

Mileham Parish Council

Draft Minutes of the meeting held on the 13th November 2017 **Draft**
in
Mileham Village Hall
at 7.30pm

Councillors present : Muriel Harmer, Mark Butler-Stoney, Trevor Carter
Apologies for absence : Tracey Reynolds (Parish Clerk)

The first part of the meeting was an Open Forum, for members of the Parish to express their concerns prior to the meeting proper. In the absence of a Parish Council Chair, this session was led by Muriel Harmer.

Breckland Councillor Trevor Carter outlined his role in the evening, which was to provide a sufficient quorum until enough Parish Councillors were available for the meeting to be quorate without him.

There was considerable concern from the floor, regarding the effectiveness of the Council, in a number of areas. These included :-

- the lack of advertising of meetings using any medium other than the Parish Notice Board, leading to a lack of attendees – in particular, failure to use the Church & Village magazine, which is distributed to every house in the Parish.
- a lack of prior notice of the Agenda and previous minutes
- problems in disseminating the minutes, in particular the failure to meet the requirements of the 'Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities'

In response, Muriel Harmer outlined the problems that the Council had been facing, including the current inability of the Council to pay people as the cheque signatory list needs updating.

Muriel Harmer pointed out that one of the problems was the shortage of people willing to serve on the Council, and urged people to stand. Malcolm Veale asked what qualifications are required to become a Parish Councillor. Muriel Harmer and Mark Butler-Stoney replied that one only has to have been resident in the Parish for a year, be on the electoral register and live within two miles of the village.

A general discussion ensued regarding the future of the Council during which a number of options were considered. Trevor Carter confirmed that, should the Council be unable to function, then Breckland Council would take over the role, which would unfortunately limit the benefits of local representation.

Judy Ryder expressed thanks to Muriel for her continuing efforts to keep the Council going in difficult circumstances.

The meeting then moved to the formal Agenda.

1. Appointment

Trevor Carter's temporary appointment to the Parish Council as of the 10th October 2017 was acknowledged.

2 & 3. Co-option of Councillors and Election of Chair

Shaun Tooth was co-opted to the Council and elected to the Chair unopposed.

4. Apologies

Received in advance from the Parish Clerk.

5. Financial Business

Cheque signatories - It was agreed that, in order to provide sufficient coverage, all three Councillors would become cheque signatories. The Chair will direct the Parish Clerk to notify Barclays Bank of the new list of signatories.

Bank Balances – The Business Account holds £8,992.22 and the Business Savings Account holds £8,579.71

Payments due :-

Village Hall – Grant as agreed for disability access - £1,500

Clerk's salary and expenses - £474.21

Mazars audit fee - £120 (£100 + £20 VAT)

R Bales - £70

Payments made since last meeting :-

Mileham Shop – Paint/varnish bench - £50

Clerk's expenses/salary - £1,183.65

Budget and precept for 2018/2019

It was agreed that the sum of £1,000 would be included in next year's budget for the Village Hall. This money would be ring-fenced by the Council and release of the funds will be controlled by the Council in the usual way, whether for capital or revenue expenditure.

The sum of £500 is to be included in respect of the churchyard, subject to receiving a suitable schedule of works.

It was agreed that the precept would remain unchanged at £7,000pa

6. Planning Applications

Muriel Harmer advised the Council of an application in respect of revised parking arrangements at The Cottage, The Street. The Chair will print off the paperwork for discussion and notify the Parish Clerk accordingly.

Mark Butler-Stoney raised the issue of naming the two roads that form the new

development on the Sawmill's site. The name of 'Sawmill Close' has already been chosen as one, the Council was being asked for their views on the other. After discussion, it was agreed that the Chair would contact the Parish Clerk to request that all future road naming requests be passed on to Councillors for discussion.

7. Pit Area

Removal of dead tree – Two quotations have been received, but only one was available for examination. Mark Butler-Stoney stressed the need to move quickly, as he considers the tree dangerous, and felt that the single quotation available was reasonable, taking into account the difficulty of the removal job. It was agreed that the sum of £420 was authorised, but that the Chair would contact the Parish Clerk regarding the other quotation, to check whether it is more competitive.

8. Bus Shelter

After discussion, it was agreed that the Parish Clerk would contact Dudgeon to advise that the process has started, we are simply waiting for the base to be laid.

9. Roads and Paths

SAM 2 – There is currently an opportunity for Mileham to pair with Gressenhall to share the costs, estimated at £850. It was agreed that Shaun would contact Gressenhall to progress this and that the cost would be met from existing funds, rather than from raising the precept. This will help to minimise delays in implementation.

Paths – Muriel Harmer pointed out that some of the road signs were obscured, and that paths and roads were particularly muddy. The Chair will ask the Parish Clerk to write to roadways.

10. Next meeting – The Chair confirmed that due to employment changes he can no longer attend meetings on Mondays. It was agreed that, as there was no-one else willing and able to chair the meetings, then unless the meeting date was changed the Council would have to fold. Consequently, it was agreed that Parish Council meetings would now be held on the 1st Tuesday of every other month, starting in January 2018.

11. Any Other Business

Terms of Reference - Councillors discussed and agreed future Parish Council administration and communication requirements and how these can best be met. The Chair will formally communicate the Council's requirements to the Parish Clerk. Mark Butler-Stoney advised that the Chair could obtain an up to date job description from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).

Meeting Closure – The Chair closed the meeting at 9.10pm