

Langtoft Parish Council

Minutes of Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 5 September 2017 at Langtoft Village Hall

Present: Cllrs Andy Halfhide (Chairman), Andy Hallam, Debbie Hallam, Yvonne McCulloch, Roy Jackson, Mike Thompson, Colin Larkman and Brian Branch

In Attendance: Julian Tatam (Clerk), Derek Patience (former Acting Clerk), District Councillors Kelham Cooke & Rosemary Woolley, County Councillor Barry Dobson, Richard Wyles, Corporate Finance Director SKDC and five members of the public.

30/17-18 Open Forum

The meeting began with the open forum at 7.00pm

Questions asked and matters raised by members of the public included the following:

- Progress on the SEA discussions re the Playing Fields. *The meeting was attended by Richard Wyles, Corporate Finance Manager, SKDC. He was invited to address the audience at this point. Mr Wyles described the background to the SEA which was introduced in April 2003 and for 2017 -18 raised in the order of £8000 to cover ground maintenance costs of about £6000 and overhead costs of £1000. The surplus of about £1000 would be added to the reserve, taking this to about £5000. Discussions are ongoing with the various tenants to arrive at a more equitable share of the maintenance costs to reduce the impact upon the council taxpayers in the village. It is expected that this will make a positive impact on the level of 2018-19 SEA payment. Mr Wyles commented that the reserve was now higher than strictly necessary and would be reduced to £2000 allowing a £3000 reduction to the SEA for 2018-19.*
- Police and Community Support Officer (PCSO). *Concern was raised that we now only have one PCSO covering Langtoft and The Deepings which inevitably only provides limited hours of cover. The topic has been discussed at a recent Police Community Panel Meeting and is being raised by that group with the Police Commissioner and Chief Constable*
- Private fencing close to corner of Aquila Way and Stowe Road: *The Chairman said that he had been advised that LCC were still pursuing the enforcement action.*
- Parking opposite Aquila Way. *Cars parking are creating an accident risk and it is noted that this is illegal at night as within 10m of a junction. The PCSO has been alerted.*
- Building work to the rear of 8 The Rides. *A tree and shrubs have been cut down to enable access for building materials and a skip from Back Lane. We will refer to LCC regarding the highways issue and review the planning application for any relevant consent.*

The Open Forum closed at 7.45 pm.

31/17-18 Chairman's welcome and remarks

The Chairman welcomed the County and District Councillors, Richard Wyles and the members of the public present.

He also welcomed Julian Tatam, the recently appointed Parish Clerk

32/17-18 Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Derek Risk and Lewis Trickey.

33/17-18 Declarations of Interest

Cllrs A and D Hallam declared an interest re the planning item relating to 8 East End.

Cllr McCulloch declared an interest re the correspondence regarding access to Back Lane.

34/17-18 To approve the minutes of the previous meetings

The approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2017 was proposed by Cllr A Hallam, seconded by Cllr Thompson and agreed with one abstention.

35/17-18 Playing Fields SEA

Standing orders were suspended (proposed Cllr Jackson, seconded Cllr D Hallam and agreed unanimously) to enable this item to be taken under the Open Forum to enable the public to question Richard Wyles from SKDC.

36/17-18 Report from County and District Councillors and Police

County Councillor Dobson said he had viewed Pocket Park with Cllr Jackson and had also had correspondence on the fence at the corner of Aquila Way. He has also had contact about the traffic on New Road and the lack of the passing places which were to have been created as a condition of the planning consent for the nine 'affordable properties'. He commented that the county has filled 15000 pot holes on its 5400 miles of roads – the second best performance in England.

District Councillor Woolley apologised that she was unable to attend the 'Meet the Councillors Event' on 22 July.

They are exploring continuing the community fund which provides grants of up to £10,000 for local community projects. The application process for smaller requests is being simplified.

District Councillor Cooke provided more details of the Big Clean programme which will come to Langtoft on 11 September. It includes litter picking, clearing paths, removing graffiti and replacing dilapidated waste bins with the aim of improving the general appearance of the streets. The Parish Council were encouraged to report any items that needed attention in Langtoft. There will be further funds to maintain the improved environment in future. He reminded us of the upcoming Stamford Georgian Festival (21 -24 September) and the keynote speaker of Dan Cruickshank.

37/17-18 Finance The accounts up to 30 August had been circulated to all councillors and there were no significant variances from budget. Bank balances are satisfactory and the next precept should be received during October. The reserves are on target to be £4500 at the financial year end which at about 25% of expenditure is in the accepted 'normal' figure. The invoices from LMR have not yet been received and the Clerk is to chase these. The external auditor is due to report on the 2016-17 annual return by the end of September.

38/17-18 Review of Ongoing Action Points

The action points were updated and discussed.

The Clerk is to obtain quotations for pruning of the trees in East End Park and a silver birch at Black Bull Green

39/17-18 Correspondence

A letter has been received expressing concern about the use of Back Lane to access the A15 which is considered dangerous and contrary to the 'restricted byway' status. The clerk is to refer the issue to LCC Highways department.

A large branch fell off a tree in back Lane (to the rear of 4 The Rides) during a storm in August. This has been referred to LCC and they are to instruct an inspection.

1st Thurlby Cubs and Scouts. They are organising a trip to Ypres in October and requested a donation to support the event. One cub /scout is to attend from Langtoft. After a discussion a motion was proposed that the request was rejected as it from outside the village – proposed Cllr Thompson, seconded Cllr A Hallam and agreed unanimously.

40/17-18 Review and Authorisation of orders for repair and maintenance work

Repairs to the fence at East End Park. The fence has been replaced and the funds from the insurance claim received. The need for a self-closer on the gate to make it child secure plus improvement to the stile will be taken up by the chairman.

Pruning of trees around East End Park. After a discussion Cllr A Hallam agreed to produce a specification to include the trimming of a silver birch tree at Black Bull Green to enable the clerk to obtain some quotations for the next meeting.

41/17-18 Planning Applications

Only S17/1530 regarding the Old Vicarage requires comment. The clerk will circulate the full details.

S17/0261 regarding 8 East End has already been refused.

42/17-18 Pocket Park

Pocket Park is now progressing quite quickly with the vendors having obtained planning consent for a footpath, car park and landscaping. It is understood that this will be funded by them.

Issues which need to be considered by the council include legal advice on the purchase, ongoing management and consequent costs, the condition of the site at handover. We will have 90 days to accept once the formal offer of sale is received.

It was agreed that Cllr Jackson would to continue to follow-up on the project with the aim of reporting back to a special meeting, preferably prior to the next council meeting on 17 October.

Cllr Thompson reminded the meeting that the council made a commitment to progressing the acquisition about 5 years ago after a consultation with the village.

43/17-18 Working Groups Reports

Finance and General Purposes: - already reported under item 37/17-18

Events and Cemetery:

Positive feedback had been received for the 'Meet the Councillors' event in July. The Chairman thanked all those who had been involved.

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Chairman's/initials/signature.....

Consideration will be given to a photo exhibition on the topic of Life in Langtoft
The next event is the Harvest Festival where we provide flowers to the cost of around £20-25.
Some of the graves are looking untidy as old flowers are not removed. There will be a discussion with Malcolm about adding this to his duties.

Amenities and Highways Group:

This has not met since the last council meeting. The gate at Black Bull Green play area needs a new self-closing spring as it is not child secure.

44/17-18 Cemetery: plaque for the war grave

This item was deferred to the next meeting as Cllr Trickey was not present

45/17-18 The Big Clean

This project is coming to Langtoft on 11 September.

Weeds around the bus shelters plus trimming the path to the cemetery had already been submitted by Cllr McCulloch.

The trees overhanging Bull Pond and the fly-tipped refrigerator on Stowe Road would be submitted by the clerk.

46/17-18 Exclusion of Press & Public

The council resolved to exclude the press & public to deal with an item of a confidential nature.

Proposed Cllr A Hallam, seconded Cllr Jackson and agreed unanimously

47/17-18 Review of employee pay rates

The clerk withdrew from the meeting for this item

It was noted that employees had not received a pay rise for some 4 years.

It was resolved that:

1. The hourly rate should be increased in line with the National Joint Council for Local Government Service recommended rate for the relevant scale point.
2. The Gardener's pay should be increased with effect from 1st. September 2017
3. For the Clerk, this increase should take effect immediately after the satisfactory completion of his probation period.

Proposed Cllr A Hallam, Seconded Cllr Jackson, all in favour

48/17-18 Dates of future meetings

Next Council meeting: 17 October 2017.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.30 pm.