if the Seckar Trust might consider the sale of land near New Inn Lane to facilitate a dropping off point for the school to help with regard to parking.

It was agreed that going forward the Council's representative to the Seckar Trust will deliver reports to the Council following its meetings.

21 Council Meetings

Cllr Bradford reported that most parish councils do not meet in August or December, and that it had been suggested to her that, if councillors agreed, it may help to attract new members if the number of meetings held annually was reduced to ten.

Council members said they preferred to have monthly meetings in order to keep in touch with Council matters. It was **RESOLVED** to leave the Council's schedule of meetings as is.

Cllr Bradford also reported that she had been informed there was no requirement for councillors to attend the Annual Parish Meeting. Only the Chair and the Clerk need to attend this meeting. Councillors agreed that they enjoyed attending the annual meeting to hear the reports of the various organisations.

22 Items for the Next Agenda

To arrange a councillor tour of the parish.

To receive an update from Norfolk County Council on the Parish Partnership Scheme bids and associated bids.

23 Next Meeting

The next meeting will be in the Village Hall on 20 May at 7.30pm. This will be preceded by a meeting of Scarning Fuel Allotment Charity at 7pm.

Pursuant to section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, it was RESOLVED that because of the confidential nature of the business transacted, the public was asked to leave the meeting so that the Council could discuss the Clerk's salary scale.

24 Clerk's Salary Scale

The Chair reported that a misunderstanding had occurred with the Clerk whereby he thought that he had moved up a Scale Range and should be receiving annual incremental payments as from 2024. It was confirmed that the Clerk was at the top of scale LC2 (18-23), (below substantive range) and that his duties were in line with this scale. It was noted that the Council had awarded the Clerk discretionary pay rises which took his banding to level 24. However, the Council had never intended for this to result in him moving up to the substantive benchmark range which would trigger annual incremental payments.

The Clerk had agreed that although on banding 24 his duties were such that he remained on the below substantive range, and therefore no annual incremental payments were due until such time as his duties increased moving the role into the substantive benchmark range.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9pm.