



Working for our Community

GISLINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT GISLINGHAM VILLAGE HALL ON WEDNESDAY 11TH SEPTEMBER 2019 AT 7.30PM

Present: Cllr J Bell, (Chair) Cllr C Tranter, (Vice-Chair) Cllr J Pitt, Cllr F Oliver, Cllr I Urwin, Cllr J Malone.

Members of the Public.

The meeting was well attended by members of the public. The Chair welcomed everyone and read a short statement apologising for not being able to announce the Meeting on the Council website and only on the Village Noticeboard.

One of the reasons for holding the meeting was so that Cllr Pitt could update the Parish Council on arrangements to hold the first meeting of the Outdoor Sport and Recreation sub-Committee which have been tasked with progressing the plans for developing outdoor sports and recreation facilities for the Village using Section 106 monies which are earmarked for this sole purpose.

Apologies: Cllr Holder, Cllr Sheehan. Cllr Saunders advised he did not attend as he objected to a second EM being held.

- 1. To consider and approve apologies for absence**
 - 1.1 Apologies for absence from Cllr E Sheehan, Cllr C Saunders, Cllr T Holder were accepted
- 2. To receive declarations of interest on agenda items**
 - 2.1 None
- 3. To approve the draft minutes of the Extraordinary Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 28th August 2019**
 - 3.1 As the minutes could not be published on the website, Cllr Bell read them aloud to the meeting.
 - 3.2 Councillors present at the meeting held on 28th August 2019 agreed they were a correct record of the meeting.
- 4. Matters Arising from the last meeting**
 - 4.1 None
- 5. Public participation session**
- 5.1 Introduction from Cllr Pitt, Chair of the Outdoor Sport and Recreation Sub Committee**
 - 5.1.1 Cllr Pitt acknowledged the anxiety which existed regarding the proposals for new outdoor sports and recreation facilities on the Charity Meadow (CM) which included, amongst other issues, the location of the facilities and potential concerns of bad behaviour that might occur around a skatepark. Cllr Pitt explained that there was a long history to the proposal of a skatepark and that a facility that could be used by BMX bikes as well as skateboards and toddlers' bikes was still popular and being requested by the young people of the Village. However, there was no intention of imposing a facility that the residents were against or of making decisions in secret. Cllr Pitt assured the meeting that the reason the Parish Council had set up a sub-Committee was to enable and encourage a broad participation in the design and management of the new facilities.
- 5.2 Views expressed from public attending**
 - 5.2.1 Many members of the public present voiced strong objections to the skatepark and didn't feel that it was straight forward to follow the decision-making process through the published minutes especially where only decisions not discussions are minuted.
 - 5.2.2 A petition signed by 188 residents opposing a skatepark was presented to the Council and accepted by the Chair.

Bell

5.2.3 Members of the public relayed their views which were mostly strongly against a skatepark in the Village due to concerns that it might attract unlawful activities such as drugs, vandalism, noise nuisance and other anti-social behaviour. There was scepticism that anti-social or criminal behaviour could be prevented through monitoring by police or volunteers. Reference was made to skateparks in other nearby towns and villages that had been closed down due to such problems.

5.2.4 Other residents also thought that it would be a great shame to create a large concrete structure in a rural setting such as the Charity Meadow and might spoil it.

5.2.5 A resident, who had grown up in the village, felt that there was very little for teenagers to do.

5.2.6 Another resident expressed the view that there had been a very negative response to efforts to meet the wishes of a cross section of age groups for outdoor recreation facilities. Also, that the history of the skatepark initiative should not be forgotten especially as the last time the whole village was formally polled in 2011 for the creation of a Parish Plan, there had been an overwhelming support for a skatepark.

5.2.7 The feeling of the meeting appeared to be that this was too long ago and no longer represented the wishes of the Village. Also, that the results of the more recent survey held in January 2019 did not show a strong demand for a skatepark.

5.3 Cllr Pitt responses to some of the concerns raised

5.3.1 Cllr Pitt argued that the facility being considered, although called a skatepark, would in fact be designed for use by BMX bikes and toddlers' scooters etc as well as skateboards. She added her view that it was legitimate to add the votes for the skatepark and for BMX bikes together. Bearing in mind that the Trustees of Gislingham United Charities (GUC) had rejected an exercise trail/jogging track, a facility for BMX bikes and skateboards was arguably the second most popular practical proposal.

5.3.2 In summary it was acknowledged that there was a strongly expressed opposition against a skatepark. Cllr Pitt assured the meeting that there would be further consultations and that no plans would go ahead without the democratically expressed support of the Village through a new survey or poll. She urged residents to join the sub-Committee and to attend its meetings. Members of the public who were interested in joining the sub-Committee were asked to leave their names and contact details and several did.

Most members of the public left at this point.

6 Outdoor Sport and Recreation sub-Committee were taken together.

6.1 It was agreed that initial costs up to £50 could be incurred in order that the sub-Committee meetings could hire the Village Hall for its meetings and provide displays and handouts to facilitate an informed discussion by all present. All expenditure will require receipts. Cllr Pitt to book the Village Hall and request that the invoice be sent to the Parish Council (noting it was an Outdoor Sport & Recreation booking for accounting purposes). The new Expenses Form to be used for purchases by Cllr Pitt. The Chair signed the Terms of Reference for this sub-Committee.

Proposed: Cllr Bell

Seconder: Cllr Urwin

All agreed.

7. Policies

The following policies were approved for adoption by the Council and signed by the Chair: These policies have all been uploaded to the Parish Council website.

- 7.1 Complaints Policy
- 7.2 Disciplinary Policy (read with Disciplinary Rules)
- 7.3 Disciplinary Rules (read with Disciplinary Policy)
- 7.4 Grievance Procedure
- 7.5 Laptop and Cell (Mobile) Phone Usage Policy
- 7.6 Sickness Absence Policy
- 7.7 Training Policy
- 7.8 Travel and Expenses Policy

8. Staffing Matters

8.1 For reasons of maintaining confidentiality this item was held in camera. A report was given by Cllr Tranter

9. Future Meetings

9.1 Date of the next Parish Council Meeting: Monday 16th September at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

Cllr Malone was thanked for taking the minutes in the absence of The Clerk.

