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Minutes of the Fressingfield Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 4 May 2021 at 7.30pm. This was a virtual meeting, held on Zoom.

Present: Cllrs Alex Brockhurst, Garry Deeks, Philip Eastgate, Tom Lindsay, Nigel Lucker, Trevor Orchard, Nick Stolls, Rachael Troughton, Neil Venton and Di Warne (Chair).

Also in Attendance: There was one member of the public and Andy Parris, clerk to the council and responsible financial officer (RFO).

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- 1 Election of chair of the council. Cllr DW was proposed by RT. Seconded by AB. She was elected unanimously.
  - 2 Election of vice-chair of the council. DW proposed NS. Seconded by TL. NS was elected unanimously.
  - 3 The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
  - 4 Apologies for absence. District Councillor Hadingham and County Councillor McGregor were both absent due to the imminent local elections.
  - 5 Members' declarations of interest. There were none.
  - 6 Notification by councillors of any lobbying related to an agenda item. Cllrs PE, AB, GD, NS and DW had been lobbied by parishioners regarding the planning application for Wakelyns Farm.
  - 7 Minutes of the previous meeting.

It was resolved that the minutes of the annual parish meeting and full council meeting held on 20/04/21 are correct.

Updates on items from previous meetings. – Information from the SIDs has been collected by TL. He will circulate this to councillors before summaries are publicised. Drawing conclusions from the data will help when devising the next steps for speed reduction in the parish. SCC has supplied an estimate of the cost of replacing/repairing the village gate-sign on the Harleston Road.

Flowering cherry trees to commemorate the Covid pandemic. After a description by GD of what could be done, the council agreed that this should be expanded into a detailed plan with costs, a timeframe and possible participants.

**RT to work with GD to draw up such a detailed proposal.**

A letter of complaint has been received following the annual parish meeting. Councillors were informed that as this was not part of a council meeting the council's complaints procedure would not be activated. The matters raised in the letter will be discussed and responded to by Cllrs DW and NS and the clerk.

**DW, NS and clerk to review the complaint.**
  - 8 The public forum. No comments were made at this point.
  - 9 Appointments
    - 1 The council approved the following:
      - i It was agreed that Cllrs NS, TL and NV would form the finance committee
      - ii There was an extensive discussion on the pros and cons of having a smaller (5 councillor) planning committee. It was agreed that planning is currently the most important aspect of the council's work. It was decided to continue with the same setup for the planning committee as this year. Namely, all councillors would be members of the committee.
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- iii Drainage working group. The main purpose of the group is to find lasting solutions to the frequent incidents of flooding in different areas of the parish. Although progress can sometimes seem as slow as wading through a mire, it was agreed to maintain this working group. The membership would be Cllrs AB, GD and DW. Four others would be invited to stay on the working group – Dr and Mrs Castro, Mr A Roberts and Mr J Secker.
- iv Speeding working group. The purpose of the group is to explore and develop schemes to reduce the speed of vehicles in various areas of the parish. It was agreed to continue with this working group. Membership would be Cllrs PE, NL, TL and TO. Two others would be invited to remain on the working group – Mr C Comins and Ms S Medland

2 The council appointed:

- i Cllr RT to review the methods and procedures for the internal control of the council's finances.
- ii GD and DW to be its representatives on Fressingfield Playingfield Management Committee

10 To consider a scheme for temporary delegation of powers Information had been circulated about the complications created by the regulation that permits virtual decision making coming to an end. The council discussed a scheme for the temporary delegation of powers. This enables the clerk to make decisions on the council's behalf. These decisions would include any day-to-day council business, approving expenditure and responding to district council requests for comments on planning applications. This delegation would last until midnight on 19 July at the earliest.

**An important element of the scheme would be fortnightly public virtual (Zoom) meetings, organised by the clerk.** These public meetings would be an opportunity for members of the public to discuss any matter with the clerk and any councillors attending. They would be publicised through the council's website and Nextdoor Fressingfield. When appropriate, the notice of the meetings would include a link to a list of planning applications that the clerk will be considering on behalf of the council. This list would also be on the council's website. DW proposed that the council adopt the scheme. NL seconded the proposal. The council supported the proposal unanimously. The full scheme of delegation can be found by following [this link](#).

11 To receive a schedule for meetings in this governmental year. The council adjusted the date of the full council meeting in April 2022. This means that the week of Easter Sunday is avoided. The schedule was then agreed by the council.

**Clerk to publish the schedule on the council's website.**

12 Finance

- 1 Report from the RFO: The timing of bank statements has been changed to the last day of each month. A request for a payment card will need to be signed by the chair. The RFO's report linked to these minutes is on the council's website.
- 2 The council approved the list of standing orders, direct debits and other regular payments.
- 3 Cllrs NV and GD confirmed that the vouchers, and invoices where appropriate, were accurately recorded on the summary sheet previously circulated to all councillors.
- 4 The council agreed to make these payments. All these payments were made by standing orders.

13 To receive reports from

- 1 The chair. Cllr DW led a discussion about how planning decisions are made, and how to respond to lobbying. The council re-affirmed its approach to responding to MSDC requests for comments on a planning application. This is that the requests are added to the agenda for the next planning committee meeting. This may be up to two weeks from the actual cut-off date for the response. Councillors also emphasised that comments on planning applications will stick to planning matters. They will not be concerned with the way in which a business is organised – these are management issues.
- 2 The clerk. The clerk's report, dealing with the issue of the timing of planning application responses described above, is available on the website. The clerk gave information about a national litter picking campaign.  
**NV agreed to lead this activity.**  
**NS will attend a webinar** on developing community-based solutions to the climate crisis.
- 3 NV informed the council about an area police webinar he had attended. This included (1) information that drug related crime linked to the so-called county lines, is not currently an issue in our rural area and (2) a link to an officer who will help the work of the speeding working group.
- 4 Fressingfield Good Neighbours Scheme. This will go 'live' on 1 June. The scheme's committee has decided there is no need to try to duplicate work being done by any local groups. This means that to begin with the focus of the group will be local.
- 5 **Cllrs NL, RT and NS will meet to refine the draft of the emergency plan**, ready to present it to the council in July.
- 6 NL is still investigating possibilities of a youth parliament.

14 Other matters brought to the meeting

- 1 There was a discussion about the increasingly industrial-estate-like-views seen when approaching the village on the Harleston Road
- 2 It was reported that wording for the last item on the usual agendas has caused some confusion with parishioners. It was agreed that in future it would be changed from 'Urgent' to 'For information'.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.35 pm.

Signed:

Chair

Date