

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
Held at 7.00 p.m. on Tuesday 2nd January 2024 at TLD Hill Institute,
Thornton le Dale YO18 7RR

Present: Cllr Barrett (Chair); Cllr Green (Vice Chair); Cllr Garbutt; Cllr Hetherton, Cllr Hallsworth.

In attendance: Minute taker - June Goodson-Moore & Members of the public.

The Chair, Cllr Barrett, stated this is an ordinary meeting of the council with no closed session. He reminded all to have respectful conduct and conduct themselves with dignity.

Public session - 15 minutes prior to the start of the council meeting @ [19:00 hrs.](#)

Resident 1: You made reference to Council being responsible for some trees in the village - how many?

Response: The Chair confirmed this item is on the agenda and that land that is the responsibility of the council must be maintained including trees. Cllr Green will pick this up on his agenda item 2324/93(b).

Resident 2: Why are the traffic lights in the village not working?

Response: The Chair confirmed this is not a council responsibility. A resident stated she had reported this to Highways on their website.

Cllr Hallsworth: asked about drains being cleaned and maintained.

Response: The Chair confirmed the council could raise this with NYC. A resident confirmed that at the Hub monthly litter picks any drain issues identified are reported.

Response: The Chair confirmed the plan in hand for a village upkeep group with Cllr Hetherton and Cllr Green as members. The group would consider volunteers, terms of reference, role of caretaker and need to then tender.

Formal Council meeting commencement at [19:10 hrs.](#)

2324/90. To **Receive** apologies for absence given in advance of the meeting, and to consider the approval of reasons given for absence.

Cllr Balderson on holiday; Cllr Markham did not feel she wished to attend this evening.

2324/91. To **Receive** declarations of interest in any items on the agenda.

None.

2324/92. To **Confirm & Sign** minutes of the PCM 7th November 2023.
The minutes have still not been received, and are unlikely to be received, from the Locum Clerk therefore cannot be confirmed. Cllr Hetherton volunteered to draw up the minutes up from the video. The Chair proposed Cllr Hetherton use the video of 7 November 2023 to write up minutes and bring to the next meeting.

Resolved: To **Accept** that Cllr Hetherton writes up the minutes from the video. Cllr Barrett proposed this, Cllr Green seconded. The Council voted 5 in favour.

To **Confirm & Sign** the minutes of the OEM 5th December 2023. Cllr Hetherton proposed to accept the minutes, Cllr Green seconded this. The Council voted 5 in favour. The minutes were approved. Cllr Hetherton and Cllr Green signed the minutes.

Resolved: To **Accept** the minutes. The Council voted 5 in favour.

2324/93. To Consider & Note ongoing matters arising from previous PCM's & Business.

a) To **Consider Church Clock Repair Fund Raising**. Grants update etc.

The Chair confirmed:

a) the gambling license application had been made with Denise Rajab who was leading the fund raising to enable the Easter Bank holiday duck race;
b) donations had been received from The Buck raffle (£310), the TLD Christmas Lights, Brownies, Crafty Hubbers, the Hub tea and cake event.
c) David Algar's history write up was passed to historical society to support social media.
d) legislation indicated the PC could match fund but required public consent;
e) the fundraising would be linked to the Finance Committee, chaired by Cllr Green, bank account be available for the deposit of £600 currently raised. Link is to Finance Committee chaired by Cllr Green who will work with Denise Rajab. Cllr Balderson will be the Council's link for fund raising. Full council resolution had been made at last meeting and community fundraising must be ring fenced and properly governed. Bank account access for depositing money was in hand.

b) To **Consider Trees Survey** / Maintenance / Public Liability Insurance update.

Cllr Green addressed the public liability issue. At the last meeting Cllr Markham expressed doubt that the council had this. Cllr Green had been in contact with insurers and quoted from the policy the £10m coverage and the rules around it. Cllr Barrett confirmed the council can be reassured to know it has currently and was previously covered with public liability that includes the maintenance activity. Cllr Green asked if anyone identifies safety issues regarding trees to let him know. He has already started the risk survey and mapping of trees. Cllr Hallsworth agreed to support this.

Cllr Barrett acknowledged Cllr Green's experience and knowledge of trees and the approach to risk rate trees. Cllr Hallsworth handed in paper quote of £1400. Cllr Green read it out.

Cllr Green confirmed tenders had not been let. Cllr Barrett reminded the council of the need to tender and obtain 3 quotes for the maintenance work.

Cllr Barrett summarised the three areas of mapping, survey, maintenance and the need for PPE and training and proposed Cllr Green leads with support of Cllr Hallsworth on mapping of land of the council. Cllr Green confirmed that a schedule for maintenance is to be drawn up and risk rated. He would liaise with National Parks and NYC as required.

Cllr Hetherton noted that the council has maps of the area that are still held by the locum clerk.

Cllr Barrett summarised the three proposals:

a) Cllr Green to undertake mapping of council land;

b) Cllr Green supported by Cllr Hallsworth to survey the trees and risk rate them;

c) Cllr Green to draw up schedule of maintenance and bring back to the council.

Resolved: To **Accept** all three proposals. The Council voted 5 in favour, of all above

- c) To **Consider** [Parish Council Website](#) update.

The Chair described the problem in accessing the website for councils and for residents. Cllr Hetherton had had trouble with both the Webmaster and despite making reasonable attempts via the previous Locum clerk to gain access this has resulted in limited success to gain access. The Council has a statutory obligation regarding the website for which the locum clerk has all access codes that she has failed to relinquish. It is therefore a matter of urgency to change the web provider. The estimated cost is less than £300. A resident with website expertise offered to assist the Council.

Cllr Barrett expressed concern that residents and Councilors cannot use the website through the actions of others. He proposed to explore the kind offer from a resident initially and then decide next steps. Cllr Hetherton to lead this.

Resolved: To **Accept** the offer of help and agree Cllr Hetherton to lead. The Council voted 5 in favour.

- d) To **Consider** removal of [Salt / Grit Bins](#) & Contents.

The Chair referred to the decision at the previous meeting to remove a small number of salt bins. The salt will be retained within the village for its use. Cllr Garbutt stated the bins are full now and recommended they are left in situ for use if needed as likelihood of removal over winter is low. It was agreed to leave in situ until spring.

Resolved: **Agreed to** revisit until spring.

- e) **Resolved:** To **Consider** [Scribe](#) administration.

The Chair stated Scribe is potentially an asset this council does not have full access to. The Council has read only access currently and this is a matter of concern regarding making payments. Cllr Hetherton had spoken to Scribe who stated they need details of the two Councilors' approved and minuted by full council today to provide that access. It was agreed by the Council that Cllr Green as Chair of Finance Committee and Cllr Hetherton who has worked on Scribe be appointed as the two Councillors to have Council Admin user status of Scribe with council email addresses to be used as the Council Admin login address.

Resolved: Cllr Garbutt proposed, seconded by Cllr Barrett, to **Accept** Cllr Green as Chair of Finance Committee and Cllr Hetherton to be appointed as a Council Admin user of Scribe. The Council voted 3 in favour. Cllrs Green and Hetherton were excluded from the vote.

- f) To **Consider** [Scribe](#) correspondence process.

Cllr Hetherton explained that to access all historical correspondence in relation to Thornton le Dale Parish Council Scribe need a single council email address. Cllr Hetherton would undertake this role and this would enable all correspondence and the subscription to Scribe to be considered. Cllr Garbutt proposed that all Scribe correspondence comes to Cllr Hetherton's council email. This would enable all historical and current correspondence from Scribe to be accessed by the council.

Resolved: Cllr Hetherton proposed to undertake this role, Cllr Garbutt seconded this. The Council voted 5 in favour.

2324/94 To Consider any new planning applications, or previous Applications /Decisions

The Chair stated the addressee for planning applications was the clerk. Cllr Garbutt expressed concerns and proposed that the council contact NY Parks planning and NYC planning to confirm how they can contact the council. The Chair will take this forward.

2324/95. To Receive and Consider matters raised by Parish Clerk/RFO.

a) To **Receive** current bank balance.

The Chair stated in the absence of the clerk/RFO this had been a difficult issue to resolve. Cllr Green confirmed the amount of £10718.84 as the balance in the Virgin account. In addition, there are two Barclays bank accounts and the balance on 31 August 2023 was £57618.52. Cllr Hetherton reminded the council that Cllr Markham had confirmed she had received a Barclays bank statement for October 2023 that was not shared with Councilors.

Resolved: To Receive the update.

b) To **Note** bank mandate status & **Consider** any actions required.

The Chair had not received any update or correspondence from Barclays bank nor had any of the Councilors except Cllr Markham as stated above. Cllr Green suggested that as an account holder at Barclays bank he would make contact to resolve the bank mandate issue. Cllr Garbutt in his former parish council role had the bank mandate so would accompany Cllr Green. Cllr Barrett proposed contacting Cllr Markham, seconded by Cllr Hetherton. Cllr Barrett proposed Cllr Green and Cllr Garbutt as Barclays bank contacts, seconded by Cllr Hetherton. The Council voted 5 in favour.

Resolved: To **Ask** Cllr Barrett to formally request Cllr Markham to hand in any Barclays bank statements sent to her home address since October 2023.

Resolved: To **Confirm** Cllr Green and Cllr Garbutt to contact Barclays bank and resolve the mandate.

The Council voted 5 in favour.

c) To **Consider** Payment's for approval.

The Chair confirmed payments had been made to AJ Gardening and Brompton Refuse to date. Yesterday a further invoice of £21.91 had been received from Brompton Refuse for payment. Cllr Barrett proposed to pay the £21.91 to Brompton Refuse, seconded by Cllr Hallsworth. The Council voted 5 in favour.

Cllr Green had received an invoice from Autilla Payroll for £450.44 with respect to PAYE for HMRC to be paid by 19 January 2024. Cllr Hetherton proposed to make the payment, seconded by Cllr Barrett. The Council voted 5 in favour.

d) To **Consider** Outstanding Payments.

Cllr Hallsworth asked if insurance had been paid. Cllr Green confirmed it had. The Scribe invoice is due soon too.

e) To **Receive** and **Consider** updates from Staffing & Recruitment Committee.

Cllr Garbutt was very happy to report in line with the Parish Council's Staffing and Recruitment Committee terms of reference, and following advertisement for a Clerk/RFO, the Committee interviewed on 28 December 2023. In line with section "**Remit of the Committee**, para 3," the Committee have selected a suitable candidate for the role and are making a recommendation to full Council to proceed with this appointment.

Jenny Collins, currently clerk at Lockton parish council, is the successful candidate. It was a very good interview lasting 90 minutes with good references received.

Resolved: to **Approve** the appointment for 12 hours per week; and

Resolved: to **Agree** the salary level to be offered is NALC point 21 which is at the lower end of the scale but provides head room for the clerk to undertake training and additional responsibilities. The pay rate is in line with the size of the council. The start date proposed is 22 January 2024. Cllr Garbutt proposed to appoint, seconded by Cllr Green. Cllr Barrett thanked the Staffing and Recruitment S&R comm. Permanent appointment clerk has been the vision for some time by previous council and this council.

Resolved: To **Accept** the proposal to appoint the candidate as suggested. The Council voted 5 in favour.

f) To **Note** any Updates to challenge of AGAR 2022 / 2023

Cllr Barrett read out the following statement:

"In June 2023 a Parish Poll was held relating to public confidence in the previous Parish Council. Subsequently representatives from the Parish exercised their public rights to inspect the accounts of the previous Parish Council. The Challenge to the 2022/2023 AGAR – Annual Governance & Accountability Return was submitted in July 2023.

The external auditor (PKF Littlejohn) has recently written to me, as Chairman of the current Parish Council, with the following update. Out of 5 challenges made to the 2022/2023 AGAR – 4 objections have been accepted by the auditors.

1. Objection to the approval of & expenditure relating to Accounting Statements.
2. Objection to the management of and expenditure relating to Contracted Accounting Statements.
3. Objection to the management of and expenditure relating to Contracted Account Statements.
4. Objection to the Council's failure to follow financial regulations in respect of expenditure on items which relate to Assertion 2 of the Annual Governance Statement as well as items of account in the Accounting Statements.

As Chairman of the Parish Council, I have been asked to collate a formal response to the accepted objections by 28 February 2024. The Council's formal response to the external auditors is expected to address the individual objections raised with supporting evidence. I have acknowledged the update from PKF Littlejohn and will seek Full Parish Council agreement before any response is submitted.

Clearly, this update from the external auditors may have serious implications for those involved in the submission of the 2022/2023 AGAR, not least members of the previous Parish Council and the Responsible Financial Officer. This Parish Council recognises our responsibilities to demonstrate due diligence with the management and the administration of Public Funds. In addition to the work we have already undertaken, I indeed to collate a response to the external auditor.

The Challenge to the 2022/2023 AGAR remains subject to confidentiality rules and so any conclusions and my consultation with Full Council will take place during an EOM (Closed due to confidential nature) to be held in the next week or two. Because of the Confidentiality, it will of course be a closed meeting.

Step 3 of Process – consideration & decision. The next steps of the challenge of the AGAR are for the external auditor to consider my response and make further decisions and until that decision is made, I will not have any further updates for you “.

The Chair stated this is a very important issue that we all need to be clear about.

2324/96 To **Receive** any new correspondence received by clerk & action required for the Parish Council.
Councilors were not aware of any.

2324/97 To **Receive** matters raised by members for inclusion on future agendas & note outstanding matters for Future Agendas.

a) The Chair asked the resident who raised the questions about trees if she was happy with the response. She confirmed she was.

b) Cllr Garbutt proposed that grass cutting review should on next agenda for council to be clear on contract requirements before the cutting season including exploring caretaker role and reviewing the three different contracts.

c) Cllr Hallsworth proposed that allotments are on next agenda.

d) Cllr Garbutt conformed that the Church clock is on next agenda.

Next meeting is 6 February 2024.

Meeting closed at 20: 09 hrs .