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Minutes of Ordinary Council Meeting: Thursday 15th June 2023 commencing at 7.30PM

Minutes taken by the Clerk, Sarah Stock

Attending: Councillors Jill Slinn (Chair), Robin Green (VC), William Shearer, Mick Macmain, Stephen Crane, and Richard Gent.

Apologies received: Cllr Margaret Green.

MOP: Mr Mark Vernon (potential councillor)

Councillors RGn, RGt and SC completed Register of Member's Interest forms. Clerk will direct WNC to update their website.

2023/27 Declarations of Interest.

No declarations of interest on matters relating to the agenda.

2023/28 Public Session

Mr Vernon noted Spencer Close maintenance which will be covered later in the agenda.

Verbal Updates (no decisions will be made on items in this section of the agenda)

- Electricity charges. Resolved. Councillors noted that charges were artificially low and payment henceforth will be based on a corrected EAC.
- Chapel Meeting Room power supply: No progress. Council noted the request to buy the freeholder and build a more substantial structure, however, Althorp will not release the freeholder and building works are financially unviable. For security, the windows will be boarded up (For July/September agenda).
- Golf Lane Oak. Andrew Leighton (WNC) has confirmed by email that WNC will commence works to the tree after the summer.
- Neighbourhood Plan – WNC Officer Mags Howe has offered to attend a meeting for members of the community interested in progressing a NDP.
- Althorp (email from Stuart Coleman, 10/5) confirming action will be taken to clear Ash tree, clear ROW CE6, and trim hedges at Ten Cottages, Harlestone Road. Cllr WS & RGn will attend mtg with Sam Williams (Althorp) on 20th June. Clerk to contact Stuart Coleman regarding The Old Smithy, Northampton Rd/Pitsford Road which has been empty 2/3 year and is looking very derelict.
- Harlestone Road SID Pole. Clerk awaiting progress report from WNC.

2023/29 Minutes

Council approved the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 18th May.

2023/30 Bank reconciliation and YTD budget vs Expenditure review

Council accepted the bank reconciliation and the budget analysis provided with the agenda.

Current Account (Unity 20415701)

£5,258

Contact: The Clerk, 9 Lower Harlestone, Northamptonshire, NN7 4EW.

Tel.: 01604 820635 email: theclerk@churchwithchapelbrampton-pc.gov.uk

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|---|----------------|----------------|
| Reserve Account (Unity 20415714) | £27,127 | |
| 2023/24 Opening balance: | £32,385 | |
| YTD Income | £17,229 | |
| YTD expenditure (Inc. VAT & Unauthorised payments) | | £12,022 |
| Online Balance | | |
| Current Account (Unity 20415701) | | £10,097 |
| Reserve Account (Unity 20415714) | | £32,627 |
| Balance b/f | | £42,724 |
| YTD Closing balance (less pending expenditure) | | £39,702 |
| 2023/24 Unclaimed VAT YTD | £1,103 | |

Council to note that portion of the utility bills from Yu Energy relate to 2022/23 - £1,214.68. Propose to allocate this against reserves. However, it is likely that bills will now be around £500 per month. Council agreed to reallocate PCSO funding.

Council will investigate measures to reduce the electricity bill such as “dimmed” lighting between midnight and 5am and lower wattage bulbs (bulb change would not be FOC).

2023/31 Accounts for Payment

Council approved the accounts for payment – all payments are inclusive of VAT.

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|--------------------------------|----------------|---------|-----------|--------|
| J Hawkins (SO) | June | 28.6.23 | £27.50 | |
| Z A Finney (Noah & Grace) (SO) | June | 28.6.23 | £55.00 | |
| Sarah Stock (SO) | June | 28.6.23 | £*** | |
| Yu Energy | 1142382 | 1.6.23 | £2,071.48 | £86.31 |
| Yu Energy | 1142381 | 1.6.23 | £219.63 | £9.15 |
| Unity Trust Bank | Statement 30 | 30.6.23 | £18.00 | |
| Barbara Osborne Payroll | 7308 | 31.3.23 | £67.50 | |
| Barbara Osborne Payroll | 7382 | 30.6.23 | £69.00 | |
| Brixworth Country Park | PP Information | 8.6.23 | £4.80 | |

2023/32 PCSO – proposed new scheme.

Following the proposal from Northants Police to have a sponsored PCSO, Boughton and Harlestone Parish Councils will not be joining the scheme making the scheme financially unviable.

2023/33 Playing Field & Pocket Park

No issues raised.

2023/34 Environment (verges, path, trees, and village maintenance)

Spencer Close: Council resolved to maintain the current schedule; any additional works need to be undertaken by Pilgrims. Council is not prepared to replace the bench.

Village Mowing: Council noted suggestions from Mr Cutler regarding a revised mowing schedule to encourage biodiversity. Mr Cutler provided detailed information for Crawan Bank, the Pitsford Road/A5199 junction and the playing field.

- Crawan Bank: Council recognise that this suggestion has some merit, and council have instructed the contractor to allow the daffodils and primroses to flower and die back before mowing. It was noted that to promote wildflowers, the grass clippings need clearing and composting. The contractor does not have facility to do this, and no volunteers have been recruited. If backed by parishioners, council would support volunteers willing to progress this project.
- Pitsford Road/A5199 junction: As this is an accident black spot, council will not countenance any scheme which might inhibit visibility of the junction.
- Playing Field: Land has been set aside along the western boundary for wildflowers. Wildflower seeds have been sown and Cllr MM cleared nettles recently, at the end of the season the area will be mown and cleared. At present it is not practical to extend the wildflower area.

Council is committed to encouraging wildflowers in the pocket park and may consider extending the wildflower area at this location.

Crossing Back Lane/Jacks Lane: Council recognise that at this blind bend it is difficult for pedestrians to cross. As there is no footpath, pedestrians have limited safe crossing places. Clerk to contact highways to suggest surface road signs or a horse crossing sign.

2023/35 Planning matters

No new applications received.

Date of next meetings: 20th July. No August meeting. 21st September. 19th October. 16th November. No December meeting.

Meeting closed 20:25