

**Witham on the Hill Parish Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Witham on the Hill Parish Council**  
**18<sup>th</sup> September 2017(Min 17-03) at 7.00 p.m. in St Andrew's Parish**  
**Church**

**Present:**       **Councillors:** Charles Henriques, Andrew Greenwood and Sue Pennant - Jones,  
                  **Residents:** Gloria Greenwood and Lynne O'Hara  
                  **Others:** Bernard Champness – Clerk and County Cllr Bob Adams

**Open Forum**

Although residents were present there was no open forum and the meeting was formally opened at 19.00

**37. Apologies for absence, acceptance of Apologies**

**37.1** Apologies were received from Cllr J Kirkwood (personal)

**37.2 Resolved:** that the apologies be accepted

**38. Declaration of Interest –** To receive Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests, as set out in Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011 and the nature of those interests relating to any Agenda item

**38.1** No one declared an interest in any matter that was on the agenda.

**39. Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on the 17<sup>th</sup> July 2017(17-02)**

**39.1 Resolved:** That the minutes of the 17<sup>th</sup> July 2017 were signed by the Chair as a correct record.

**40. Matters to Report**

**40.1** Cllr Pennant Jones said that the garages at East Green had not been looked after and now looked neglected. She showed some photographs to reinforce what she was saying and which showed that weeds and grass had been allowed to grow by the garage doors and in the surrounding area. She was advised that the way of getting this done was to go on line at SKDC regarding the Big Clean and ask for the vegetation to be cut back. The only problem was that she did not know who owned the garages. She thought it was South Kesteven District Council but they denied that they did. Cllr Bob Adams said that he would make enquires. Cllr Pennant Jones said that she would go on line and register this as work to be done.

**40.2** In the same area, there was insufficient lighting and residents had complained that the area was very dark and they felt unsafe. Cllr pennant Jones wanted to know if we as a Council could do anything about getting lighting installed or whether we could purchase a step light. She was advised in the first instance to put this onto the Big Clean as well.

**40.3** Cllr Greenwood said that Cllr Kirkwood had reported to him that there was a problem on Footpath 1 as a tree had fallen over it this had been reported.

**40.4** Cllr Greenwood reported that the wooden hand rail at the Bywells needed replacing as it was rotten. He had obtained a quote of £115.00 for oak materials which he thought was expensive and he was investigating either different hard-wood or a cheaper quote. Once he was satisfied

with the cost he would carry out the repairs himself. He was advised that the quote he had obtained was considered reasonable, the Council would be happy to reimburse him and he could carry out the repairs.

**40.5** Thanks were recorded to Mr Will Stanton for clearing the footpaths which was very much appreciated.

#### **41. To Co-opt a Councillor**

**41.1** There was only one candidate Mrs Lynne O'Hara, who was present. The Clerk asked her the two legal questions and she confirmed that she was not an undischarged bankrupt and did not have a criminal record. Resolved: that Mrs Lynne O'Hara be co-opted onto the Council. She was asked to sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office which she did and which was witnessed and signed by the Clerk. She was invited to take her place at the table for the remainder of the meeting. The Clerk explained that he would send her the Registration of Members Interests form for her to complete.

#### **42. To receive a report from the County and District Councillors.**

**42.1** County Councillor Bob Adams explained that following the restructuring of the County Council things were bedding in and working well. There was still a significant problem dealing with potholes throughout the County. He advised that if we wanted to report a pothole we should use the portal on the website and it would be logged with a reference number. He understood that once logged, the complaint had to be looked into and dealt with whereas if it was a telephone call there was no record and messages could easily be misplaced. It was suggested that residents could and should continue to report any potholes.

**42.2** District Councillor Martin Wilkins was not present and had not sent a report. The Clerk was asked to contact him to see if he had a report which could be included in these minutes.

#### **43. Clerks Report and Correspondence received.**

**43.1** The following letters/e-mails had been received:

1. A substantial number of letters from HMRC dealing with advice and dates for webinars.
2. A number of letters relating to historical talks in the Village and surrounding area.
3. Notification of the outcome of the last few planning applications.

It was commented that it was not thought necessary to note each and every letter of e-mail received. Likewise, it was felt that the minutes were rather long and should be shortened. The Clerk pointed out that it was necessary and a requirement that decisions were recorded and minutes should show how decisions were arrived at without having to go into detail about who said what. Cllr Pennant-Jones asked that if the Clerk sent her the minutes would paraphrase them for the Three Towers magazine.

#### **44. Planning applications:**

**44.1 S17/1603** – remove branches off Cherry Tree overhanging No 1 Elm Street at 1 Elm Avenue. **Response** by 20<sup>th</sup> September 2017' It was noted that both this plan and the one in Item 44.1.1 had been approved on the 15<sup>th</sup> September despite us having until the 20<sup>th</sup> November to reply. The Clerk was to record this in a letter to the Planning Department

**44.1.1 S17/1604** – removal of Holly tree at Kayfen, Main Street, **Response** by 20<sup>th</sup> September 2017. See item above.

#### **45. To consider the External Auditors certificate and opinion**

- 45.1** The External Auditor Grant Thornton had now carried out the Audit and were content that all was in order. However, they did point out that the Internal Auditor had indicated in Objective F 'yes' to having petty cash when we did not operate this scheme and he should have stated "not covered" Likewise they noted that the Council held a high level of funds in reserve and that we should consider in future we reduce the amount. **Resolved;** that the report be noted.
- 46. To consider the amount we may request for the Precept for 2018-19 to be discussed at the November meeting.**
- 46.1** The Clerk explained that this was on the agenda for the November meeting when we would have to set the Precept request for 2018-19. Although no decision was required now we could give consideration to what might be needed for the next financial year. Some suggestions were made such as a village cleaner (litter picker), general maintenance work in the village, flowers and maintaining them. All these matters could be considered.  
In relation to the above matter the Clerk explained that he could start the budget process by putting in a nil request for any funds and instead we could use the reserves that we had. On the other hand, if we did that and Parish Council precepts were subsequently capped to nil increase, we would have to pay for a referendum to do so and this could cost more than the amount we might need as a Precept. If we had a legitimate reason for maintaining the reserves we could feel confident in doing so. No decision was needed but consideration could be given to this matter between now and the meeting in November. Matters to consider: why there was no village cleaner, general maintenance work that needed to be carried out, planting and looking after flower beds and shrubs.
- 47. To discuss how we can progress our request for some action to make the junction with the A6121 safer**
- 47.1** Cllr Greenwood explained that since the last meeting there had been three further accidents. Two at the crossroads and one by the bend towards Toft. He was not sure if these were reported so he was not sure if they were on the register of recorded accidents. However, this was still a concern and something should be done to either reduce the speed limit or to have a long section of double white lines in the centre of the road. With Bourne expanding the problems are getting worse as there is more traffic now. Cllr Adams was asked if he could help in any way to get something done to make the junction safer. Quite a few children had to cross the road in the mornings and afternoon to catch the bus on the opposite side of the road. Sometimes this could take up to 10 minutes to achieve. The Clerk pointed out that perhaps the best course of action was to involve the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership as their support would make it more likely that the County Council would approve any works. Cllr Adams said that he would be pleased to help and would try and contact someone at the Road Safety Partnership and see if a meeting was possible.
- 48. To receive an update on the play equipment on The Green**
- 48.1** Cllr Greenwood explained that despite having a meeting earlier this year with Mick Smith (SKDC), when he thought some progress was being made, since then, despite repeated reminders he had heard nothing further. There was still safety mesh around the play equipment and it was felt that we really needed to see some progress now. Cllr Adams said that he would have a word with Mick Smith to see what was happening and if something could now be done to reach a conclusion.
- 49. To discuss how best to use the potential offer of funds from Witham Hall.**
- 49.1** There was nothing to discuss or report since until we know what works SKDC are prepared to fund we are not able to make any clear proposals to Witham Hall School, who have

previously indicated they may be prepared to contribute.

**50. To confirm Expenditure**

£257.07 – B M Champness (salary for July August & September)

£64.00 – HMRC (PAYE)

[ ]denotes those payments paid between meetings, which have been approved by the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Parish Council or at a previous meeting but not listed

**Payments made by Direct Debit - £**

**50 1** Resolved: that the above payments be made.

**51.** Any other business – *Reminder – by law no decision can be made under this item only information exchanged.*

**51.1** The Clerk was asked to make arrangements with Lloyds Bank to add both Cllr Greenwood and Cllr O’Hara to the list of approved signatories.

**51.2** The Clerk was asked why we were meeting in the Church rather than the Village Hall. He explained that he had given notice of the meeting dates but he would make sure the village hall was not double booked again.

**51.1** There being no other business the meeting was formally closed at 20.18

**52.** The date of the next meeting – to be held on **Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2017** at 7.00 p.m. at St Andrew’s Parish Hall, Witham on the Hill.