

Pre-Meeting Business: None

Public Participation: The condition of 55 Eastgate Street was queried. It has been empty for a number of years and is becoming derelict. It is believed that the owner previously applied for permission to build an additional property on the site. It was agreed that the Clerk would draw this matter to the attention of Breckland Council.

NORTH ELMHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the

MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

held in the Pavilion at 7.30 p.m. on Wednesday 4th December, 2024

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208 Those Councillors Present Were:

Mr. P. Grainger (Chairman), Mr. M. Phillips (Vice Chairman), Miss A. Ferris, Mr. T. Fitzalan Howard, Mrs. A. Keeble, Mr. J. Labouchere, Mr. N. Markwell, Mr. M. Rayner and Mr. F. Gillespie.

Also in Attendance: Mr. K. Webb (Clerk), Mr. B. Borrett (County and District Councillor), who left after a few minutes to attend another meeting, and one parishioner.

209 Apologies for absence:

Mr. B. Gee, Mr. C. Smith and Mr. G. Bambridge (District Councillor)

210 To Receive Declarations of Interest:

The Chairman reminded the meeting that, should the occasion arise, interests should be declared by Councillors as soon as this was realised, and the interest should be minuted.

211 Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday, 13th November, 2024:

Resolved to approve the minutes as a true and accurate record. Agreed by all. (Proposed by Mr. Phillips and seconded by Mrs. Keeble).

212 Report from County and District Councillor

Mr. Borrett provided an update on the reorganisation of Local Government and devolution. The leader of Norfolk County Council had recently met with the Minister in Westminster and it was confirmed that the previous devolution deal is no more. A white paper has not yet been produced but it should be available by the end of the year. Norfolk and Suffolk are expected to have a combined mayoral authority. There is a real fear that this may result in a future loss of local democratic accountability.

UPDATED INFORMATION AND MATTERS ARISING

213 Land Management Matters (item 180)

- (a) Village Green Work on some repairs to the zip wire has not yet started and Mr. Phillips is to chase. It has been mentioned by some parishioners that dog waste is regularly not being cleared up at a number of places in the village. There are signs on the Village Green. It was stressed that the registration plates of any vehicle owners guilty of not clearing up after their dogs should be noted and duly reported.
- (b) Cathedral Ruins Nothing to report.
- (c) Cathedral Meadows Nothing to report.
- (d) Broom Green Nothing to report.
- (e) Millennium Wood (and Jubilee Wood) Nothing to report.
- (f) Bridleway on disused railway line and other railway linked matters Nothing to report.
- (g) Prince William Wood Nothing to report.
- (h) Church Meadow The new trench is working well.

214 Allotments (item 181)

Nothing to report.

215 Street Lights (item 182)

Westcotec are dealing with the issue of the smaller light near 29 Eastgate Street. The older one was hanging by a thread.

216 Highway Matters (item 183)

The matter regarding the temporary bus stop near the County School Station junction will be chased by the Clerk. Matt Lines, Highways Engineer, has assisted with our Parish Partnership bid for measures to improve road safety throughout the village. An application has been made covering a cost of £15,668.51 with the County Council requested to provide 50%, i.e. £7,834.00. Proposed by Mr. Phillips and seconded by Miss Ferris. All in favour.

217 Pavilion and Playing Field (item 154)

Miss Ferris reported that work on the showers is to be done on 12th December. She has contacted the Football Club regarding outstanding fees and the sum of £250 is to be paid in the near future. The switch on of the Christmas lights is to take place at 6.00 p.m. on Friday, 6th December. Thanks were expressed to all volunteers for their work with the lights. The contract for the general waste bin is due for renewal. Biffa had previously suggested an increase of 17% but, after negotiations, a rather more appropriate rise of 4.2% was offered. This would effectively increase the four-weekly charge from £51.04 to £53.20. All agreed to accept the new figure. The Clerk will advise Biffa accordingly. Both Nurture and Groundscape had visited with a view to providing quotations in respect of the grounds maintenance contract for 2025. They were shown round by Messrs Phillips and Gee, and Mrs. Keeble. John Piller, principal of Groundscape, impressed all members and has submitted a quotation, covering 17 cuts per season (March to October), totalling £5,718.00. This price is fixed for three years. Unfortunately, nothing was forthcoming from Nurture. Mr. Phillips proposed to employ Groundscape as the grounds maintenance contractor for next year and this was seconded by Mrs. Keeble. All in favour.

218 Eastgate Centre (item 185)

A tarpaulin is in place.

219 Brookside Development update (item 186)

Solicitors from both sides are liaising regarding the current position.

220 Risk Management – considerations and updates (item 187)

Nothing to report.

221 Overview of Parish Council financial situation (item 188)

The Chairman is to make contact with Cambridge Building Society so that he can be included as one of the authorised signatories on the account.

222 Defibrillators (item 189)

Miss Ferris has bought a new torch for £9.99.

223 Local Plan update (item 190)

Nothing to report.

224 Archive Group records (item 191)

Nothing to report.

225 North Elmham Living Sustainably (NELS) Group (item 192)

An invitation has been made to the Group to attend a future meeting of the Parish Council.

226 Churchyards – current situation and future plans (item 194)

Mr. Rayner said that some concerns had been raised at the last meeting and there hadn't yet been a response from the PCC. Mr. Fitzalan Howard felt that this was not a religious issue and that every parishioner has the right to be buried in the village. It is a facility for all residents. Mr. Labouchere supported this view but accepts that not many people actually attend church. It is, however, a village asset which is available for all to use. Mr. Gillespie said that if an annual grant of £2K was to be given for the next three years, it should be acknowledged that this would be the limit of the Parish Council's assistance over that period. Mr. Phillips proposed that the Parish Council should make a grant of £2K per year to the PCC for the next three years. This was supported by Mr. Fitzalan Howard. Six members were in favour of the proposition, with two members being against.

227 Parish Precept 2025/2026 (item 196)

A small deficit of about £800 is forecast for the year 2025/2026. The Band D contribution remains at the current figure of £80.64 for the seventh consecutive year. The tax base has increased to 523.4 (from 503.9) which results in a Precept of £42,207.

228 Possible trod (path) on Back Lane (item 197)

Nothing to report.

229 Village Hall (item 198)

Mrs. Keeble is of the opinion that the Memorial Hall is becoming in a state which makes it not fit for purpose. Miss Ferris concurred with this view. It was agreed that progress needs to be made with the plans for a new village hall. The matter will be discussed at the next meeting.

230 Parish Charities update (item 199)

Mr. Phillips confirmed that the merger of the Church and Town Land General Branch Charity with the North Elmham United Charities had been completed. In addition, all funds in the Diamond Jubilee Green Support Trust, (£6,752.69), have been transferred to the Parish Council's Bank account.

231 Christmas arrangements (item 200)

A Christmas tree is up and the invoice will be received in due course.

232 Accounts for Payment and Schedule of Income

a) Resolved to approve the following Accounts for payment:-

24/11/24	Biffa (wheelie bin service from 26/10/24 to 22/11/24) - (d/d)	£61.25
19/11/24	E-on Next (pavilion from 1/10/24 to 31/10/24) – (d/d)	£90.22
28/11/24	Public Works Loan Board (Village Green repayment) – (d/d)	£626.45
4/12/24	D. Tyson (pavilion cleaning for November)	£137.28
4/12/24	Mandrake (payroll services – November, 2024)	£27.72
4/12/24	M. Phillips (Christmas box for volunteers)	£18.00
4/12/24	M. Phillips (products for allotments)	£66.34
4/12/24	J. Duffield (work in Cathedral Ruins)	£185.00
4/12/24	J.R. G. Fletcher (key keeping – October and November)	£62.50
4/12/24	K. Webb (Clerk’s pay for November)	£826.64
4/12/24	HMRC (Tax and N.I. on Clerk’s pay)	£244.58
4/12/24	Jones Electrical Ltd (street lighting maintenance – Q12025)	£114.99
4/12/24	SLCC (annual membership fee)	£240.00

(Expenditure approved by all members)

b) Schedule of Income:-

18/11/24	Pavilion lettings	£10.00
19/11/24	Balance of Diamond Jubilee Green Trust Support account	£6,752.69
22/11/24	RPA re Flood Resilience Fund	£2,895.00
29/11/24	HSBC (coif inc div)	£29.57
29/11/24	HSBC (coif inc div)	£47.83
29/11/24	Foxburrow Farms (half yearly rent – A.M.Smith)	£1,844.50
2/12/24	Interest on Bank account (3/9/24 to 2/12/24)	£168.87

Balances (at 3/12/24):- Current a/c - £71,898.28 Business Premium a/c - £45,817.46

(Cambridge Building Society - £80,197.04)

233 To Consider Planning Applications and Determinations:-

a) **Applications**

None

b) **Determinations**

None

234 Correspondence

- 1) Advice from Highways that the Rangers will be visiting the village “over the coming weeks” (the Chairman will attempt to obtain a more specific time when he next speaks to Mr. Lines of Highways).
- 2) Request from parishioner for assistance with trimming some trees that are next to the property’s garden and for a dog waste bin to be sited on the adjacent path (members to visit the site to inspect)
- 3) Notification of the commencement of a draft consultation on draft recommendations for ward boundaries in Breckland.
- 4) Request to instal a memorial bench in the village (all in favour and suggest siting on the Village Green. The Clerk is to establish the preferred type of bench – low maintenance suggested).

235 Any Other Matters (for information only)

Mr. Labouchere mentioned that he is still in possession of his extremely popular camel which had been in the play area for some time before it was “temporarily” removed. It was agreed that the camel should be welcomed back in the not too distant future.

This was Mr. Labouchere’s last meeting and he had notified the Parish Council of his intention to stand down in a letter dated 12th October, 2024. He was warmly thanked by all for his outstanding contribution to local communities over a considerable period of time which involved 44 years as a Councillor for three parishes and 16 years as a District Councillor.

236 Agenda items for next meeting:

New Village Hall.

237 Next Meeting:

Wednesday, 8th January, 2025 at 7.30 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.30 p.m.

Chairman

Date

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