

LITTLE HOUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of a Meeting of the Parish Council held in the Village Hall on Monday 13th November 2017 at 7.30pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: Jim Cudmore, David Deacon, Andrew Harris, Julia Harrison (Chairman), Peter Harrison, Lindsay Needham and Lallit Patel

The Clerk & RFO: Selena Jacobs.

County Councillor Michael Clarke and 1 Parishioner were also in attendance.

17/108 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors Elizabeth Dutton, Lindsey Hammond

17/109 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Julia Harrison and Jim Cudmore both declared an interest for agenda item 17/121 due to family links with the organisation and did not take part in the discussion or vote..

17/110 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of the Meetings of the Parish Council held on the 18th September and the 23rd October 2017, which had been circulated to members prior to the meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the proceedings at that meeting.

17/111 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

- a) Playing field replacement of monkey bars update – No further update to report currently.
- b) Road signs VAS update – We still await the report and contact from the suppliers.
- c) Defibrillator & Payphone – The adoption of the payphone is now complete, and the defibrillator is on order.
- d) Street lights – Light 4 on Lodge Rd was awaiting new parts as it was deemed unsafe, this has now been completed.
- e) No.43 Bus Service – a new contract has been awarded which starts the 1st December and the timetable is on the noticeboard and in the Bus shelter.
- f) Cherry Tree in Lodge Close – This has been reported to Street Doctor and we await a response.

17/112 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Parishioner Mrs Jenny Monk addressed the Council to express her wish for support in the campaign being run by users of the No.43 bus service to try and save the service in the NCC budget proposals which is currently in consultation.

17/113 REPORTS FROM COUNTY/DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

County Councillor Michael Clarke reported on the current County Council Budget consultation and stressed the importance of fighting for Local services and highways. The current bus service will be guaranteed until March but in the current proposed budget the funds will be cut from then. The County Council needs to find a £10mil deficit on this year's accounts but also save £27mil on the 18/19 budget.

17/114 PLANNING MATTERS

- a) S/2017/2650/NA – **(For Info only)** Land to the east of Great Billing WRC Northampton NN3 9BX – Plans had been circulated prior to the meeting. Although we have not been invited to comment on the proposal we would like to stress concerns regarding the increased traffic at the Ecton Lane junction with the Billing Rd.

Selena Jacobs Clerk & RFO

b) S/2017/2577/EIA Application to build 525 homes plus community facilities at Land North of Newport Pagnell Road Hackleton. The Council felt no reason to Object but would like to comment on the concern for increased traffic through Great Houghton and the congestion it may cause at the Great Houghton junction with the A428 Bedford Rd.

17/115 CORRESPONDENCE

- a) Community Governance Review – The next phase of the consultation is now open. We have not been asked invited as consultees this time as Brafield on the Green have now retracted their wish for a boundary review.
- b) New Homes Bonus – The next round of the New Homes Bonus is now available and Little Houghton have £3011 to spend on Community related projects.

17/116 COUNTY COUNCIL BUDGET CONSULTATION

The Budget consultation is open until the 1st December. After discussing the main points which may affect the Parish within the proposals it was agreed that we would submit a response as shown in appendix A.

17/117 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS/BALANCE OF FUNDS

The list of payments had been circulated to members prior to the meeting and it was agreed that the following payments be approved;

Payments made out of meeting now reported;

19.09.2017	01181	Came & Company	Insurance renewal	1987.42
28.10.2017	01182	Selena Jacobs	October salary	436.78

Payments for which approval is sought;

13.11.2017	01183	E.ON	Q2 Electricity	442.30
13.11.2017	01184	E.ON Solutions	Q2 Maintenance contract	128.77
13.11.2017	01185	Selena Jacobs	Exhibition expenses	47.52
13.11.2017	01186	Defib Store Ltd	Defibrillator	1590.00

Receipts

30.09.2017	NatWest	Deposit Interest September	0.33
31.10.2017	NatWest	Deposit Interest October	0.38

Balance of Funds

After the above payments and receipts the balance of funds on the Council's bank accounts at NatWest, Drapery Branch, Northampton is £40,712.92

17/118 FINANCIAL COMPARISON REPORT

The Financial comparison report for the first half of the year was approved and accepted unanimously by members present.

17/119 INTERNAL CONTROL COUNCILLORS REPORT

As Councillor Hammond was absent from the meeting this item was deferred until January.

17/120 SCHOOL GARDEN PROJECT

The Chairman reported on a request from the school for assistance in the form of a grant to help them build a new outside learning area. They had provided estimated costs and a list of funds already acquired. The Parish Council agreed that it was happy to award a grant of up to £500 as part of its section 137 allowance.

17/121 NENE VALLEY HELP SCHEME

The Council has revived a request to consider a grant payment of £100 to the local Nene Valley Help Scheme within the 2018/19 Budget. The request was approved unanimously.

17/122 ELECTRICITY SUPPLIER REVIEW

The Clerk reported that she had been in talks with Cardinal Energy an energy consultancy firm who had been looking at obtaining a better deal for us on our street lighting bills. She reported they had secured a deal for a 52-month fixed term with an annual saving of around £100. Although this seems a small saving it was agreed that considering the recent annual 15-18% increases we have been subject to the move would be a great benefit and the Clerk obtained the go ahead to sign the new contract.

17/123 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE THE 2018/19 BUDGET

The budget which had been circulated prior to the meeting was considered and approved.

17/124 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE THE 2018/19 PRECEPT

The Precept which had been circulated prior to the meeting was considered and approved at £14,364, an increase of 2.6% in line with CPI on the current year to cover anticipated increased costs.

17/125 TRAINING

The Clerk had circulated the NCALC training schedule prior to the meeting asking if there was any interest in upcoming courses. The Clerk requested she attend the General data protection course next year which was approved.

17/126 DELEGATED PLANNING RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE CLERK

Following on from the approval of the new policy at the previous meeting the Clerk had since received some advice from Northants CALC and had made a few minor adjustments to the Policy as advised. This was discussed, and all changes were adopted and updated.

17/127 CLERKS ANNUAL APPRAISAL

It was agreed that this year's appraisal would take place privately between the Clerk and Councillors Julia Harrison and Andy Harris during January, and follow the NCALC appraisal guidelines. Any feedback should be passed on to the Chairman before the end of the year.

17/128 VILLAGE COMMUNICATIONS

The main issues discussed during the meeting which would benefit from wider circulation through our agreed communication tools were discussed and agreed.

17/129 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next statutory meeting of the Parish Council will be on Monday 8th January 2018 commencing at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

The meeting was closed at 20.45

Signed as a true record of the proceedings at the above meeting.

.....ChairDate

Appendix A

NCC Budget Consultation

Response from Little Houghton Parish Council

The proposed budget cuts were discussed at our parish council meeting on 13th November 2017.

Whilst the Parish Council appreciate the seriousness of the situation and the challenges facing the county council, WE URGE YOU IN THE STRONGEST POSSIBLE TERMS TO:-

1 Maintain the rural bus subsidies.

For many people in this village, the bus service is their only form of transport and essential for them to get to work, hospitals, shop and to socialise. To remove the subsidy and risk the transport being withdrawn would be disastrous for the rural areas. It goes against all the principles of sustainable communities and will increase the congestion on the roads and town centres, as more people would resort to private transport and taxis.

2 Maintain the gritting of rural roads

We recognise that road gritting is presently linked to bus routes, and this village benefits from both. The prompt and thorough gritting of roads is one of NCC's flagship services. Residents in rural areas need to be assured that their safety and transport needs are taken seriously. In a county such as Northamptonshire, where so much is rural in nature, the local economy, hospital services, education and social services all rely on people in the rural areas being able to get to work during inclement weather.

All of the other proposals, whilst difficult to accept, are less damaging and threatening to the rural areas and this village in particular. Little Houghton Parish Council hope that NCC are able to continue with these two essential services.