



**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON  
MONDAY 20<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2023 at 7:00PM**

**Present:** Cllr J Bell, Cllr I Urwin, Cllr L Tacey, Cllr J Mew, Cllr Alexander  
Clerk – J Challis, RFO – S Budd, 2 members of the public

**Apologies:** Cllr C. Tranter

**1 Chair's welcome and to consider and approve apologies for absence**

Cllr Bell welcomed everyone to the meeting, including the members of the public. Apologies received from Cllr Tranter were approved unanimously.

**2 To receive Declarations of Interest on Agenda items**

Cllr Bell declared a non-pecuniary interest against agenda item 17, due to being a member of the Gislingham WI, and a committee member of Friends of St Mary's. Councillors agreed unanimously for Cllr Bell to remain present during the discussion but to abstain from voting.

**3 To received Requests for Dispensations on Agenda items**

See agenda item 2.

**4 To resolve the draft minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023 are a true and correct record.**

Cllr Mew proposed approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023 as a true and correct record; seconded by Cllr Tacey and approved unanimously with one abstention (Councillor who was not present at the meeting).

**5 Matters Arising/Update on actions from the 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023 Parish Council Meeting**

Apologies received from Cllr Alexander for the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023 were previously deferred due to no reason being provided. Cllr Alexander confirmed her reason for being unable to attend the January 2023 meeting, which was approved unanimously with one abstention (Cllr Alexander).

**6 Report from County Councillor**

A copy of CC Cllr Fleming's report can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.

**7 Report from District Councillor**

A copy of DC Cllr Warboy's report can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.

## **8 Gislingham United Charity nominated Parish Council representative**

GUC (Gislingham United Charity) are seeking a new nominated Parish Council Representative due to one of the current two representative's terms ending shortly, and suggested it would be beneficial for any nominees to attend a Parish Council meeting. A resident had indicated their interest, so Cllr Bell asked the Clerk to extend an invitation to the March Parish Council meeting, and the resident was therefore in attendance. Cllr Bell invited the resident to introduce themselves and explain why they were interested in becoming a nominated Parish Council representative. The resident explained that they have previously been a nominated Village Hall representative for GUC. They would like to become a Trustee of GUC once more, in order to be involved in its charitable aims for the residents of Gislingham.

Cllr Urwin asked if the resident would be willing to attend Parish Council meetings to ensure feedback between the council and GUC, if they were to become the nominated PC representative. The resident confirmed they would, and there being no further questions, Cllr Bell thanked the resident for attending, and confirmed that the Clerk would be in touch once councillors have made a decision.

## **9 Public Participation Session (15 minutes set aside)**

The two members were present to speak to the Council regarding the condition of the verges opposite the Lovells development, (in addition to one of the members being present for the previous agenda item).

They reported that the lorries entering and leaving the Lovells development had eroded the verges opposite, which in effect has widened the roadway. However in doing so, the gap between where the verges used to start, and the road, has become a strip of potholes, making it very dangerous for cars if their wheels steer into it. They suggested this edge should be kerbed to solve the problem and make it safe for all road users.

Councillors discussed the issue and agreed for the Clerk to report it both to the Lovells Developers and Suffolk Highways. Cllr Urwin will take photographs this week to be attached to the reports.

7:20pm the two members of the public thanked councillors and left the meeting.

## **10 Chair's Report**

- Cllr Bell thanked Mr Bryant for organising the Spring Litter Pick with the 1<sup>st</sup> Mendlesham Scouts. It was held on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2023, and Mr Bryant reported it was a great success with 15 adults and 8 youngsters taking part.
- Cllr Bell reminded councillors to forward their nominations for the Watson Bowl and Volunteer of the Year Award 2022 to the Clerk before the next meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023, when the nominations will be decided 'IN CAMERA'.
- Further to agenda item 8, Cllr Bell asked councillors to consider who they would like to represent the Parish Council on the GUC board of Trustees, and to forward their thoughts to the Clerk to collate and send to the Chair of GUC.

## **11 Clerk's Report**

- Six Bells Inn Appeal ref: APP/W3520/W/22/3306727. The Planning Inspectorate has provided an update to say that they are waiting to conduct a site visit, following which a decision is expected towards the end of April 2023 against the appeal.
- Placement of the 30mph sign near the Lovells Development; SCC has advised that it will cost in the region of £10,000-15,000 to move the sign, including the cost of a new traffic regulation order that is a mandatory requirement. Any such change has to be supported by the County Councillor.
- The grit bins have been delivered and are on MSDC's list of works to install, with the CCTV signage and new dog bin.

- An invitation has been received for a Parish Council representative to join BMSDC's Joint Local Plan Modifications Teams meeting, on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2-3:30pm. Cllr Bell offered to attend and asked the Clerk to forward the Teams meeting invitation.
- The new Gislingham sign on the B1113 has now been fitted by SCC.
- Play equipment/surfacing CIL Bid Application – no further update as yet. Councillors considered whether to include the new VAS signs within the Bid. The Clerk will ask MSDC Infrastructure whether this is possible, or if a separate CIL Bid Application needs to be made.
- Noticeboard; the site visit was conducted by the manufacturer to inspect the faults. They have reported that in their opinion the noticeboard is not faulty because condensation is a natural phenomenon. Their advice is that it should be wiped down with a clean cloth. The Clerk is pursuing this further with the supplier.
- The Clerk is in the process of obtaining three quotations for the footpath grass cutting 2023, which will be included on the April agenda for councillors' consideration and decision.
- Play Inspection Report dated 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023: MSDC contacted the Play Inspection Company to ask why the inspection was conducted, given that Gislingham PC had advised we would be arranging our own inspection, and the contractors were present carrying out the works to the under 6 play area and resurfacing at the time the inspection was carried out. They have not received a reply as yet but will chase it up.
- The hedge on the High Street, Gislingham, which is encroaching onto the road/pavement has been reported again.
- Lovells reported that they inspected the verges and could not see any issues following the previous advice from a resident that they had been eroded by lorries entering leaving the site. The Clerk will contact them again as per the concerns raised in agenda item 9 Public Participation Session.
- A resident has made comment regarding the poor condition of some of the signage within the village. The Clerk has replied to advise that this is currently being looked at, and relevant reports made to Suffolk Highways.
- The Village Hall have confirmed that they are happy for the litter picking equipment to be stored in the area with the chairs, however this means it will not be under lock and key. Councillors were thankful for the offer, but raised concerns that it would not be in a locked area. After discussion, Cllr Urwin kindly agreed to keep the equipment in his locked garage, until an alternative location can be arranged.
- War Memorial – the grant application to the War Memorials Trust is ongoing. They have advised it to be quite a lengthy process.
- Defibrillator – no further updates. As per the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2022, councillors agreed unanimously that due to the unknown history of the current defibrillator located in the phone box outside the village hall, and concerns that it is not an up-to-date model, they would seek to purchase a new machine, possibly situated in a more prominent location within the village, upon further advice from the local ambulance service. After discussing, councillors shared their concerns that in the meantime, should there be a need to use the current defibrillator, it may not be reliable. Therefore it was agreed to email the village hall to remind them that the PC agreed not to take on responsibility for the current defibrillator, due to reasons minuted above.

#### **ACTION**

- **Clerk to ensure grit bins, CCTV signage and new dog bin are installed as soon as possible.**
- **Clerk to ask MSDC Infrastructure if new VAS signs can be included in the current CIL Bid Application**
- **Clerk to pursue complaint regarding the new noticeboard**
- **Clerk to obtain three quotations for the cutting of the footpaths**
- **Clerk to pursue response regarding the annual Play Inspection Report**
- **Clerk to continue with village signage audit and reports to Suffolk Highways**
- **Clerk to email the Village Hall regarding the defibrillator as above**

## **12 RFO's Report**

- A summary of reserves, receipts and payments, and a bank reconciliation, all to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023, were sent to Councillors prior to the meeting.
- Confirmation of the precept instalment payments 2023/24 has been received from BMSDC, which also confirms a council tax band D decrease of 20.32% on 2022/23.
- Approval of Internal Auditor 2022/23: Councillors unanimously agreed to instruct Trevor Brown to act as the internal auditor for 2022/23, as previously.

**ACTION – RFO to instruct Trevor Brown as above**

## **13 Neighbourhood Watch Report (Clerk)**

The March Neighbourhood Watch Report was sent to councillors prior to the meeting, and can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.

## **14 Footpath Warden's Report (Martyn Bryant)**

The Footpath Warden confirmed prior to the meeting that there are no updates to his February 2023 report.

## **15 SID (Speed Indicator Device) Report**

The March SID report can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.

## **16 New Speed Indicator Devices, including approval of updated quotations**

The Clerk obtained three quotations with up-to-date pricing for the new VAS devices, which were sent to councillors prior to the meeting. After discussing it was agreed to defer this item until after the May elections.

**ACTION – Clerk to add to the June 2023 agenda**

## **17 Grant & Donation Requests**

- Gislingham Women's Institute (WI) – a request has been received for a donation of £100 towards a summer outing to Wimpole Hall for members. Cllr Bell reiterated her previously declared non-pecuniary interest against this item. Cllr Alexander proposed approving a donation of £100; seconded by Cllr Tacey, and approved unanimously with one abstention.
- Friends of St Mary's Church Gislingham (FOSM) – a request for a donation of £250 towards the Annual Flower Festival has been received. Cllr Bell reiterated her previously declared non-pecuniary interest against this item. Councillors discussed the request, noting that a request was received in September 2022 but was refused because it was retrospective. Councillors also noted that the Grants & Donations Policy states 'The Grant or Donation available is limited to a maximum of £100 per application. If the Parish Council considers that there are exceptional circumstances, then it can decide to exceed these limits.' After discussing, Cllr Urwin proposed approving a donation of £250; seconded by Cllr Mew and approved unanimously with one abstention.  
Cllr Urwin asked whether the £100 discretionary limit in the Grants & Donations Policy should be increased. Cllr Bell said this could be discussed when the policy is reviewed again in September 2023.

**ACTION – Clerk to advise Gislingham WI and FOSM as above, and RFO to raise payments via cheque.**

## **18 Elections 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

Anyone wishing to stand for the next 4-year period will need to complete and submit a nomination form by 4<sup>th</sup> April 2023, for the Elections due to be held on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023. Retiring councillors will

step down on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023, and new councillors will start office. The Clerk has an appointment to take any completed nomination forms to the mobile Electoral station in Eye on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> March.

## **19 Annual Village Meeting and Annual Parish Council Meeting Arrangements 2023**

The Annual Meetings are due to be held on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023, however the Annual Village Meeting will now precede the Annual Parish Council Meeting. This is because the JRSO Adult Lead (Junior Road Safety Officers) from Gislingham School has confirmed they will be the guest speaker, and the JRSO's have also been invited to attend.

Therefore the Annual Village Meeting will start at 6pm in the Village Hall on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023. Annual reports will be invited from organisations within the village, and the Watson Bowl and Volunteer of the Year awards for 2022 will be presented. Light refreshments will be served at the end of this meeting, which will be followed by the Annual Parish Council Meeting at 7pm. At the Annual Parish Council Meeting the Chair and Vice Chair for 2023/24 will be appointed. The Chair of the Staffing Panel will also be appointed, and Councillors will discuss whether they wish to have a Planning and Finance Committee, and confirm the meeting dates for the forthcoming year.

## **20 Expiry of Allotment Agreement with GAGA in May 2023**

Further to the 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023 meeting, the RFO has been advised by the solicitor acting on behalf of the Landowner, that the Landowner would prefer for the Agreement to remain with the Parish Council. The Landowner is not VAT registered, and the solicitor does not believe there to be any stamp duty implications. Councillors discussed the Agreement reiterating their concerns regarding the financial implications to the council for the additional work created for the RFO, and for taking the cheque to the Co-op bank in Ipswich. In addition there were also concerns raised regarding the council's management obligations of the allotments as set out in the Agreement, and any associated liabilities.

Councillors agreed these concerns require further detailed consideration, and the agreement should be an item for decision at the June meeting, post elections.

**ACTION – Clerk to include as an agenda item for the June meeting**

## **21 Approval of Street Lighting Maintenance and Energy Inventory 2022-23**

This was circulated to councillors prior to the meeting. Cllr Bell said that streetlight no. 19 on Mill Street is still listed incorrectly. The Location needs to be amended from 'Opp School' to 'Opp Old School', which is now a private house, to avoid any confusion.

Cllr Bell proposed approval of the Street Lighting Maintenance and Energy Inventory 2022-23, taking into account the above amendment. Seconded by Cllr Urwin and approved unanimously.

In the covering letter from Suffolk Highways it mentions conversion to LED lanterns to help reduce energy costs. Councillors asked the Clerk to find out more information from Suffolk Highways on this.

**ACTION – Clerk to advise Suffolk Highways that the inventory has been approved with the amendment against streetlight unit no. 19, and request further information on conversion to LED lanterns.**

## **22 Charity Meadow Update**

The Play equipment/resurfacing company have confirmed that the softer area of surfacing reported by Cllr Urwin at the previous meeting, is due to the following, which they advised is the standard way resurfacing over existing areas is carried out:

'Wet pour is made up of two layers; the first layer is the base layer which is bigger pieces of rubber making it very soft and then the top layer which is smaller pieces which is harder wear course.

When we completed your overlay, we had to remove a blue graphic which was loose meaning we couldn't overlay it with rubber.

In order to then bring this area up to the same level as the rest we filled the hole using base rubber then overlaid the entire area.  
This means you have a small area of wet pour which has more base layer than others making it softer under foot.'

Councillors agreed they were happy with the explanation.

## 23 Finance

Payment	Amount	Proposed by	Seconded by	Approval
Admin Payment for <b>March 2023</b> (Clerk & RFO)	£791.59	Cllr Urwin	Cllr Mew	Unanimous
Clerk mileage expenses (March 2023 PC meeting)	£8.55	Cllr Mew	Cllr Alexander	Unanimous
Hire of Village Hall (February 2023 PC meeting)	£20.00	Cllr Alexander	Cllr Tacey	Unanimous
I. Urwin expenses (H&S refresher course)	£36.00	Cllr Tacey	Cllr Bell	Unanimous with 1 abstention
Gislingham CE Primary School (Running Track)	£4,595.00	Cllr Tacey	Cllr Bell	Unanimous
Playground Supplies (resurfacing work/under 6 play area)	£36,868.80	Cllr Bell	Cllr Urwin	Unanimous
RFO expenses (stamps)	£5.44	Cllr Mew	Cllr Alexander	Unanimous
SCC Street Lighting & Maintenance costs	£1,416.37	Cllr Urwin	Cllr Mew	Unanimous
Gislingham WI	£100.00	Cllr Alexander	Cllr Tacey	Unanimous with 1 abstention
FOSM (Friends of St Mary's Church)	£250.00	Cllr Urwin	Cllr Mew	Unanimous with 1 abstention

The RFO raised cheques for all payments, which were signed by Cllr Bell and Cllr Urwin, as all cheques need to be signed by two signatories.

Cllr Bell requested an 'IN CAMERA' discussion regarding the Clerk and RFO's holiday entitlement. Approved unanimously and minuted separately.

## 24 Training

The Clerk advised that SALC have confirmed New Councillor Training dates will be announced after the May elections.

## 25 Policies and Reports

- Privacy Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Risk Assessment and Management Policy
- Publication Scheme
- Safeguarding Policy
- Transparency Policy
- Internet Banking Policy
- Reserves Policy
- Asset Register
- Business Plan
- Financial Regulations
- Standing Orders
- CCTV Policy

- Internal Controls
  - Internal Control and Internal Audit Effectiveness Review
  - Internal Control Statement Approval

The above policies and documents were sent to councillors prior to the meeting. The RFO requested the Financial Regulations be amended to reflect that the budget is reviewed every 6 months, and also that the Internal Control Report be amended to say 'has appointed a Councillor to conduct a review of the system of internal control via the following tests on a quarterly basis with a written report of any findings to be submitted to the Council and minuted as received'.

After discussing, the policies and documents listed above were unanimously approved en bloc, taking into account the amendments from the RFO and councillors.

**ACTION – Clerk to update and publish all policies and documents above**

## **26 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of Gislingham Parish Council will be held on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023 at 7pm in Gislingham Village Hall.

Meeting Closed at 8:59pm