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HOE & WORTHING CIVIL PARISH MEETING

MINUTES OF THE PARISH MEETING HELD IN ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH WORTHING, ON THURSDAY 26TH OCTOBER' 2023 AT 7.00 P.M. TO 9.00 P.M

Present: - Celia Daniel (Chairman) and Griselda Hubbard, Parish Clerk

Attendees were: - Richard Crisp, Danny Danson, Mark Dunn, Clive Hough, Wendy Hough, Alan Hughes, Graham Lewis, Miranda Smith, Margaret Barrett, Bill Borrett, Richard Malt, Sue Malt, Jennifer Tuckwell, John Tuckwell and Rev'd Rachael Dines

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chairman welcomed those present with a special warm welcome to the Team Vicar in the Dereham and District Team Ministry, Rev'd Rachael Dines. She joined the Ministry earlier this year and will no doubt help and assist the Parish wherever she can.

2. To accept apologies for absence

District Councillor Richard Duffield, who sits on the General Purposes Committee and oversees the Lincoln Ward for Breckland District Council, had been invited to attend the meeting. (Post meeting note: Chairman received ansaphone message left at 6.30pm 26.10.2023 – flood emergency)

District Councillor Roger Atterwill, who is the Chairman of Swanton Morley Parish Council and also oversees the Lincoln Ward for Breckland District Council, had been invited to the meeting but had not replied to the invitation.

Apologies for absence were received from: -

Christine Danson, Penny Dunn, Tracey Green, Ivan Mayes, Katie Mayes, Ted Sansom, Mark Smith, Philip Barrett, James Sayer, Jules Wain, Carl Watling and Glenys Watling.

3. Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 24th August 2023 to be consider, agreed and signed off

Two email changes were requested.

Philip Barrett to be added to the list of attendees. On the top of page 3, the abbreviation HMG to be changed to Hall Management Group. Item 4, second line, change alternative to read alternate.

Page 3, second paragraph, remove the last sentence.

After these amendments were made, the Chairman signed them off.

4. Matters arising from the minutes of 24th August (not on the agenda)

There were no matters arising that were not listed as agenda items.

5. Village Hall – update, Rev'd Rachael Dines, Team Vicar – appendix 1

Rev'd Dines read out her statement, which is appendix one and will be attached to the minutes.

The main points she mentioned were: -

The management of the hall, working with the Diocese of Norwich to find a way forward that is both legal and transparent to help keep the hall going, sorting out the bank account situation and trying to secure voluntary help.

The Chairman asked the Rector that once she has met with the Diocese of Norwich regarding the status of the Hall and its financial matters, the Chairman be advised of any new information.

6. Breckland District Council – General Purposes Committee – update

At the last meeting the Chairman received the mandate to ask the committee to resolve two concerns: -

- 1) request to employ a Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer
- 2) should the Parish Clerk role include accounting the Village Hall finances.

Prior to any vote being taken by the General Purposes Committee (GPC), during that meeting, which included representation from Cllr Atterwill, there was a broader discussion (which was not included in the minutes) around the need to employ a Parish Clerk. Although legally this parish had the right to ask the District Council to employ a Clerk, the District Council could not grant our request. The Chairman was told it could appear that the Parish was working towards a half-way approach to that of a Parish Council, which was not acceptable. Also, if granted, it would create a precedent and create other problems in the future i.e., relating to H.M.R.C. or if there was a change in Parish Chairman. The General Purposes Committee voted unanimously not to confer the power for this Parish Meeting to employ a Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer. Mr Borrett stated that this official job title could

not be used. General Purposes Committee recommended the Parish could, under subcontracting arrangements, then reimburse Mrs Hubbard for her administration and finance services. Mrs Hubbard agreed to accept these arrangements and, in the future, will submit an invoice (half yearly periods) to this Parish Meeting for payment.

During the General Purposes Committee meeting the Councillor referred to his record of attending Parish meetings over the past four years or so, he had not done so recently. He also reported that the Parish had become very fractious between the two villages.

Furthermore, he referenced that precept monies had been spent on the fabric of Worthing Church; this is incorrect. There was no mention of a donation made to Hoe Church. The use of Section 137 was questioned. For this meeting the information is, that for 2022-2023 Worthing Church received £750.00 for church yard costs, community equipment and labour costs, no donation has been spent on the fabric of the building.

The Chairman stated that Cllr Roger Atterwill also referred to Robertson's Barracks and was unsure why this was mentioned. It could be a possible development in Swanton Morley.

Following the General Purposes Committee meeting, Councillor Atterwill separately confirmed to the Parish Chairman that the Parish and the Village Hall finances must be held in separate bank accounts.

Mrs Hubbard also agreed to manage the day-to-day account for the Village Hall. She will be reimbursed from that account and will present to the Village Hall Committee an invoice for her time and work.

Mr Borrett questioned that the Parish Chairman was not giving an accurate report of the General Purposes Committee meeting. Mr Lewis informed the meeting that he viewed the recording of the General Purposes Committee meeting, it troubled him greatly and if Cllr Atterwill was present this evening, this would have been challenged. The Parish Chairman mentioned this is an update not a report, and in her personal opinion, what was discussed at the General Purposes Committee meeting also raised concerns. The Chairman of the General Purposes Committee recommended two areas needing attention.

1) this Parish holds a Local Governance Review and 2) the Parish has no authority to make donations under Section 137, if this was needed, the Parish must return to the General Purposes Committee for approval. Mr Borrett implied that the General Purposes Committee is not qualified to reach such a decision. He informed the Parish Chairman that Mr Trevor Wood (previous Chairman) had extensively covered this point. Mr Borrett advised the Parish Meeting to seek legal advice on this matter.

When the Parish Chairman tried to discuss the second question (should the Parish Clerk role include accounting the Hall finances) with the General Purposes Committee, the meeting was halted. The Committee stated that with the Village Hall under the control and ownership of the Diocese of Norwich, Breckland Council, our local authority, cannot discuss or get involved with the financial accounting of the Village Hall.

Mr Borrett proposed that the Clerk continues to maintain the Parish and Village Hall accounts separately, in the one bank account. This proposal was seconded by Wendy Hough and the resolution was unanimously agreed.

7. Finance – half yearly budget review. How we administer Parish Finance

At the last Parish meeting, it was agreed that, due to bank charges, the bank transfer from HSBC to the Co-operative Bank however, the application was declined so an application was subsequently submitted to Lloyds and accepted. The account will be managed by the Parish Clerk. The Chairman asked for agreement from those present to transfer the monies in the HSBC account into the new Treasurers Account with Lloyds. Mr Borrett proposed this action, seconded by Wendy Hough and all were in favour. Breckland DC will in future, pay precept monies into this new account, including the outstanding £900.00 due. The current balance of £3,249.57 will be transferred to the new account, giving a total of £4,149.57. This includes the £500.00 grant for the King's Coronation, which remains unspent. The Chairman asked for suggestions regarding how this grant should be spent.

Worthing parish residents thought a plaque, maybe an inscribed stone, paint Worthing bridge or a bench placed by the bridge, the estimated cost of £300.00. Hoe parish residents had previously suggested a tree.

Another thought was that as the King likes flowers and flora, a donation could be given to the churches to maintain the flowers.

Mr Borrett proposed a Parish event for the two villages, celebrating the Coronation, around Christmas time, to be held in the Villager Hall, seconded by Clive Hugh and the resolution was unanimously agreed. Mr Borrett offered to arrange the refreshments, etc. Sue Malt will check the diary for date availability.

Finally, as in previous years the meeting reviewed donations and it was agreed £325.00 be awarded to each church for the maintenance of both churchyards.

To complete this year's finance review, Mr Borrett proposed that the accounts and spending be approved, this proposal was seconded by Miranda Smith and the resolution was unanimously agreed.

Budget Setting for 2024/2025 – appendix 2

Our Public Liability is currently with BHIB however the Clerk has advised that this is excessive, and she thinks the same cover could be obtained with a different insurance company. A reduction to the current cost is anticipated.

Mr Lewis queried whether the Parish meeting should consider a change in the precept level. Mr Borrett referred to several years previously where the Parish meeting had reduced the precept and then raised it back to £1,800.00 which seemed appropriate.

Mr Borrett proposed the precept level for 2024-2025 is £1,800.00, seconded by Mick Dunn and the resolution was unanimously agreed.

Draft Community Emergency Fund/Emergency Plan document – appendix 3

The Parish Chairman proposed that the Parish residents consider this draft document for the future, and she invited any person interested to join her to develop this plan. She suggested that people meet at the next Group discussion, which is planned for 29th February to take this forward. Further details will follow nearer the time. It could be presented at the May meeting.

8. Planning Applications

TRE/2023/0265/TPO – Mill House, NR20 4BL Tree Preservation Order. This has been approved. Their letter of approval stated there was a site visit carried out.

3PN/2022/0036/UC Worthing Barn – prior approval for change of use. Decision by date has been extended until 2nd November 2023. (post meeting note: date now extended to 12.01.2024)

Breckland DC have produced a draft 'local Validation List (LVL)' which sought the Parish Planning Committee views on what should be considered when a Planning Application has been submitted to Breckland Planning Dept. It was an extensive checklist and the Parish responded with some recommendations. A full list can be distributed to anyone who requests this. Currently this is in draft with Breckland and not finalised.

The Parish Planning Committee had begun to review its local procedure; this is now on hold subject to the local validation list. Mr Borrett thought that in future, comments that are going to be sent should be shared with residents. He felt that at meetings everyone should see comments and they could be voted on. This is good for transparency.

Breckland Local Plan

The Chairman had sent letters to Cllr Atterwill and Cllr Duffield regarding some particular call for sites and was hoping they would be present at this meeting for discussion. Mr Borrett (as an elected Councillor) was invited if he had any news on the Options and Issues being drawn up by Breckland DC. He was not aware of anything concrete; the pressure is still ongoing regarding the New Town Development.

9. Local Governance Review

The Chairman spoke to those present regarding the recommendation raised by the GPC of having a Local Governance Review which had been discussed last year. She asked whether it was the desire of the parish to have another review and if agreed it would formally take place in 2027 at a cost of £500.00. A show of hands unanimously agreed that they wished to remain as a Parish Meeting and not move to become a Parish Council.

10. Worthing Flood – Graham Lewis – appendix 4

A handout prepared by Mr Lewis was circulated.

The homes that were affected by floods have been told by the Environment Agency that at no cost, property flood resilience measures will be provided. Much work has been done pursuing the Environment Agency on all matters.

11. Highways – Carl Watling – appendix 5

A handout prepared by Mr Watling was circulated.

The Chairman has received concerns regarding speeding through our villages which also causes properties to shake and vibrate, spread mud and damage to the verges on local roads. People are at risk when cycling or walking their dogs because delivery drivers and tractors are driving far too fast.

The Chairman offered, with the approval of the meeting, to write to local farmers and landowners to seek their continued support when using the roads safely. Also, where possible, that culverts and ditches be kept clear and any dangerous trees overhanging across the roads be cut back. This proposal was supported by Alan Hughes and seconded by Wendy Hough and the resolution as unanimously agreed. The Chairman will send out letters. A resident questioned whether the police could check on speeding however the Chairman explained that it would take a long time for this to be put in place and evidence needs to be gathered in the first instance.

On behalf of Worthing, Mr Dunn agreed to assist and work with Mr Watling on future highways matters.

12. Any Other Urgent Business

There will be a Remembrance Service in Worthing on Sunday 12th November. The Spirit of Christmas event with wine and beer tasting and Christmas Raffle will be launched on Saturday 25th November at 3pm. The Carol Service is on Sunday 17th December also at 3pm, followed by mulled wine and mince pies.

The Chairman finished the meeting by wishing everyone a good Christmas.

13. Date of next meeting

29th February 2024 DISCUSSION GROUP

23rd May 2024 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, VILLAGE HALL, HOE

13. Agenda items for next Parish Meeting

Draft Planning Document

Draft Community Emergency Fund/Emergency Plan Document

Any agenda item that parishioners wish to discuss specially, please submit in writing to the Chairman by NO LATER THAN 1st MAY 2024

There was no further business to discuss so the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed at 8.50 p.m.

Signed: CJD
Celia Daniel (Hoe & Worthing Parish Chairman)

Date: 30th May 2024