

NOTES of a HOUGH ON THE HILL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held at 7.10 pm in Hough on the Hill Church on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

Present: Cllr Stewart Sharman (in the Chair), Cllrs R. Harris, V. McLean, J. Pope, L. Rann and A. Seage also Cllr A Maughan, Dist Cllr P Milnes and 10 members of the public.

A member of the public asked that the Parish Council look at the original survey that went out at the start of the updating of the Neighbourhood Plan to ascertain what the Parishioners wanted for their Parish.

Cllr Milnes congratulated all those who had been elected. She advised that there is a hung District Council – Conservatives got 43% of the votes and the remaining parties 57%. There are lots of negotiations going on to find a way forward for an administration. She also advised that there is currently a Prosperity Fund available with £500,000 funds in it – this runs until April 2024 then there is a further sum for 2024-2025. SKDC will need £1.87 million from its reserves this year.

Cllr Maughan introduced himself to the new Councillors. He made them aware of Fix My Street and said that potholes should be repaired within 90 days. He will follow up Fix My Street reports (with the given ID number) if this timescale is not met.

**01/23: Apologies** had been received from Cllr Allen who had a prior family arrangement abroad. It was resolved to accept her apology.

**02/23: Declarations of Interest** – None received.

**03/23: Minutes** of a meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> March had been read and approved by the previous Chair, Donna Lang, and by Cllr Harris and it was resolved that they be signed as an accurate record.

**04/23: Employment Committee** – Clerk advised that this was a requirement as advised by LALC for the purpose of any grievance or disciplinary matters. A draft Terms of Reference was handed to all councillors present. It was agreed to defer this matter to the next meeting.

**05/23: Civility and Respect Pledge** – it was agreed to allow the new Council to have time to consider this matter and to defer it to the next meeting.

**06/23: Planning:**

S23/0331 – Single storey extension at Hillside, Lower Road, Hough – refused.

S23/0640 – Tree works at 12 High Road, Hough – pending consideration.

ENF22/0122 Beechers Farm – felled trees – Cllr Milnes advised that SKDC is still struggling to contact the owners.

**07/23: Highways** – Mr Barrett (member of public) who runs the community speedwatch initiative in Hough and Brandon was asked for his opinion on whether revised and new Speedwatch Signs would be appropriate. He said he felt they would be more effective than existing ones and that four would be required. They cost £13 each and the Council resolved unanimously to go ahead and purchase 4 signs at a total of £52. This discussion led into talking about SIDs. The first action needed is to ask LRSP to come out and agree the positioning, which Highways would then approve. Whether to have moveable ones or static ones was considered and moveable ones were felt to be more effective.

**08/23: Litter pick** – it was agreed that Councillors will observe the situation with regard to litter, in each of the three villages, and then consider whether a group parish litter pick is necessary. Agenda for next meeting.

**09/23: Play area** – Clerk advised that the annual report had been received from Wicksteed and that all notations showed matters were all Low Risk and therefore no immediate attention required. Clerk said that the equipment has a 3-5 year life expectancy and asked if the Council wishes to spend up to £20,000 on a new base now, or wait for 3 years and look at new play equipment as a whole – agreed we would wait 3 years and continue with bark top ups. Cllr McLean advised that there were some concrete areas showing and it was resolved that the Clerk should order 3 builders bags of play bark, as in the past; Councillors will then distribute over play area floor. It was felt that the grass cutting was not adequate as it ended up in chunks across the field. We need to have weekly cuts or equipment that will mulch the grass – Clerk to contact the contractor to see if they have the equipment to mulch and/or whether there will be a cost implication associated with adjusting the requirement. It was noted that the contract has to be re-tendered in November 2023. Clerk advised that councillors are required to inspect the play area monthly and a rota was distributed. Cllr Harris will do the May inspection and Cllr McLean the June inspection – other councillors should ensure that they get guidance from either Cllr Harris or McLean when doing their first inspection. Clerk to circulate the inspection form that should be completed.

**10/23: Highways project** – Clerk advised new Councillors that the three phone boxes and noticeboards will be refurbished and the village entrance gate at Brandon repaired, by way of an LCC initiative with Balfour Beatty. She explained that the phone box paint has been donated by the CHT as the defibrillators are housed in the phone boxes and that the only costs to the PC will be the new gate post and paint, plus paint brushes, wire brushes etc. The refurbishments should take place shortly (*since heard this will be on 20<sup>th</sup> June*).

**11/23: Finance:**

- [i] Resolved to sign the bank reconciliations at 31.3.23 and 30.4.23.
- [ii] Resolved to sign the AGAR Certificate of Exemption 2022-2023.
- [iii] Resolved to sign the AGAR Annual Governance Statement 2022-2023.
- [iv] Resolved to sign the AGAR Accounting Statement 2022-2023.
- [v] Resolved to renew the Annual Website Maintenance for 10 hours at £170+VAT.
- [vi] Clerk advised that the light in the Hough phone box had been repaired and the street light next to it had also been repaired.
- [vii] Resolved to pay the Insurance renewal cost (last year of a 3 year agreement).
- [viii] Resolved to sign a new Bank Mandate with signatories to be Cllrs Harris, Rann and Sharman and also the Clerk.

**12/23: Correspondence:** New Councillors training course on 3<sup>rd</sup> July at Carlton Scroop – 5 wish to attend, one is unavailable and clerk to check with Sue Allen.

Chair asked for ideas to take forward and a suggestion was made for a multi purpose court at the playing field using the Prosperity Fund. Chair proposed that given the Neighbourhood Plan was such an emotive issue that it made sense to take some time out and defer any decisions until everyone had appraised themselves of the details around NP, the LGS and the DC. The Chairs view was that

the time spent on NP had detracted from other Parish business and that the PC needed to regroup and consider wider matters across the Parish.

**13/23:** It was agreed that we should have an Extraordinary Meeting some time in June – Wednesdays being the preferred day for meetings and as an item on the agenda at that meeting, consider whether we want a **Neighbourhood Plan meeting in July.**

**14/23: Next meeting:** 21<sup>st</sup> June 2023 (to be confirmed).

Meeting closed at 8.25 pm

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