

MINUTES OF METHWOLD PARISH COUNCIL
VIRTUAL MEETING HELD
THURSDAY 11th MARCH 2021 at 7.00pm

Parish Councillors present: J Marriage – Chairman, R Gibson – Vice Chair, S Burbridge, S Crump, P Crawley, D Scott, L Burge, B Horton, R Scott

Also in attendance: R Buckle (Parish Clerk)

Cllr A Ryves

Cllr M Storey

4 members of the public

The Chairman welcomed all to the virtual meeting, and thanked all for joining onscreen and on the telephone, it's good to see some new faces.

1. The parish council to receive and resolve to agree apologies for absence, Apologies received from D Charlesworth-Smith who has requested a temporary leave of absence for 5 months due to family matters – ACCEPTED

2. To receive declarations of interest in items on the agenda and consider any requests for dispensations –

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on February 11th 2021 – Proposed S Burbridge, seconded L Burge - APPROVED

4. Matters arising from the last minutes. Scotts Lane – refuse collection – three different types of wheelie bin have been distributed to the new builds by the Borough Council but no waste collection has been made, new residents were not made aware that other residents have to take their refuse to the Main Road to be collected. There is no sign of the turning circle which was shown on the original plans. Cllr Ryves was asked to take this up with the Borough Council.

5. Reports

5.1 Update and report from the virtual meeting of Open Spaces and to consider recommendations made at the meeting held on 25 February 2021 –

a. Proposal to revisit plans for building on the recreation ground – Open Spaces have been looking at converting The Pound into toilets but have been asked to look at providing changing facilities as well, as this will require a new building it was suggested an Architect is asked to advise on what may be possible, especially as the rec. is in the conservation area. Clerk to ask architects to visit and give suggestions. Wild Flower Meadow (behind the church) – the grass needs to be cut and all cuttings removed before the wild flower seeds can be sown, our Contractor has quoted £170 + VAT JM Proposed to accept this quote, S Burbridge seconded – APPROVED.

Please can the wild flower meadow be given a name so people are aware of the area being talked about? To open Spaces.

b. Proposal for a fun day/event on the recreation ground this summer – The parish council have been approached for a group to hold a community event/fun day on the recreation ground to celebrate the end of lockdown and to enable to community to get together, there is already a group of residents who are willing to support this, there was a suggestion that any funds raised could go towards the provision of a changing facility/toilets, L Burge proposed that the parish council support this event and allow the recreation ground to be used, R Gibson seconded this proposal, the parish council felt this was an excellent idea and APPROVED to support this event. Date to be confirmed.

5.2 Update and report from the virtual meeting of Hall Group and to consider recommendations made at the meeting held on 4th March 2021 – The old chairs have now been collected by Cherry Tree Farm to use in their facilities.

The signage at the hall is to be updated.

The electrician has given the Clerk a start date of 26th April 2021

a. Shelving in Old Social Club kitchen - £76 already approved, approval required to spend an additional £80 to make more substantial shelving for crockery and £150 for wood to fit on metal shelving, JM Proposed to approve the additional spend, L Burge seconded - APPROVED

6. Finance

6.1 Approval of payments list – Late invoices have been received for the boiler service £90 this will be added to the payments list for approval. B Horton proposed to approve payments, S Burbridge seconded – APPROVED

We have been informed by the waste company of a 6.25% increase to costs from 1st April 2021 this is due to an increase in costs for disposal of waste.

7. Planning

7.1 To receive planning decisions

20/01279/F Land at Former RAF Methwold Brandon Road Methwold Norfolk IP26 4RL - Freestanding solar panels Application Permitted 2 March 2021 Delegated Decision

21/00006/LB The Old Vicarage 11 Crown Street Methwold Thetford Norfolk IP26 4NR - Listed building application for installation of an eaves gutter and two rainwater pipes to the west elevation

Application Permitted 26 February 2021 Delegated Decision

7.2 To receive planning applications – None

7.3 To consider planning applications received after the agenda was published - None

8. Items received for agenda.

Consideration to transfer buildings to a Charitable Trust with the Parish Council as Sole Trustee - Following the decision on the rates from the Borough Council to remove the 100% Discretionary Rate relief on both buildings from 1st April the parish council will be liable for approx. £10500 per annum. The options to pay the rates would mean a) A substantial increase to the Precept/Council Tax b) The parish council will need to run events to raise at least £1k per month throughout the year or c) Transfer the buildings to a Charitable Trust with the parish council as Sole Trustee, this would be run as a totally separate entity.

As options a or b are not really feasible we have taken advice from CAN and NALC, the best option is to transfer the buildings to a Charitable Trust with the parish council as the Sole Trustee, as a registered charity they are automatically entitled to 80% Discretionary Relief with up to an additional 20% relief on top, this has been confirmed as correct by the Borough Council. As members of NALC the parish council have been able to take advantage of a free advisory session with a Partner at Birketts Solicitors - Charities Department, if the parish council decide to go ahead as NALC members the parish council are able to employ them at a reduced rate. To be a Charitable Trust would protect the buildings for the future.

A list of questions will need to be compiled to take back to Birketts who have quoted £5k to take this to a conclusion. JM proposed to accept the quote from Birketts and set aside £5k in the budget to move forwards so that the parish council can make an informed decision for transferring the buildings to charitable status. D Scott seconded - APPROVED

9. Correspondence – circulated as received

Open Forum for Public Participation

An opportunity to hear from members of the public, Borough and County Councillors.

Toilets on the recreation ground – previously there were plans passed for a changing room, can this be included in the plans for toilets? The Chairman replied that previous plans did not meet FIFA rules and have now lapsed but this can be revisited now that there is interest, professional advice will be sought. It may be possible to apply for CIL funding but a scheme needs to be in place before this can happen, it is too late for this year but it may be that the plans are ready to apply next year.

A resident stated that there has been a lot of negativity on Facebook recently, but he proposed to set up some events at St George's Hall, we need to grow positivity in the village, will the parish council support him with this? The parish council all agree to support this venture.

Rights of way - what happened to the proposed deviation on Footpath 4 around the old shop? Are the newly installed yellow roundalls in the correct place? It is believed this is still under consideration of the Borough Council and not decided yet.

Footpath 10 – when will this be realigned?

Trees along the meadow fence line in the rec. there is a lot of growth sprouting from the base, can this be cut back? The parish council is about to have a tree survey undertaken once quotes are received, this will identify any work which is required. Last time these growths were cut back it was done by volunteers.

A resident stated that there has been a lot of comments made on Facebook but they notice tonight those making comments haven't turned up to the meeting, if they are so worried about what the parish council do maybe they should have attended and listened to the meeting and take in what happens, the resident commended the parish council for what they do and thanked them. The Chairman responded and thanked the resident for his comments, all the parish council are volunteers and do this for no reward, hopefully a community event may help.

10. Further items and reports

As previously minuted the parish council have been approached by a developer who has asked to buy a strip of the car park to gain access to the field behind the car park at St Georges. The Chairman said that members are aware that a developer who is interested in developing the land behind the two PC buildings has made the PC an offer to purchase a strip of St Georges car park to widen the road alongside to improve the access to the site. This clearly has implications for the whole village and as such it is believed that, before the PC can respond to the offer [which would be dependent on the developer securing planning permission] it should hold a public meeting. This would not be to discuss a planning application which has yet to materialise, but to discuss the sale of a strip of the car park. Currently such a meeting cannot take place except virtually because of the Covid restrictions. The Chairman suggested that this could be on the agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting.

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on Monday 26th April at 7.00pm on Zoom anyone is welcome to attend, this is not a parish council meeting, the parish council host the meeting. Details of the zoom link can be obtained from the Clerk closer to the meeting date, the agenda will be displayed on the noticeboards and on the parish council website.

Bins on Fair Hill – reports received as bin overflowing, these have been emptied but it has been noticed that someone is putting dog mess in the bin here, please do not fill bins with dog mess, use the dog waste bins which are available throughout the village. Discussions on increasing litter bins but to do this we have to provide bin enclosures at approx. £500 each and the Borough Council provide a wheely bin to go inside.- To Open Spaces for discussion.

It was seen on Facebook that the plastics factory is looking at a collection of hard plastics, the Chairman has written to them for more details, but a reply has not been received.

Church wall repair – can CIL be used for this? Clerk to find out.

Litter – a big thank you to all residents who are undertaking litter picks and for those not using the appropriate bins please put your litter in the correct bin, dog waste can be double bagged and deposited in your black wheely bin.

The wild flower meadow can this be called the old flower meadow? – to Open Spaces suggestion to ask the primary school to name this area.

Notices required for the bins on Fair Hill to educate those using litter bins for dog mess? – Open Spaces
It is intended that the Community Speedwatch team will start again in the parish soon, if anyone wants to volunteer please contact the Clerk who will pass your details onto the Co-ordinator.

The waste bin outside St George's Hall - someone had left a bag of dog mess by the bin.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and looks forwards to seeing you at the next meeting.

11. To pass a resolution (under the Public Admission to Meetings Act 1960 to exclude members of the public and press for the following confidential items:

a. Quotes for cleaning the play equipment, three quotes have been received

Quote A) £70.00 Quote B) £120.00 these do not include the skateboard ramp due to the distance from the water supply and Quote C) £1505 for the play equipment and £790.00 for the skateboard ramp.

Quote A was accepted.

Meeting closed at 8.45pm