

**MINUTES OF METHWOLD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD IN THE 21 ROOM ST GEORGES COMPLEX
THURSDAY 8th FEBRUARY 2018 at 7.30pm**

Present: J Marriage – Chairman, D Thomas - Vice Chairman, D Charlesworth-Smith, S Stones, K Plumridge, S Burbridge, P Crawley, T Thomas, R Gibson, S Burbridge, C West.

Cllr. M Storey

2 members of the public

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting.

OPEN FORUM

The fence at 1 Stoke Road – resident reported this fence is causing a blind spot for pedestrians when walking from the High Street onto Stoke Road the resident was almost knocked over by a cyclist on the cycle path, the fence needs to be lower to be able to see if anyone is coming towards you on the path. Following a request from the Parish Council for the Clerk to write to the Planning Officer the Chairman read out the response.

1. To receive and consider accepting apologies for absence – R Hood, B Horton.
2. Declaration of Interest - Councillors invited to declare any interest in any item on the agenda. K Plumridge declared an interest regarding the Clerk in discussions regarding the HR report later in the meeting.
3. To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 11th January 2018 as a true record of the meeting D Charlesworth-Smith proposed minutes are accepted, S Burbridge seconded All Agreed.
4. Matters arising from past minutes- Flagpole – Clerk is to obtain costs for flagpole and flag. Did the Clerk write to Lorne Greene, yes but apart from receiving an acknowledgement of letter no response? Abandoned vehicle on High Street has been removed.
5. Reports:
 - 5.1 Chairman’s Report – Thanked P Crawley for repairing the floor in the 21 room. Still working on the new spec to replace the worn mats on the Rec. with the grass mats. Working on spec for the spalling on the front of St Georges Hall. No questions.
 - 5.2 Clerk’s Report – Japanese Knotweed, need to decide on course of action – Chairman is following this up. No questions.
 - 5.3 Open Spaces Working Party and to consider recommendations made regarding: – Damage to wall on Thornham Road & Wooden fingerposts to sign footpaths – D Thomas has visited the owner of the wall which has been damaged by vehicles, the parish council have every sympathy with the wall owner and will ask the Clerk to write to Highways to see if anything can be done to preserve the grass verge, there are several places in the village where large vehicles mounting the verges are causing the banks to break away and exposing the foundations of chalk walls which causes damage. Resident has asked for the footpaths to be signed around the parish, there will be a parish walk organised to locate where the signs are missing and Highways will be asked to replace them. SAMs2 sign has been on Hythe Road facing towards Methwold Hythe – the average flow for 7 days is just under 4k vehicles in one direction, the 85percentile is showing an average at times of 41mph. This information will be discussed with Highways when we can arrange a meeting. A workday is to be arranged in the Cemetery shortly to clear the ivy.
- 5.4 Hall & General Purposes Working Party and to consider recommendations made regarding:
 - Lighting in the Main Hall, Hires – Youth Room – Childminders and Artist requests, Youth room – progression, MM Fund, MCAG 28th May. The lunch club have their 3rd free hire on 2nd March, the first two have been very successful but there is some way to go to be able to reach those who could benefit most. D Charlesworth-Smith proposed that the free sessions are extended for another three months, S Burbridge seconded T Thomas and K Plumridge abstained, All remaining Agreed.
 - Methwold Community Action Group – holding a community celebration on 28th May to celebrate the 400th Market Charter, the 125th Anniversary of St Georges Hall, the parish council have been asked if they would like to be involved in the celebrations. However, several members of the parish council are already involved with this event. C West

proposed the parish council donate the use of the whole complex for the day for free as the parish council's contribution seconded by S Burbridge, D Thomas and R Gibson abstained All remaining Agreed.

A group of local childminders would like to hire the youth room weekly on a Wednesday starting in April to hold their childminding sessions then from 3.30 pm to hold an afterschool club which will be open to everyone. Discussion as to how the parish council can support the start-up of this. R Gibson proposed £20 per week for 12 weeks and then review to see how this is working, T Thomas seconded All Agreed.

Local artist has asked to book the youth room to host two upcycle & recycle sessions, to start with this would be just a one off as a tester in the coming half term from 9.30 until 3.30 to see what uptake there is. Discussed by parish council who were keen to support, J Marriage proposed a £10 hire fee for this event to try and encourage this type of event, T Thomas seconded, All Agreed.

Mini Methwold Fund – The Chairman explained that Mini Methwold has been performing well and has bookings on the calendar, hirers have travelled from Wisbech and Bury St Edmunds to use the room, and this is very encouraging. The Mini Methwold Team are concerned that to keep the room functional and interesting any broken or tired items will need to be replaced as soon as possible when required. To be able to do this they have asked to have a separate fund held within the parish council accounts where they are able to replenish items as required without having to wait for the next parish council meeting for approval. This request and how the parish council can support this venture was discussed in detail.

It was discussed by council that the fund should have an initial £500 credited to set it up, the fund would be managed with a separate page in the accounts and any movement would be reported to the Clerk to be able to keep account. There would be a maximum £300 spend at any one time, anything over this amount will be taken to full council for approval. The Mini Methwold team are already holding stay and play sessions regularly, the money from these sessions goes back into the main parish council account, they also put on a special event each month and they have asked for any money taken at these events to be put straight into the Mini Methwold fund to ensure the fund is built up to cover new projects, and keeping the room functional and interesting. C West proposed the Mini Methwold fund is set up with £500, spend limit is £300 and money received from the special events is put into the Mini Methwold fund, T Thomas seconded – All Agreed.

A group from the parish have asked to hire the kitchen in the old social club to hold a takeaway evening to raise funds for MIND, the 21 room would not be hired but would be required to enable those picking up their takeaways to access the kitchen, the group has asked the parish council if they would consider waiving the hire fee for the kitchen as this is a charity event. The parish council have discussed and had concern about the access being through the 21 room, the Clerk was instructed to ask the group if they could use the double doors next to the kitchen for people to collect food? The council also discussed the request for the fee to be waived and feel that as MIND is not a local charity they could not waiver the hire fee, there are many charitable events held at the Complex which pay the full hire rate. Hire charges are already subsidised for residents. Clerk to write to the group to explain the decision. It was requested that a policy is put in place to cover the request to reduce or waiver hire fees, this will be brought to the next meeting.

Methwold Beavers – have approached the Clerk to ask to hire a room for their sessions on a Tuesday for 6 weeks whilst the weather is cold. The youth room has been shown to the Leaders, they have requested a reduction in the hire fee as there are only a small number attending. Discussed at length, the parish council would like to encourage the Beavers to use the facilities which are here for the community. D Charlesworth-Smith proposed free use of the youth room to Beavers for the 6 weeks, with a review at the end of this time if the Beavers decide they would like to continue to use the room. K Plumridge seconded – All Agreed.

Lights in St Georges Hall – there are 4 units which don't work, they have been inspected and it was found to be the internal workings which don't work. The units are old and it is not easy to get replacements for them, it is thought they have been up for many years. Two options a) replace the tubes with LEDs which can be dimmed, (dimming is required for the functions that are held in the hall e.g wedding receptions and sports events), the cost is approx. £35.00 each or b) replace with LED non dimmable cheaper but loss of dimming function. After replacing the lights in the 21 room there is an option to replace the hall lights with similar LED panels, the cost would be approx. £1k but they can be dimmed as required and the lifetime is expected to be approx. 25 years. R Gibson proposed that all light units in St Georges Hall are replaced with the new panel option, T Thomas seconded – All Agreed.

5.5 HR Group – The Clerks contract was discussed, the Clerk is to take on the role of Data Protection Officer for the Parish Council, the location of work is to be updated and a lone worker policy is required, proposed increase to

hours to 20 hours per week, salary is SCP 23 £11.054 per hour, this is set by NALC and SLCC increases are awarded annually by NALC & SLCC and agreed by council, C West proposed the parish council accept the increase in hours and to accept the changes to the contract. D Charlesworth-Smith seconded – All Agreed K Plumridge abstained.

Lone worker policy is being worked on and will be circulated to all before the next meeting.

The contract for the Key Holder is being prepared but needs more work current the agreed hourly rate is £10.00, 7 hours per week, advised to have a zero hours contract, Chairman is looking into this.

The Cleaner is self-employed and is paid at the agreed rate of £11.50 per hour, he has a different contract, R Gibson proposed that the contract for the cleaner is accepted by the parish council, K Plumridge seconded – All Agreed D Thomas and T Thomas abstained.

6. Finances

6.1 Accounts Update – Inspection holes have been dug on the rec to inspect the foundations of the play mat surfaces.

There will be a separate sheet within the 2018/19 Accounts for the Mini Methwold fund recording income and outgoings.

6.2 Approval of payments to include Approval to pay Insurance premium for the Complex for 2018/19 – S Burbridge proposed approval for payments, S Stones seconded – All Agreed.

7. 7.1 To receive planning applications:

18/00120/F Extension to open fronted agricultural store building Home Farm 2 Whiteplot Road

Methwold Hythe Thetford Norfolk IP26 4QP - SUPPORT

18/00031/TREECA (T1) - Lawsons Cypress: Remove. (T5) - Sycamore: Remove. (G2) - Fruit trees x 4: Remove.

Greenways 7 Old Feltwell Road Methwold Thetford Norfolk IP26 4PW - SUPPORT

7.2 To receive planning decisions:

17/02227/F The Bothy Brandon Road Methwold Norfolk IP26 4RJ - Proposed two storey extension

Application Permitted 29 January 2018 Delegated Decision

7.3 To consider any planning applications received after the agenda was produced:

18/00209/F Replacement dwelling with associated outbuildings at Greenways 7 Old Feltwell Road Methwold Thetford Norfolk – Parish Council discussed and feel this will improve the area - SUPPORT

8. Items received for Agenda

Trod – Brookville can the Trod be tidied up and a pathway installed, can the other Trods around the parish be tidied up? The Clerk has asked Highways for a cost to formalise the footpath Trod between Methwold and Methwold Hythe, the cost would be approx. £55k to upgrade and in excess of £75k with streetlights for this to be done. To clear back the current Trod and re top with plainings would cost in the region of £5k. All Borough Councillors have a £6k members fund which they can use on small highway works across their division, Cllr Storey was asked about this, he has 14-16 parishes which he covers, it was explained that the Trod is walked daily and people are walking in the road because it is not wide enough for a pushchair, in the wet the long grass makes feet and legs wet, the groups are blocked and puddles form along here meaning people walk in the road. Cllr. Storey is due to meet with Highways soon and will discuss priorities.

Cycle path from Stoke Ferry to Methwold – It was felt that in principle this is a very good idea however a feasibility study is required, will wait to see how this progresses with Stoke Ferry Parish Council.

Drain covers – has been reported to Highways who are supposed to be following up.

9. Correspondence

Letter from Spencer Farms regarding vehicles driving on the grass, Chairman to respond.

OPEN FORUM

Going from the High Street towards Cock Corner vehicles are driving on the verge as far as the hedge on the left hand side breaking down the grass verge, this is making the road and pavement very muddy. A meeting will be arranged with Highways and a few from Open Spaces to discuss the items in the parish which are cause for concern.

10. Any Further Reports - for information only

Policy for hire fees – charitable and community use draft to be ready for the next meeting.

Data Protection – Clerk is the DPO a small committee will be required to ensure compliance, it is complex and will take some time, and volunteers from the parish council are required.

At the end of The Avenue off the main road - road surface is breaking up into potholes. Clerk to report to Highways. Streetlight in Trent VC Close is on all day.

Parking in St Georges Hall car park gateway, this is inconsiderate and unacceptable to other users of the car park, please do not park here.

Thank you for speaking to Crown House to get them to cut their hedge and to them for doing so.

The Old Chapel – is there anything which can be done about the screens, Cllr. Storey has already been involved with this.

The streetlights Main Road Brookville have been replaced but are very bright, this is because they were replaced with the new LED lights.

Meeting on 23rd February to discuss Broadband and mobile phone connectivity with Elizabeth Truss MP and Secretary of State for Culture at Weeting, D Thomas and D Charlesworth-Smith to attend and report back at the next meeting.

Thank you to John Webb for pressure washing the mats on the Rec.

PTA at the primary school are holding Bingo in St Georges Hall on March 23rd and a yard sale on the 7th May.

11. To pass a resolution to exclude members of the public – Fire Door Quotes

Four companies asked to quote for this work, three quotes received. All quotes were discussed and T Thomas proposed quote C was accepted as best value for money, R Gibson seconded – All agreed. Clerk to thank and inform all who quoted of outcome.

Meeting finished at 9.55pm