

Langtoft Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 8 January 2019
at Langtoft Village Hall

Present: Cllrs Andy Halfhide (Chairman), Brian Branch, Angela Brogan, Brian Brown, Andy Hallam, Debbie Hallam, Roy Jackson, Colin Larkman, Yvonne McCulloch, Mike Thompson and Lewis Trickey.

In Attendance: Julian Tatam (Clerk), County Councillor Barry Dobson, District Councillors Rosemary Trollope-Bellew and Kelham Cooke, and one member of the public.

68 /18-19 Open Forum

The meeting began with the open forum at 7.00pm

In the absence of any questions from the member of the public there was a proposal to suspend standing orders to take the reports from County and District Councillors; proposed Cllr Jackson, seconded Cllr Branch - passed unanimously.

69/18-19 Report from County and District Councillors and Police

D.Cllr Trollope - Bellew reported that planning application S17/1900 for 35 houses at Stowe Road will be considered next week and offered to speak on behalf of the LPC (Langtoft Parish Council) regarding our objections to additional traffic from the resident of the new houses.

D.Cllr Cooke confirmed that further black waste bins will be delivered in due course. There is to be a further meeting with the stakeholders of the playing fields with a view to progressing the discussion on the redevelopment.

C.Cllr Dobson reported that LCC Highways had stated that there is no capacity to include West End and Stowe Road in the regular gritting route but encouraged LPC to challenge this. The proposed feasibility study for 4 way traffic lights at the A15 crossroads will not take place for at least 2 months. He suggested that we could apply for a weight limit on West End /Stowe Road within the village so that construction traffic for the 35 houses (should the application be approved) would have to access the site from King Street

There was a general discussion on the planning application for the proposed filling station on the A15 just north of the A15/A1175 with the aim of informing the District and County Councillors of the traffic issues.

A report from PCSO M Laughton was read out. The key item was that there were thefts from 11 vehicles in Langtoft over the night of 3rd January. The offenders later used a bank card that they had just stolen from Langtoft in McDonalds and were captured on CCTV. Footage from CCTV cameras in the village is also being examined to build evidence.

The Open Forum closed at 7.35 pm.

70/18-19 Chairman's welcome and remarks

The Chairman welcomed the County and District Councillors.

71/18-19 Apologies for absence

None as all councillors were present

72/18-19 Declarations of Interest

None.

73/18-19 To approve the minutes of the previous meeting

The approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 27th November 2018 was proposed by Cllr Trickey, seconded by Cllr Brown and agreed unanimously

74/18-19 Clerks Report

The Clerk's report had already been provided to the Councillors, including a log of communications. In the absence of an alternative quotation, The Gritting Company was appointed to undertake gritting of the village this winter at a cost of £310 (+VAT) per visit. There was a discussion about the lack of progress on renovating the pond in East End Park. The Clerk will look into instructing an environmental survey which is a pre-requisite of undertaking work in the pond.

75/18-19 Working groups

Finance and General Purposes:

The report was circulated to the Councillors. Key points:

The 2018 – 19 payments are up to date and below budget but a reduction in the reserves of £6,800 is still projected if the budgeted expenditure of £4000 on gritting and £2000 on Penfield takes place.

The 2019/ 20 draft budget indicates a further deficit of £5800, after a £700 inflationary increase in the precept, reducing reserves to just £3,700; an unacceptable figure. Removing gritting of £4000 would reduce the deficit to a more acceptable £1800. A cost reduction programme is proposed, looking at reducing the net costs of The Grapevine (£1800) and, if it is to continue, gritting (£4000 in 1918/19 budget).

The budget was formally considered in item 76/18-19.

Events & Cemetery:

No meeting had taken place.

Amenities:

Reported that we are to take up the quotation from the contractor who currently cuts the grass at Baston, at a considerable cost saving.

Penfield Nature Reserve (Pocket Park):

No meeting of the management group had taken place but the Chairman of the group, LPC Chairman and Clerk had recently met with the neighbouring farmers to view and discuss the rabbit issue. Rabbits residing along the edge of the reserve are grazing the crop which could cause uneven ripening with yield and quality reductions. The ideal solution is to install rabbit fencing along the boundary, estimated at 600m. This can be attached to the existing wire but needs to be dug into the ground which is a major operation if done by hand. There would be a need to hire some machinery to create a trench. A discussion of the topic followed.

Although the Council acknowledged that they have a responsibility to control the rabbits they decided not to take action at this time.

Regarding the 'missing link' in the path, we are to pursuing this with LCC Highways.

The legal process is reaching a conclusion and the transfer is expected to take place in the near future.

76/18-19 Finance

Year to date accounts. The accounts to 31 December had been circulated to all councillors, including all transactions to date. The balances at that date totalled £23,504cr.

Internal Audit. The internal audit to 30 September has been completed, with the following comment: 'As far as I am concerned, the systems of internal control are adequate. The accounts and papers submitted to me are all in order and I therefore have no matters to report to the Parish Council.'

Precept for 2019 20 . There was further discussion of the budget and the proposed exclusion of any amount for gritting for the 2019 20 winter. After some lengthy discussion it was concluded that the Council has been mandated by the residents to undertake gritting and a sum of £2000 was added to the budget for gritting (lower than 2018 19 in the expectation of reducing future costs).

To cover the cost of the gritting and other inflationary cost increases, a motion to set a precept of £24,500 (a £2700 increase) was proposed by Cllr A Hallam, seconded by Cllr Jackson and agreed unanimously.

The new precept lifts the band D payment to £32.25 from £29.08, an increase of under 1p a day. It was noted that residents will continue to benefit from LPCs negotiation of a reduction in the SEA of £4.73 (for band D). Furthermore, the precept has been held down for many years and was £21,000 back in 2010/11.

Budget for 2019 20

Further to the setting of the precept, agreeing the overall budget and individual allocation of expenditure, to include £2000 for gritting, was proposed by Cllr Brogan, seconded by Cllr A Hallam and passed unanimously.

77/18-19 Planning

The following planning applications were discussed:

S18 2270 Extensions at 10 Westfield Way. A proposal that we recommend refusal on the grounds of the scale of the first floor extension, the location of the garage and style of roof on the side extension being out of keeping and having adverse impact upon neighbouring properties was proposed by Cllr Trickey, seconded by Cllr A Hallam and agreed unanimously.

S18 2263 Filling station on A15. A proposal that we recommend refusal on the grounds of road safety due to the dangerous access was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr Trickey and passed on a majority (10 votes for and 1 abstention).

78/18-19 Council Administration

Planning Application Consideration Process

A suggestion by Cllr Trickey that we consider a policy of:

1. If no comments or objections from any Councillor then the Clerk can record that as no objections.
2. If any councillor has concerns over any application then a site visit should take place, to inform the subsequent discussion and agree the wording before the Clerk submits a response.

The suggestion received a support with the anticipation that it is formally considered at our Annual Meeting.

External Communication

A suggestion from the Chairman that we set up a Facebook site to communicate news to the villagers, but without the ability for comment (any comments should be raised in the public forum at a council meeting) received general approval. To be discussed in more detail at the next meeting.

79/18-19 Other Matters

Emergency Planning – Resilient Communities

Cllr Brogan reported on a recent meeting she had attended and provided some documents for Councillors to study. To be discussed at the next meeting.

Grants and Funding

There was a brief discussion of a 'wish list' of projects for Cllr Brogan to look into obtaining funding. The list includes a wheelchair accessible viewing platform at Penfield N.R. , renovating of the pond at East End Park, further play equipment and new goalposts for Black Bull Green.

A motion to suspend standing orders for 10 minutes to allow the remaining business to be discussed was proposed by Cllr A Hallam, seconded by Cllr Brogan and agreed unanimously.

Speed Signs

The battery on one of the speed signs has failed. The Chairman agreed to collect the speed sign and arrange for a quotation for a replacement battery.

Storage

There was a brief discussion of the need for a store for existing council equipment and also for the proposed purchase of hand tools for Penfield. Quotations for renting or purchasing a small secure shipping container will be obtained.

80/18-19 Date of next meeting

Next Full Council meeting: Tuesday 19 February 2019 at Langtoft Village Hall at 7.00pm

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.40 pm.