

MONK SOHAM PARISH COUNCIL

(Draft) Minutes of a Meeting held on Tuesday 26th November 2019

The meeting commenced at 1903 at the Bedfield Sports Pavilion

11/19 - 01 Present

- David Entwisle (DE - Chairman), Graham Wigley (GW – Vice Chairman), Julian Sayer (JS), Charles Bagnall (CRB), Cliff Arndt-Snelling (CAS), and Caroline Berkley CJB).
- Geoff Robinson (GR), as Parish Clerk.
- Matthew Hicks (SCC and MSDC Ward Councillor for Item 09/19 – 08 MH)

11/19 – 02 Apologies for Absence

- None.

11/19 - 03 Declaration of Members Interests.

- GR reminded the councillors of the need to notify any changes to their circumstances which may affect their Declaration of Members Interests. There were no changes reported.

11/19 - 04 Public Open Session

- There were no members of the public present.

11/19 - 05 Minutes of the Last Meeting (3rd September 2019)

- These were agreed and signed by DE as an accurate record.

11/19 - 06 Action Points from the Minutes

- The provision of a cabinet to contain the WWI book of remembrance had now been completed by JS. All agreed that it was a wonderful item and he was thanked for his excellent work. GW agreed to come up with a few appropriate words to be added to the cabinet and Chris Hill will be asked to do the artwork.
- GR had emailed the councillors regarding the recent wreath laying on two Monk Soham WWI soldier's graves during a private visit to France & Belgium and gave a brief report. He stated that it again had been a very moving experience.
- Gay Clarke had expressed the view that the Coffee Caravan should revisit the village in the Spring. GR to liaise with Gay.
- Worlingworth PC had been advised that Monk Soham PC did not wish to participate in a Speedwatch project at this stage.

11/19 - 07 Police Report

- GR stated that the Suffolk Police crime website showed no recorded crimes in the village for the period August to October 2019.

11/19 -08 Report of District & County Councillor

MH attended and stated that:

- SCC Trading Standards continued to seize dangerous and illegal counterfeit tobacco products from retailers, especially with regard to the safety of children.
- A competition for children to name the 41 SCC road gritters had generated great interest. This culminated in some very amusing names and in a stand at the Suffolk Show, which attracted large numbers of children to witness the naming of some of the gritters involved.
- SCC had introduced awareness training for new young drivers in terms of education and road safety, in the early days after passing their driving tests.
- £760,000 had been obtained to install or improve central heating in low income houses.

11/19 - 09 Financial Update

- GR explained that income since the last meeting consisted of the 2019/20 second half-year precept of £750.00 from MSDC.
- Expenses during the same period had been the Clerk's first half salary (£321.00) PAYE (£54.00) and expenses (£123.43), plus £146.16 to CAS for the 2019/202 Insurance renewal. A cheque for £100.00 to Robert Girling (Hungers Green upkeep) had still to appear on the bank statements.
- GR produced an estimate for the rest of 2019/2020 which showed a potential surplus of £1193 at 31st March 2020, without prejudice to any unforeseen expenditure. Payment of small gift for webmaster Fred Clayson was approved.
- As directed at the last meeting, GR had produced a discussion paper regarding the history of the current Clerk's salary and the national requirements under Local Government rules. This had been circulated to all the councillors for consideration. The salient points of the paper were that whilst the Clerks contract had remained the same since 2009 and was for 90 hours per year, a detailed analysis of the current workload showed that a conservative total of 180 hours per annum was required to provide the service required on an on-going basis to the Parish Council. In addition, there had been no increase to his salary of £750 since that date, whilst 180 hours on the National Association of Local Councils SCP scale should equate to circa £1758. The councillors were unanimous in agreeing that this situation could not be allowed to continue and in addition, it would make any replacement for the current Clerk difficult, if not impossible to achieve. In addition, GR was thanked for his excellent work over the past ten years in what appears to be a considerably underpaid role. It was therefore unanimously agreed to increase the Clerk's salary to £1500 with effect from the 1st April 2020 and then review it on an annual basis.
- The 2020/21 precept was set at £2,250 and the forms were signed accordingly for MSDC.
- JS had researched the cost of providing a seat and paving for the area next to the Monk Soham Green notice board and had come up with a figure of circa £400. He will obtain a firm quotation to enable GR to consider a grant application.

11/19 - 10 Planning Applications

- DC/18/05088 (The Long House – Garage Conversion to House) – refused by MSDC. AS previously discussed, GR had emailed MSDC regarding the applicants apparent separation of the proposed drive from the rest of the garden. This appeared to be contrary to the comments in the refusal regarding the Grade II listed status of the Long House. The matter is still under investigation by MSDC Planning Enforcement.

11/19 - 11 MSDC Revised Joint Local Plan

- GR stated that he had emailed the comments from the last meeting to the project team at MSDC and a response was awaited. The comments and all correspondence had been circulated to the councillors.

11/19 - 12 Countryside Group

- No Countryside Group report was available.
- GR had received a letter from a parishioner complaining that Monk Soham footpath was being used by horses which was making the surface almost unusable. JS to try and find out who the owners are and GR to consult SCC highways. GR to also put an article in the parish magazine and reply to the parishioner.

11/19 - 13 Other Correspondence and Any Other Business

- JS stated that a parishioner had asked if a grit-bin could be provided near Monk Soham Green notice board, where the school bus stops. After a brief discussion this was not considered to be practical due to the current SCC Highways dictact. JS to advise the parishioner accordingly.
- DW introduced a letter he had received about possible VE75 celebrations in May 2020. After a brief discussion, it was agreed that GR would initially liaise with Gay Clark (regarding the church) and Kathy Thurman (RBL) to see what, if anything, they had in mind.
- The infamous humps in the road on Snares Lane had returned, near a pothole that had become greatly enlarged. GR to contact SCC Highways.

11/19 - 14 Date of Next Meeting

- The date of the next meeting was fixed for 1900 on Tuesday 11th February 2020, to be held at the Bedfield sports pavilion.

The meeting closed at 2010.

Chairman.....