Minutes of meeting via ZOOM on Wednesday, January 20th, 2021

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Present: Mr. P. Rice (chairman) Cllr. A. Butler, Cllr. T. Bradford, Cllr. S. Chapman, Ms. J. Harrison, Mr. R Lovick, Mr. H. May, R. Graves Morris, Mr. B. Standen, Ms. S. Turner, Mr. R. Price (NCC) and Mr H Blaythwayt (NNDC)

Guests: Mr. D Bland, Ms. S. Vergette and Mr. A. Varley

1. Apologies for Absence: Cllr. G. Playford has submitted his resignation.  Announcements for the vacancy are being accordingly placed.

Cllr. Rice introduced new Councillors Ms. J. Harrison and Mr. A. Butler. It was further announced that Mr. David Balls is no longer serving as Clerk to the Council and has retired from service.NALC has offered to provide support if needed before a new Clerk is retained.

1. Declaration of Interest:Ms. Sarah Vergette is an applicant for the Clerk position; Cllr May is part of UTWG and Cllr. Rice with Broads Society.

1. Minutes of December 16, 2020: Corrections – Cllr. R. Graves-Morris made motion for co-option of Councillors, it was agreed that Ms. Harrison would also be elected to the VHMC and under reports Cllr. R. Graves Morris received the letter of offer for a grant from the NNDC not Cllr. Turner.  Cllr. R. Graves Morris is primary contact and Cllr. Turner secondary on the proposal.  Cllr. May noted that he had declared an interest in the TVMC.  Motion to approve the minutes made by Cllr. H. May, second Cllr. S. Chapman and approved,

1. Progress Reports: a) Highways – no report. b) Staithe – Cllr. May asked when the idea of parking meters on the Staithe was suggested.  It was thought this was due to a weight restriction.  Cllr. May and Cllr. Rice will work with Councillor Blaythwayt for clarification and what is being enforced.  c) SAM2 – Cllr. Standen noted the unit is with Catfield until the end of February. 4 new poles have been erected in Potter to mount the unit – 2 on Station Rd, 1 each on Church and Marsh Rds. following approval from Highway Authority.  8 new brackets and bands have been purchased.  Catfield is owed 1 from us but have requested 2 additional brackets.  Cllr. Standen proposed selling them to Catfield seconded by Cllr. Chapman.  Cllr. R. Graves Morris suggested Catfield be asked to donate to Potter Heigham at the purchase value to avoid VAT issues.  Amended proposal approved.  Cllr. Standen is continuing to download data for Catfield until they get appropriate technology.

1. New Website: A subcommittee comprising of Councillors Standen, Rice, Lovick and Turner has been working on the new website and reviewed the prototype created by Cllr.  Standen.   Steve Potter is providing historical pictures.  As the two prior reviews took over an hour all Councillors will be invited to a preview meeting by Zoom in advance of the February meeting so that any additional changes can be made.  The new site will be proposed for ratification at the February meeting and pending approval, go live.  Cllr. Butler made some suggestions re history.  It was agreed that a link to the site will be circulated to all Councillors.

At this point Cllr. Chapman noted that subcommittees need to be approved by the full Council. Cllr. R. Graves Morris proposed that this and other “committees” be referred to as “working groups” as they have no authority and can only present recommendations and findings to the full Council.Seconded by Cllr. Chapman and approved.

1. Standing Orders was on the agenda but there is no report.  A working group is addressing the Standing Orders that were last reviewed in 2008, and another is working with Mary Haslam to upgrade the Gazette.  A final working group is one working to replace the Clerk. The ad is out for the Clerk position and closes January 31st.  In recognition of Mr. Ball’s service, a voucher to an Art Supply shop in Yarmouth will be purchased for £130 - £80 from the Council which will come out of the Chairman’s Fund and £50 from the VHMC.  It was pointed out that during his 16 years of service David went above and beyond the call of duty and it is only fitting that he be appropriately thanked and recognized. It was agreed that he should be acknowledged for his service at an event being planned to unveil the newly installed solar panels at the Village Hall when Covid restrictions permit.

It was asked how the new clerk will be selected.  As Cllr.  Rice would have a conflict of interest it was proposed that Councillors Lovick and Chapman serve in this capacity and Cllr. Rice as a non-voting participant.  Cllr. Applications will be circulated to the full Council and a short list of candidates interviewed.  It was asked if the job description could be amended. As it has already been out for some time it cannot.  Cllr. R. Graves Morris informed the group that there was no longer a need to ask candidates if they would voluntarily support the VHMC as Cllr. Turner has offered to serve in this capacity.

Cllr. Chapman raised issue of signatories for checks.Following discussion Cllr. Turner proposed that Councillors Rice and Chapman serve as signatories and Cllr. Graves-Morris as the auditor.Cllr. Lovick seconded and all approved.

1. Police Reports: Cllr. Standen noted that policing in our area will not be changing although the precept is increasing. This is due to an exceptionally low crime rate in the area. Cllr.  Rice advised that any individual concerned about this can make their concerns heard.

Councillor Rice commented on the dedication of Tom Gibbs who recently responded to calls from café owners in Sea Palling about out-of-town visitors. Gibbs was off duty.

1. : None

1. Public Time: David Bland asked about closing Staithe to the public to restrict visitors.  Cllr. Blaythwayt noted that as this is an asset of the Broads Authority, he will write to them.  Closure of car parks is constantly under review, the dilemma being consequential street congestion from parking.  Bland also noted a large tree limb hanging down on Mill Rd that is potentially extremely dangerous should it fall.  Cllr. R. Price suggested that Cllr. Rice contact highways and make a report to generate a case number.  Cllr.  Price will also contact them.

Adam Varley introduced himself as a candidate for County Councillor.He provided a brief overview of his current activities.Cllr. Rice closed the public time at 8:30 p.m.

1. Planning Matters: A revised application for an extension on Reynolds Lane has been received. Cllr.  Standen stated his concern that although smaller than the prior application, the building is up against the boundary line.  Cllr. Chapman suggested that the application be approved subject to the correct foundation being used.  Seconded by Cllr. Standen and approved.

1. Reports from Councillors and Members

* Allotment Officer: This position is now vacant, and Cllr. Butler volunteered to take this on to replace Gordon Playford.  Cllr. May noted that rents will be increasing, and sufficient notice must be given.
* Significant discussion ensued pertaining to flooding in Reynolds lane necessitating action from the Fire Department twice in recent weeks as well as flooding in Meadow Court and green Lane.  It seems that ditches have not been cleared.  Cllr. Harrison noted problems caused by traffic breaking down verges on Marsh rd. that result in drains being clogged with silt. Cllr.  Rice noted that we must continue to pressure Anglia Water. Cllr.  Rice will serve as liaison on this issue and Cllr. R. Price asked to be copied on any reports/issues re flooding so he too can assist.
* Environment – Cllr. Lovick suggested that post Covid a litter pick up could be organized. Cllr. Blaythwayt noted he could help in the loan of equipment such as Hi Vis jackets.
* Footpaths – Cllr. Lovick noted nothing to report.
* Highways – After clarification that the phone box on the corner of Station Rd/St Nicholas way is active, Cllr. Butler suggested the installation of a grit box on the corner.  During icy weather due to the camber on the road it can be a death trap.  It would require volunteers to distribute the grit which Butler volunteered to do.  Cllr. Butler proposed looking into cost which he believes to be £150.  Cllr. Rice seconded and all approved. Cllr.  Buckley also suggested a waste bin.  The issue is cost of getting it emptied.
* Staithe - Cllr. May suggested that more waste bins are needed at Staithe.  Cllr. Blaythwayt offered to approach the Broads Authority about getting more installed.

1. Reports from Other Bodies:

* VHMC – Cllr. Graves-Morris informed the group that following approval and acceptance of the grant from the North Norfolk District Council Sustainable Communities Fund, proposals have been reviewed and a vendor selected.  He thanked Councillor Blaythwayt for his assistance in supporting the proposal, Cllr. Chapman for his extensive technical knowledge and Cllr.  Turner for soliciting and negotiating proposals.  Work should commence in Spring.   He further noted there is another tree down that must be attended to.
* Trust Fund – Cllr. Chapman informed the group that grants have been made to St. Nicholas Church, the Methodist Church, and the Brownies to help them during the pandemic. All should be financially comfortable at this time and the Trust Fund is financially strong and affluent.
* BA/UTWG – Cllr. May suggested that now is the time for business to apply for grants.  Cllr. Rice mentioned an idea being considered to add an extensive land drain to the sea across Hickling.
* Cllr. May also noted that a Councillor brought forward a complaint about a business not following Covid restrictions. The matter has been dealt with.
* NNDC/NCC – Councillor Price announced that the number of Covid cases in the area are down to 271/100,000 from 358/100,000. He is working to increase the speed of access to the vaccine in our area.
* Ludham School – no report

1. Finance Report and Approval of Payments: Cllr. Rice asked for the Council’s approval of what was itemized on the agenda. Cllr. Lovick asked if any kind of support documentation supported the expenses of the Clerk.  Harrison noted that such documentation is normal. Cllr. May reported that there are certain expenses for the clerk that are pre-approved.  This needs to be revisited when a new clerk is engaged.  Cllr. Chapman informed the Council that David Balls had 15 boxes of documents that will be delivered to Cllr. Chapman. He requested approval from the Council that he would go through the paperwork and archive anything that is not currently needed in Norwich.   He also suggested that the new Clerk be issued with 2 flash drives to store Council matters on. One to be held by the Clerk and one the Chair.  Both matters proposed by Cllr. Chapman were seconded by Cllr. Rice and approved by all.  Cllr. May proposed that all bills as presented be paid seconded by Cllr.  Graves Morris and approved.

1. Consultation and enquiries – nothing to report.

1. Any other business: Each councillor was asked if they had anything.
   * Cllr. Lovick reported that he and Cllr. Turner were working with Mary Haslam on the Gazette.
   * Cllr. Butler suggested adding litter bin at the corner of Station Road and St. Nicholas Way.Cllr. Rice will investigate cost etc and report back.
   * Cllr. Standen noted that the old wall alongside the Church property is bowing out badly. Cllr. Rice will reach out to Donald Pickering about this issue.
   * New Council vacancy being posted with closing date of February 9th. Cllr. Rice will also post on PH Face Book page.
   * Cllr. Harrison asked about training opportunities for new Councillors.Cllr. Rice will reach out to NALC about online opportunities. Ms. Vergette noted that there is one available that takes about 2 hours for all members.

1. With there being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:36 pm