



## **North Thoresby, Grainsby & Waithe Parish Council**

North Thoresby Village Hall, The Square, North Thoresby, DN36 5QL

### **Minutes of the Meeting on 13 November 2023 at 7pm**

## **Statement**

The minutes of the meeting held 13 November 2023 that were approved at 4 December meeting were modified by the clerk and posted without council approval. That copy of the minutes is published here in full and includes the unredacted notes that were circulated and approved on the 4 December meeting.

#### **Follows:**

- 1. Unredacted notes – approved on 4 December 2023 – circulated at the meeting to both councillors and members of the public.**
- 2. 13 November 2023 minutes, previously published.**

From 13 November Meeting - Minutes Corrections

Item Number	Comment
3	<p>The first question asked by a member of the public was relating to the validity of the public EOM meeting.</p> <p>The chair confirmed the notice was on the board on Thursday Morning, 19 October. The meeting was held Monday 24 October.</p> <p>In item 3 section c of our standing orders it states;  <b><i>b) The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.</i></b></p> <p>Consequently Thursday 19 and Monday 24 October doesn't count. Sunday 23 October doesn't count. That leaves Friday 20 and Saturday 21 October. That's two days. Consequently the meeting was not valid. This isn't my opinion, it is as laid down in our standing orders.</p> <p>I propose the records show that the meeting held 24 October be designated as an informal meeting and consequently no formal notes of order are valid.</p>
	<p>Clerk Question - Why did you take on this role?            You said you are a qualified accountant - This is not verified            You said you are a qualified clerk –yet you have not completed all the qualifications to make that statement.</p> <p>Chair:            You allowed the clerk to make these wild allegations regarding a closed Social Media group. You have not fact checked this with the group have you? But you have allowed it to go in the minutes with no evidence for doing so.            The group to which Mr Baxter refers is a closed group and they are not happy that Mr Baxter has breached the rules of the group and furthermore they have no history to what Mr Baxter is claiming.</p> <p>Once again, I will state it is totally wrong for Mr Baxter to criticise anyone in this forum where that individual or group is unable to respond to the allegations. Therefore this paragraph should be removed from the minutes.</p>
	<p>Table top sale Leaflets            Quite clearly on the video ( position 11.08 mins in) I state that I am not allowed to publish anything on behalf of the parish council.</p> <p>Continuation.            See from video 14 30            I have found hard evidence. Not alleged. Hard evidence backed up by Police, Justice of the Peace, at least 5 parish councils and around half a dozen respected clerks. I have made an offer for any member of this council and of the parish to come forward and I will share this information with them. In the last month I have had a healthy number of parishioners make enquiries. Not one member of this parish council have taken up my offer.</p>

Signed:

Date:

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	<p>I made it perfectly clear that I do not have the authority to hand out information on behalf of the parish council.</p> <p>Please ensure that the minutes are corrected properly. I have a hard copy so you can take it down correctly.</p>
	<p>Budgets came next goes to item 19</p> <p>Broadband Electric kilowatts Land line – internet free Overtime hours – how many hours September</p>
6	<p>Last line of note Irrelevant. Was put up as a hypothetical scenario.</p>
7	<p>Approval of minutes</p> <p>From approx. minute 29.00 of the recording I pointed out that the minutes as presented could be seen as libel. Consequently, should the other councillors agree to them, that would put them into a position of being held responsible – not the clerk, them.</p> <p>From 29.47 The Chair recognised I had made my point regarding the sign off the minutes</p> <p>This has not been documented. I would like this put into the minutes as I stated at the time.</p>
8	<p>Closed Session</p> <p>I clearly stated that a paper copy should have been provided to me. There is no enforcement that mail has to be electronic, this is something the clerk has made up. It has nothing to do with confidentiality.</p> <p>Your leaving this out of the minutes proves once again that you cherry pick what you record.</p> <p>Please minute this correctly and send me a copy of the appropriate documents.</p>
9	<p>I would like to confirm that the Monitoring Officer has been informed of the invalidity of this meeting.</p> <p>To be clear, the clerk has made the mistakes but the councillors are held responsible.</p>
12	<p>Anti Fraud and Corruption</p> <p>Statement by Cllr Marshall.</p> <p>Last line on page 5 “Something that the previous admin didn’t follow.” Libelous. The previous admin had procedures that they followed. They used the Scribe system and transactions were all clearly allocated a ledger code. The Clerk ditched Scribe as part of his modernisation plan and did not properly assess the information to be brought over. It may be up to us to continually improve our systems but once again this is an incorrect statement that can only provoke and provide ammunition for the previous administration to raise complaints.</p> <p>Take the line out and stop knocking people.</p>

Signed:

Date:

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13	Telephone Access item g Its been missed out that discussions are going to be held between The Chair, the clerk and a member of the community who may be able to get a free line.
13	Fencing – Item i Its been missed out that discussions are going to be held between The Chair, the clerk and a member of the community who may be able to source competitively priced fencing.
13	Defib Machine – Item k  It's been missed out that a statement was going to be made publicly so the village have an understanding about what is happening and also that it is out of use.  Have any supporting papers come through with a definitive proposal?  What about the adverts that came through?  What about training to use it? What about contacts of authorised users? I have sent an email to all councillors regarding this and the only response from the Chair is that we won't be able to talk about it. Why not? Why is it not on the agenda?
14	The vote has been recorded wrongly. I abstained due to not receiving the papers in time for me to ready them fully. I would like the vote to be recorded properly
15	The clerk states he is a qualified accountant – This is not verified.
16	In the general expense's grid, it shows the clerks travel as Sept – Oct and Oct to Nov and then on this agenda as Nov. Please can we have the specific date range, for example 2 October to 4 November ETC as this is confusing to the reader.  You agreed for the hours of the clerk to be documented separately. Specifically the clerk. Both contract and overtime. This is an expense that is of use to the public in terms of the great transparency we proclaim to share. It does not breach GDPR rules as it is relevant to the running and costs of the Parish Council. We are not disclosing the specific value. Just a component part.

#### Items for next meeting

Proper contingency for when people are on holiday as per Code of conduct and standing orders. Need procedures for email, phone.

Data Recording sheet – monitor for data/docs loaded onto the website – example attached

FoI Monitoring. Register available to all Councillors – example attached. We have a duty to record all FOI And SAR

Procedures for corrections on website – I have submitted various corrections. All ignored. What is the procedure please?

How do we stop standing orders at the bank?

Signed:

Date:

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## FULL PARISH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

13 November 2023 – 7pm

### MINUTES

**Present:**

**Councillors:** Cllr. Buckenham (Chair), Cllr. Gallop (V/Chair) Cllr. Snell, Cllr. Howard, Cllr. Gale, Cllr. Spence, Cllr. Marshall, Cllr. Berryman

**Clerk and RFO:** Mr S Baxter    **Members of the public (MOP):** 28

**Meeting commenced at 7pm. Meeting was held at the North Thoresby Village Hall, North Thoresby.**

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### AGENDA ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND DECISION

**1. Chair's welcome**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the whole community for attending.

**2. Statement by the Chair of the Parish Council - appendix A**

**3. Members of the Public Participation - questions from the public at the discretion of the Chair**

**(i) A question from a member of the public who is local:**

*The question was aimed at the Clerk - 'what attracted you to the position of Clerk in North Thoresby?'*

*The Clerk stated that he saw an update on a Clerk forum on social media made by a person formerly associated with the Parish Council about the vacant role of the Clerk at North Thoresby, Grainsby and Waithe PC. Due to the quite atrocious attacks and allegations made about the Council and some current Councillors, out of curiosity he looked into the role and undertook due diligence. It was clear to him that these allegations were that of someone with a clear agenda to attack the Council and from deeper review there actually were issues with the person formerly associated with the Council and not the Council itself. As I had experience of helping Councils that were experiencing unfair treatment, and the hours of the role fitted into my work life balance. I thus applied for the role and was successful. I wanted to help this wonderful community and Council and not let an attempt by persons formerly associated with the council be successful.*

**(ii) A question from a member of the public who is local):**

*Can the Chair confirm that the agenda for the EOM on the 24 October 2023 was published with three clear days on the noticeboard and the website?*

*The Chair stated that he can categorically confirm that the agenda was published on the PC noticeboard and the website on Thursday 19 October 2023 which was more than three clear days. As to some persons suggestion the agenda was hidden away on the website, this again was incorrect. It was on the usual section of the agendas and was in date order and was clear on the noticeboard.*

**(iv) A question from a member of the public who is local:**

*Can the Chair confirm the amount claimed by the Clerk is correct especially as he travels from Hull?*

The Chair stated that all claims are properly made and authorised. He continued that after speaking to ERNLLCA about how Clerks claim travel, he was told that in Lincolnshire there was a Clerks that actually lived in the USA, and so it is not unusual for clerks to travel from other areas - as does the former Clerk of this PC. He confirmed the rate paid is the HMRC approved rate.

**(v) A question and statement from a member of the public who is local:**

He stated that he was aware that Cllr Gale was handing out leaflets at the tabletop sale at the Village Hall on Saturday 11 November 2023. He was aware the majority of the people that Cllr Gale was handing these leaflets to were not happy about this event being used for an attempt to attack the Council and refused to take the leaflets. Can the Council confirm if she was acting with any Council authority or permission? Plus can Cllr Gale explain who the 'we' mentioned in the leaflet are?

He also wanted to say that the details on the leaflet distributed by Cllr Gale were disgusting and this group should be ashamed of themselves.

The Chair initially asked Cllr Gale if she handed out the leaflet, why she did and if she wrote the detail on the leaflet?

Cllr Gale stated that she did not write the leaflet but as someone had left the leaflets on the table she was running she felt she had to hadn't them out. She did not state who wrote the leaflet. She did not reply to the fact that she had no authority from the Council and did not state who the 'we' in the leaflet was.

The Chair stated that Cllr Gale did not act with any authority of permission of the Council and that while the council would not normally comment, because of the falsehoods and allegations, the Council had written a full reply to all the allegations and they were left on the chairs in the Village Hall. He confirmed that the PC Response would be published on the website and copies would be provided to lunch club attendees as well as 3rd party places.

He concluded that there may be another code of conduct breach by Cllr Gale and it would be reported to the Monitoring Officer.

**Continuation of issue raised - statement by Cllr Marshall**

Cllr Marshall stated that she wanted the community to know that the allegation of a 'witch-hunt' made against her and others in the statement that was handed out by Cllr Gale and various social media updates were disgusting and a total lie. The allegation that she had spoken to a former councillor and orchestrated a campaign is rubbish - she has barely spoken to this former councillor. And Cllr Marshall wanted to make clear that some members of the former administration that claimed her husband has been filming their addresses is again rubbish - at the time claimed he was at work and this can be proven.

**Continuation of issue raised - statement by Cllr Gale**

Cllr Gale stated that when she joined the Council in May 2023 she wanted to help and eventually felt that she was not being listened to as to things she has (allegedly) found. She stated again that she was not involved in the writing of the leaflet but wanted to share the details of what was written.

When asked if she had authority to hand these out - Cllr Gale did not answer.

**(vi) A question from a member of the public who is local:**

Can the Council confirm why the email addresses of the Councillors aren't available on the website, why are the council thinking of spending some money on a landline (when Internetty do it for free) and can the Council confirm why they are spending more in electric usage than needed?

The Chair stated that in regard to the email addresses, it is very common for Parish Councils to have all communications to go through the Clerk to ensure everything is properly actioned. This is the same for

many local councillors including the Council that the former Clerk now works for. It also ensures that data is properly managed and questions answered. The Clerk will always ensure that things are forwarded on to the relevant Councillor. As to why an email wasn't answered while the Clerk was on holiday - he can't be expected to answer work on annual leave.

The Chair asked Cllr Marshall (as the Finance Committee Chair) to answer the finance questions.

Cllr Marshall stated that the finance committee is looking at all costs, in a thorough and careful manner to ensure that the council uses all the community's money carefully, and with value for money. In regard to the electric costs and anything members of the community may have knowledge of doing things cheaper or better - Cllr Marshall stated that the Council would invite anyone to make this aware to the Clerk so that it can be properly reviewed.

**(vii) A question from a member of the public who is local:**

*Can the Council and Clerk be asked about some members of the community that are filming the PC meetings and if there was a way that if any members of the community complained, if the Chair could ask the filming to stop. The person stated she though there was some legal mechanism for this.*

The Chair asked the Clerk to answer. The clerk stated that he was not aware of any mechanism to stop people filming members of the community or making any recording. But he would welcome any way that the member of the community was aware of. The Clerk stated that some filming of the PC Meetings can often come across as intimidatory which was not appropriate.

The Chair thanked the members of the community for their questions and they were welcome to stay to watch the Paris Council meeting. The Clerk confirmed that with the Chair's permission, questions can be asked by members of the community on specific agenda items.

**No further questions.**

**4. Proposal to exclude members of the public from participation - but can observe**

*For the following agenda points members of the public can observe the meeting but cannot take part in any debate. Any persons not Councillors or the Clerk will be asked to remain silent*

- **Motion to exclude members of the public from participation was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.**

**5. Apologies from Councillors for any absence**

The Clerk confirmed that he had received apologies from Cllr. Jones who had given her reasons for absence to the Clerk who wished to advise the Council it was proper but it was for the councillors to agree or not. The Councillors were invited to make any responses to the apologies and if there was no objection, for the apologies to be accepted by way of a proposer, seconder and vote.

There were no objections by the Councillors to the absence of Cllr Jones.

- **Motion to accept the apologies of Cllr. Jones was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.**

**6. To grant dispensations to Councillors in regard to declarations of interest: To receive any declarations of interest in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and to consider any dispensations**

The Clerk confirmed that no declarations have been received from any Councillors prior to the meeting - he asked all Councillors if they wish to offer any declarations for any subject of the Parish Council Meeting. The Clerk confirmed that none were offered and thus it can be considered that there is no pecuniary interest of any Councillors which would affect their voting of any motion on the agenda.



Cllr Gales asked if the Clerk had to give any Declarations of Interest - such as any item in connection with the Clerk's brother?

The Chair and Clerk confirmed that as the Clerk does not have a vote, and is an employee, he does not have to give any declaration of interest.

The Clerk asked Cllr Gale not to bring members of his family into any PC discussions as his family is nothing to do with the agenda items.

#### 7. To approve the minutes of the Full Parish Council Meeting on the 02 October 2023 as a true record

The minutes of the previous Parish Council meeting had been distributed to the Councillors (to their email accounts that were considered safe as per the Email Policy) prior to the meeting to allow for any inaccuracies to be brought to the attention of the Clerk.

Cllr Gale stated that she felt that after listening to recordings of the meeting (she did not disclose who made the recording) that there were things missing, and things added.

The Chair asked if she had a list of these alleged discrepancies - to which she stated she did not.

The Chair then stated how can the Council review these alleged inaccuracies if she cannot list them now?

No further notes or inaccuracies were stated by any Councillor and thus the Clerk offered the minutes to be formally accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting on the 02 October 2023.

- **Motion to accept that the minutes of the Full PC Meeting on the 02 October 2023 were an accurate record of the meeting was proposed, seconded and agreed by majority - Cllr Gale opposed. Motion carried.**

#### 8. Report of the closed session of the last Full Parish Council Meeting on the 02 October 2023 – agree report is accurate

The report on the closed session of the previous Parish Council meeting had been distributed to the Councillors (to their email accounts that were considered safe as per the Email Policy) to the meeting to allow for any inaccuracies to be brought to the attention of the Clerk.

Cllr Gale stated that she was not provided with copy of this record.

The Clerk stated that all Councillors with a 'safe' email address as detailed by the Email Policy of this PC were sent a copy, and that for security of data no hard copies were sent. This is to ensure security. As her email account is not considered 'safe' as per the policy she was not sent a copy.

No further notes or inaccuracies were stated by any Councillor and thus the Clerk offered the report and record to be formally accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting on the 02 October 2023.

- **Motion to accept that the recorded report of the closed session of the Full Parish Council Meeting on the 02 October 2023 was an accurate record of the meeting was proposed, seconded and agreed by majority - Cllr Gale opposed. Motion carried.**

#### 9. To approve the minutes of the EOM Parish Council Meeting on the 24 October 2023 as a true record

The minutes of the previous Parish Council meeting had been distributed to the Councillors (to their email accounts that were considered safe as per the Email Policy) prior to the meeting to allow for any inaccuracies to be brought to the attention of the Clerk.

Cllr Gale stated that her in opinion the meeting was illegal and not called properly. She continued to make various claims about the meeting.

The Chair stated to Cllr Gale again (as this had been detailed to her at the actual EOM) that all procedures were followed and that if she felt the council was not acting as it should, to contact the Monitoring Officer.

No further notes or inaccuracies were stated by any Councillor and thus the Clerk offered the minutes to be formally accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting on the 24 October 2023.

- ***Motion to accept that the minutes of the EOM of PC Meeting on the 24 October 2023 were an accurate record of the meeting was proposed, seconded and agreed by majority - Cllr Gale opposed. Motion carried.***

**10. Report of the closed session of the last EOM of the Parish Council Meeting on the 24 October 2023 – agree report is accurate**

The report on the closed session of the previous Parish Council meeting had been distributed to the Councillors (to their email accounts that were considered safe as per the Email Policy) to the meeting to allow for any inaccuracies to be brought to the attention of the Clerk.

*Cllr Gale stated that she was under the impression the element of discussion was 'informal' and that no decisions could be made.*

*The Chair stated that the closed session was confidential but that a record of the discussion needs to be kept.*

No further notes or inaccuracies were stated by any Councillor and thus the Clerk offered the report and record to be formally accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting on the 24 October 2023.

- ***Motion to accept that the recorded report of the closed session of the EOM Parish Council Meeting on the 24 October 2023 was an accurate record of the meeting was proposed, seconded and agreed by majority - Cllr Gale opposed. Motion carried.***

**11. To approve the minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of the Parish Council Meeting on the 02 October 2023 as a true record**

The minutes of the previous Parish Council meeting had been distributed to the Councillors (to their email accounts that were considered safe as per the Email Policy) prior to the meeting to allow for any inaccuracies to be brought to the attention of the Clerk.

No further notes or inaccuracies were stated by any Councillor and thus the Clerk offered the minutes to be formally accepted as a true and accurate record of the Finance Committee meeting on the 02 October 2023.

- ***Motion to accept that the minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of the Parish Council on the 02 October 2023 were an accurate record of the meeting was proposed, seconded and agreed by majority - Cllr Gale abstained. Motion carried.***

**12. Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy - as agreed by the Finance Committee for full Council approval**

The Clerk stated that this Policy was discussed in detail by the Finance Committee who had felt it was required.

The Chair asked Cllr Marshall as the Chair of the Finance Committee to go through the details of the Policy:

*Cllr Marshall stated that from the training and guidance she received, it was clear that all Councils including this Parish Council needed to have proper safeguards to protect the financial resources of the Council and stop any attempt at fraud. One element that has already been undertaken, and this policy instructs it, is that under the former administration the former Clerk could authorise payments through the bank including to himself without any Councillor action needed. This was clearly not appropriate as it left a major risk to the Council funds. However now, even payment that the Council makes requires two members of the Finance Committee to approve every transaction - the Clerk can input (but can't authorise) and the two Finance Committee Councillors can authorise (but can't input). This means that there is proper control - something that the former administration did not follow.*

Cllr Marshall continued by stating that under this policy, every penny spent is scrutinised with proper controls to ensure that the community can be confident that the community funds are being used properly and appropriately.

Cllr Marshall finished by stating that the key words for this Parish Council's financial transactions is transparency, security and value for money. If any member of the community can offer help in saving money, please contact the Clerk.

- **Motion to accept the acceptance of the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.**

### 13. Updates from Clerk - from previous meetings

#### a) Financial Transparency

The Clerk stated it was agreed by the the Council the quarterly financial reports have been publicised for the community. The Council will hope that the community feels that his administration is being transparent as possible with financial activities.

#### b) Issue of road speed signs been blocked by hedges and trees

The Clerk stated that following the last meeting, he had been in contact several times with Highways who had confirmed that they have undertaken an initial investigation and from the issues raised are planning a project to deal with the highlighted issues. Highways did state that it was more complicated than first thought and thus may take longer to resolve.

The Council will update the community once more information is known.

#### c) Displaying and distribution of Minutes

Following the decision by the Council at the last PC Meeting, the Council has now been able to start investigating the various places where the minutes of the Council could be left for the benefit of the community. The Council has now agreed to leave some copies of minutes at the local Morrisons store in the Square, as well as in the telephone box - and are also planning to discuss having the minutes displayed in the noticeboard of the local pub.

This will help to meet the community interactions and the transparency goals of the Council.

#### d) Policies: Email Policy, Security and Key Policy, LGA Code of Conduct

As per the agreed policies at the last meeting, these have all been published on the website. He stated that the HR& Facilities ToR was amended as required by the previous meeting to ensure that the Playground maintenance and safety was specifically included.

#### e) Tree Survey report

This was agreed to be processed at the last meeting. Unfortunately there has been a delay in the surveyor confirming a date for the inspection as the number of trees to be reviewed has increased as per the request of the community and the decision of the Council. It is hoped that the survey would be completed in December but it may depend on the weather conditions.

#### f) Christmas function

The Clerk was delighted to report that he had received a lot of requests from the community groups fully supporting the event and asking for a table. The Clerk confirmed that the details will be discussed further in the agenda discussion.

#### g) Telephone access for the Hall

A review has been undertaken on the best options and because of the need to ensure contact-ability when any power is down, it would be best to resort to the use of a mobile phone. Most wifi phones need some power in the phone or wifi provision. It was suggested that the phone be a pay as you go version which when monitored

properly will ensure that the cost is only applied when the phone is used. The cheapest phone is in the region of £50-£100.

#### *h) Playground safety Report*

The Clerk stated the Council has started work on the playground report and the Village Hall Manager and other local members of the community have already completed several recommended elements in the report. It is hoped that the elements they can repair are finished by December. From then a playground specialist will be called to complete the specialist works.

#### *i) Fencing consideration and safety issue at the front of the Village Hall*

The Clerk stated that he had been in contact with several Ironmongers and Fencers and had had a site visit (along with the Chair) with one of the Ironmongers. Quite a few of the ones the Clerk has enquired unfortunately had not responded.

The Ironmonger stated that there were two main options: a normal fence with straight bars and various aesthetic additions along the wall (the width of the VH) or the heritage version.

The Clerk stated that the costs came back as an estimated £4.5k for the normal fence and £12.5k for the heritage fencing (as it would involve a tremendous amount of work).

The grant received was £8.7k of which £5.5k for the fencing and £3k for noticeboards and work.

#### *j) Clerk and Councillor surgery at the Thursday Lunches at the Village Hall*

The Clerk confirmed that the Clerk and Councillors had attended the drop in and lunch clubs at the VH - this has allowed members of the community to ask any informal questions and discuss community issues. The clerk stated he wished to thank all members of the community that have attended and for their kind words and support for the good work the council is undertaking.

#### *k) Defib Machine and the recommendation*

We have been aware that the defib machine has not been in proper use and have been trying to contact the original distributor and supplier for guidance. The light indicating 'in use' is not in operation and thus we had to assume it was faulty.

We have now been in contact with other suppliers to get a viewpoint on operation of the machine. They have confirmed that the actual model has been discontinued and the parts are very hard to get hold of. But the contractor would need to visit the site to inspect and undertake a review. This would be £187.50 +VAT. If the battery was in need of replacing that would be £295+VAT and if the pads needed replacing that would be £126+VAT.

The Council could consider leasing a defib. machine - the lease is a £1 +VAT a day which includes annual maintenance, replacement batteries (if needed) and spare pads if used or out of date. They would also replace the machine if it was faulty and would make us aware if it was used.

I would recommend that the Council consider the lease option. This may be more expensive over a five year plan than purchasing it with extra parts, but it would give a reassurance it would always be operational should it be needed. It would need Council approval as the five year contract is above the delegated authority of the RFO.

The Councillors discussed this and wanted to review the details further and decide at the next meeting.

#### **14. Financial update from the Clerk (including bank reconciliations) - to formally agree**

The Clerk opened the update by assuring that this administration will always be open with the community and ensure that they always know how their money is being spent. He stated that he has reviewed minutes from the previous administration and there is very little update for the community on the way the money was spent - the

reconciliations and financial reports on a regular basis and thus he as the RFO, and the current administration will always give assurance on transparency and ensure that regular financial reports are open to the community.

He would encourage all the community to review the regular financial reports and see how this Council is using the community finances.

The main two elements the RFO reported was that he wished to bring to the council's attention:

1. The Grass Cutting contract - this budget was agreed by the former administration was insufficient to what the contract with the grass cutting contractor required. The budget agreed was £2,480 and the cost of the grass cutting that was agreed was £3,656. This means that the budget was £1,176 insufficient. This Parish Council was able to ensure the costs with the contractor for 2023/24 was frozen so that at least the Parish Council can keep the expenditure under control.
2. The budget for HMRC and pension contributions - this budget agreed by for the former administration did not include any provision for HMRC and any pension contribution. As these two elements are statutory and contractual there should have been budget provision made by the previous RFO. Thus this administration has had to include this expenditure in the running budget which has had an effect on the overall budget.

The remaining budgets are either within a small margin or in a surplus position.

He stated that the financial position of the Council is looking solid and that it will still be looking at a surplus position which is a vast improvement from the deficit budget the previous RFO and administration agreed. The surplus has been achieved by the close monitoring and careful management of the funds.

*\* A question from a member of the public who is local - Chair gave permission:*

*The question asked of Cllr Marshall and the Clerk - 'can the Council explain what happened to the expenditure of the painting of the windows of the Village Hall and it doesn't appear in the financial records published on the website:*

*Cllr Marshall stated that the contract for the painting of the windows was given to the former Clerk in April 2022 to paint the window frames of the village hall. Then after very little work was undertaken by the former clerk in regard to the work he was asked to do, he then just before he left the Council as the clerk, arranged to pay himself the full amount of the contract despite the fact that the full work had not been completed. While the Council will be seeking all legal avenues to recover the money paid for the work that was not completed, the Council cannot go into any more details due to confidentiality.*

*The Clerk stated that this event of a member of staff paying themselves could not happen again due to the procedures put in place by this Parish Council and the policies now in force.*

- ***Motion to accept that the financial update of the RFO on the Parish Council's financial position was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

**15. Budget & Precept recommendations for 2024/25** - RFO's recommendation on budget considerations for final decision at the next PC Meeting in December 2023.

The Chair asked the Clerk to explain the current considerations of the work on the budget and precept for 2024/25.

The Clerk as the RFO stated that it was prudent business practice to start the budget discussion and impact on the precept in November to then allow a decision in December 2023. He confirmed that the proposed budget had been sent to the Councillors with safe emails for their review, and this agenda point is not for the agreement of the budget.

He stated that from close management and due consideration of the effect of the current economic climate, he was able to both not only propose a balanced budget, but that he feels that the Precept may be able to be frozen at the rate agreed last year. This is because this administration is very careful in the financial management and scrutinise all expenditure - the RFO is confident that the proposed picture can be maintained.

He stated that the community were demanded to pay an increase of 65% last year - this year he would propose there is NO INCREASE in the precept.

**16. General expenditure for approval - to formally agree that the payments are acceptable:**

PAYEE	EXPENDITURE REASON	AMOUNT
Clerk salary & allowance	Contractual for November 2023	Withheld - confidentiality
Clerk overtime	Overtime for November 2023	Withheld - confidentiality
Village Hall Manager salary	Contractual for November 2023	Withheld - confidentiality
HMRC	Payment of deductions and statutory liabilities	Withheld - confidentiality
Lincolnshire County Council	Payment of pension deductions and PC liability	Withheld - confidentiality
ICO	Payment of data management registration	£35.00
Clerk's Travel Expenses	Travel for Meetings - Oct to Nov 2023	£127.80
Clerk expense claims	Lunch Soup Warm session (S137)	£7.40
Royal British Legion	Wreaths x 2	£40.00
Chubb Fire	Fire extinguisher replacement and parts	£338.93
SSE Energy	Electric	£618.61
AP Services Ltd	Plumbing services	£220.19
ERNLLCA	Councillor Training	£48.00

The Clerk explained that the Chubb Fire costs were for the annual maintenance of the fire equipment included the extinguishers. This also included additional extinguishers in the meeting room and corridor. The expenditure for the Royal British Legion was for the wreaths for the Remembrance Day which by all accounts was well attended and a lovely service. The cost for the AP Services was for the issue with the bathroom taps and replacements and the ERNLLCA was for Councillor training which had a good response and was very useful.

There was a question about the Soup expenditure - this was confirmed as reimbursement for Cllr Howard for the Soup Lunch on the 19 October.

There was also a question from Cllr Howard if any overtime hours of the Clerk could be detailed in future agendas - this was confirmed by the Clerk as proper and would be included.

- **Motion to accept and agree the expenditure as highlighted in the schedule of payments was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.**

**17. Planning applications and results - to discuss and agree the decision on each**

*Planning Permission application*  
*Application Number: N/133/02093/23*  
**APPLICANT:** Mr. C. Heweth,  
**PROPOSAL:** Planning Permission - Extension to existing dwelling to provide additional living accommodation.  
**LOCATION:** MOOR LODGE, STATION ROAD, NORTH THORESBY, GRIMSBY, DN36 5QS

Cllr Snell (as Chair of the Planning Committee) stated that after this had been reviewed by the committee informally they were content the planning application was appropriate and that it should be supported.

Cllr Snell also stated that the Council had received details of two recent planning applications which had been approved by the Planners at ELDC:

*Date received Application Number. 25/07/2023 N/061/01452/23*

*PROPOSAL: Listed Building Consent - Installation of roof-mounted solar pv system on the flat roof of an existing outbuilding.*

*LOCATION: THE OLD RECTORY, GRAINSBY LANE, GRAINSBY, GRIMSBY, DN36*

*Date received Application Number 25/07/2023 N/061/01451/23*

*PROPOSAL: Planning Permission - Installation of roof-mounted solar pv system on the flat roof of an existing outbuilding which is a listed building.*

*LOCATION: THE OLD RECTORY, GRAINSBY LANE, GRAINSBY, GRIMSBY, DN36*

- ***Motion to agree the Parish Council's response to the planning application N/133/02093/23 as SUPPORTED was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

#### **18. Playground safety report - update from the Clerk on the action from the report**

The Clerk stated that the work on the playground report has already commenced with the Village Hall Manager undertaking the most urgent work. With help from the local community we have been able to ensure that the work will hopefully be completed within a month. We are now looking at procuring the specialists needed to complete the work and ensure all the work recommended in the report is completed.

The Clerk stated that the HR & Facilities Committee in the ToR have a specific responsibility to ensure the work is completed for the safety of the community.

#### **19. Telephone connection coverage for the Parish Council - update from the Clerk on the action**

The Clerk stated that the Council has previously reviewed the need for a landline not only for the booking of the Village Hall but also to ensure that the Council can be contacted upon a serious emergency in the community. This would also have to take into account any power cuts and system availability

The Chair of the Finance Committee stated that if a member of the community could provide details of how the Council could receive a free landline through INTERNETTY then it would welcome the information. The Finance Chair also asked the Clerk if this was free can it be installed immediately without Council action or decision - this was confirmed by the Council.

The Chair of the PC also stated that if there was any financial implication, this matter could be discussed by the Finance Committee at the next Meeting in December - this was agreed by the Finance Chair.

Cllr Howard also stated there has been previous work on the Emergency Plan and this could be reviewed in future.

#### **20. HR & Facilities Committee Terms of Reference - to discuss and vote**

The Chair asked the Clerk to go through the details of the agenda point.

The Clerk stated that the Council had agreed to form this Committee at a previous meeting but there was a request to ensure that the safety management of the playground was specifically noted to ensure it was monitored for the safety of all. This has now been done and copies of the ToR had been provided to all Councillors for their perusal.

The Council stated that points 2.3 and 2.5 were in effect duplicated and these needed to be merged.

The Councillors agreed it was now appropriate to agree and to be used by the Committee.

- ***Motion to agree the ToR of the HR & Facilities Committee was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

#### **21. Governance and Policy Committee - recommendation of formation and ToR**

The Chair stated that after reviewing the process used by ELDC in regard to the way they manage Governance, it was felt that this PC needed a process to ensure that they could manage and control the governance needs. It would in effect bring together all the various elements of governance and policy needs of the Council. The committee would also be able to manage the policy needs of the Council and to be able to react to any legal

changes or recommendations by either NALC, ELDC or the Monitoring Officer, including any formal submissions of code of conduct complaints.

The Councillors discussed the agenda point and agreed that it would allow a focus on the governance needs.

Cllr Howard asked if the time stated given to the public for questions was three or five minutes.

The Clerk confirmed he would review the standing orders and ensure the committee's ToR was accurate.

The Clerk stated that the Council needed to first agree if the Committee was to be formed:

- ***Motion to agree the formation of the Governance and Policy Committee was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

The Clerk stated that the Council needed to then agree the ToR for the Committee:

- ***Motion to agree the ToR of the Governance and Policy Committee was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

## **22. Suggestion from the public on actions by the Council - Consideration of how to use a suggestion scheme**

The Chair stated that from communication from a local member of the community, it was felt that the community needed to have an opportunity to make suggestions for the Council to act upon. He agreed this was a great idea and would allow the community to ask the Council to review ideas for improvements or to form such items as 'games afternoons' or other community related sessions. The way it would work is that in the Village Hall would be a template to encourage suggestions and then the Clerk would bring these to the Council to review.

The Council agreed that this channel of communication was a great idea and needed to be implemented.

- ***Motion to agree setting up a Suggestion Scheme for the community was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

## **23. Christmas working group - agreement to what can be organised and costs**

The Chair asked Cllr Marshall who is leading the Christmas Working group alongside Cllr Howard.

*Cllr Marshall stated that the PC had received a lot of interest from various community groups who had asked for a table or wished to have an opportunity to display literature about their groups, including the Rainbows and Brownies. This also included the local food bank and other community groups who were from the wider local area. There was also interest from the local school who wanted to combine the interest from the Food Bank to create an assembly to highlight the issues in connection. Overall this Christmas function is about bringing the community together and enjoying the great community spirit. She wished to thank the EVENTS COMMITTEE for the provision of the Christmas Tree and that they would ensure that the lights of the community groups would be reviewed and checked as needed.*

*She continued to state the PC was looking into running a cafe on the day which would be staffed by the Councillors and would hope to raise needed funds for the Village Hall - and if the community wished to contribute they would be welcome. And crucially the tables to the Community Groups are FREE OF CHARGE and that the whole event would be at NO COST THE COMMUNITY.*

The Chair thanked Cllr Marshall for her update and the wonderful work that is going on for the event in December 2023.

## **24. Fencing discussion and fire risk assessment charge - update and possible decisions on how to proceed**

The Chair stated that for any members of the community who were not aware; following the application by the previous administration that applied and received a grant from the National Lottery Community Fund, this administration of the PC was tied into recognising there was a safety issue in regard to the front of the VH that needed railings. The application was for heritage railings with additional noticeboards.



The Chair continued that following a full safety and risk review, the safety risk highlighted that if there was a rush of persons through the front fire exit doors, there would be a serious risk of people being forced over the wall and drop onto the road. This wasn't about aesthetics - it was a safety risk that the PC had to manage as if they didn't, and something were to happen, then the PC would be held liable. Whilst the Council does recognise that not everyone wants railings at the front, there is a risk that needs managing.

The Clerk stated that he had tried to contact several Ironmongers and one responded - and had undertaken a site visit and given his opinion, including that which agreed with the safety and risk assessment recently carried out by the PC. He stated that the railings would be needed from the bus stop to the main bush area at the edge of the Village Hall.

He gave two quotes:

- 1) Quote for standard railings with some 'knuckles' to break up the straight lines - £4,028 + VAT
- 2) Quote for heritage style railings (similar to the memorial garden) - £12,659 + VAT

The Council asked the Chair if the railings would cause an additional issue with people being crushed against the railings and children being placed at risk. The Chair confirmed that the railings that had been quoted met the legal requirements for the safety of children, and in regard to the crushing the exiting would be across the front of the VH and down the slope.

The Chair was asked if the railings were needed as per the safety risk assessment - he replied yes there was a safety risk that needed managing.

The Chair stated that in his opinion there were three options:

- 1) Approve the standard railings that the grant received will cover
- 2) Approve the heritage railings which will need approximately £7.5k from Council reserves
- 3) Hand the grant money back to the National Lottery Community Fund

The Clerk stated the National Lottery would need an urgent review on the use of the Grant and that this issue could not be continued to be delayed - as the awarding body could eventually formally request the funds back. A member of the community stated that if permitted he would like to measure for a quote from an alternative contractor to see if the quote could be cheaper.

The Council agreed that this community person should be permitted some time to assess the cost but that the final decision had to be made at the next meeting on the 04 December 2023.

*Cllr Gale asked if there were any drawings for the work - the Chair confirmed that drawings would be done once submissions to the planning team at the ELDC was submitted.*

The Chair agreed that the issue needed to be agreed at the next meeting for finality.

## **25. Co-option campaign for local community** - the recommendation of the clerk for how to manage recruitment

The Chair asked the Clerk to update the Council on the co-option position.

The Clerk stated that currently there was one vacancy on the Council vacant which had not been fulfilled at the May elections. He had received confirmation from ELDC that we could proceed with co-option if the PC wished so. He stated that he had received interest from members of the local community who asked about being co-opted.

He recommended that the Council if they wish to proceed with the co-option, they could publicise this on the website, noticeboard and other places in the village to encourage people to apply for the co-option onto the Council. The deadline could be the 30 November 2023, which will give people around two weeks to consider and apply. Then the Council could either decide at the 04 December meeting or call an EOM to decide.

The Councillors discussed the timeframe and Cllr Snell asked if the Council could delay the co-option to allow the Council to manage the current issues it is dealing with. The Councillors stated while it was a narrow timeframe, getting the last place filled on the Council would allow more help.

There was consensus among most of the Council that the co-option should proceed and that the Clerk should ensure that as many places as possible are used for publicising the vacancy. Then after applications are received by the Clerk and checked for legal compliance, then the Councillors can decide at the next meeting.

- ***Motion to agree that the Parish Council should proceed with the co-option procedure and invite applications from the local community to apply was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

## **26. Urgent or important correspondence received**

The Clerk stated that the following had been received:

- Multiple complaints from the community about the leaflet that was distributed by Cllr Gale at the table top event on Armistice Day, Saturday 11 November 2023
- Complaint from the previous internal auditor - this will be managed as per the Complaints Policy
- Subject Access Request from a person associated with the previous administration
- Letter from ICO - confirming that the complaint against the PC has not been upheld
- Letter from the NALC confirming the NJC pay award for staff of local government and local Councils
- Letter from a member of the community about the trees near the Village Hall - referred to ELDC
- Letter from ELDC about the S106 applications in connection with the local development

## **27. To agree the date of the next PC Meeting - Monday 04 December 2023 at 7pm**

The Council agreed that it would hold the next meeting as per the schedule of the first Monday of the month.

- ***Motion to accept that the next meeting of the Parish Council to be on Monday 04 December 2023 at 7pm was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

## **28. To resolve: Whether the Council will move into closed session to consider the following confidential and legal matters in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.**

- ***Motion to agree to move the meeting into a closed session due to the agenda point being confidential was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

*For the following points members of the public must leave the meeting as the meeting will be a closed session.*

**MEETING PAUSED AT 8.57PM TO ALLOW FOR THE COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO LEAVE.**

**MEETING RESUMED AT 9.05PM TO ALLOW THE MEETING TO CONTINUE.**

## **29. Staffing issue - for discussion and agreement**

The details of the discussion were confidential and thus not included in these minutes. A separate report of the discussion will be noted for the Councillors only if the closed session followed..


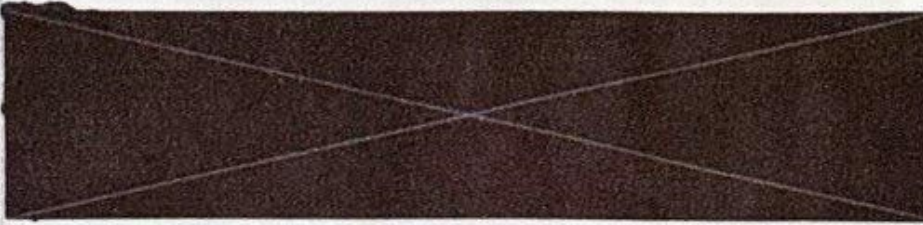



**THE CHAIR OF THE PARISH COUNCIL CLOSED THE MEETING AT 9.07PM.**

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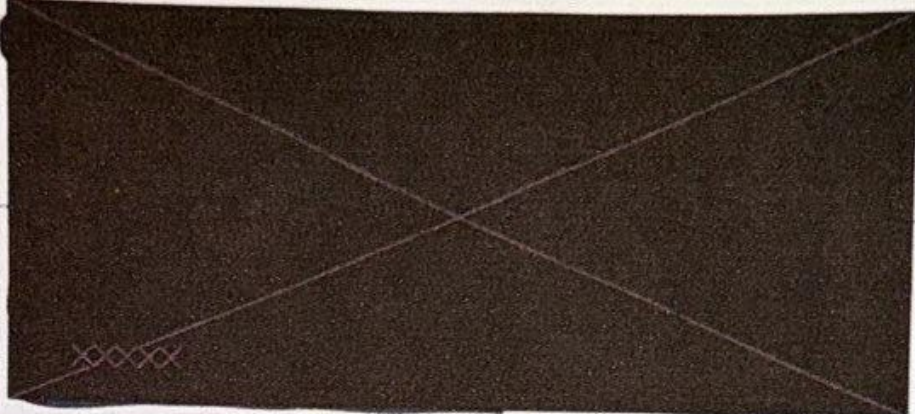





AMENDMENTS THAT WERE PROPOSED BY CLLR GALE FOLLOW THESE MINUTES. WHILST THEY WERE ORIGINALLY AGREED BY THE PARISH COUNCIL, DUE TO THE ACTIONS OF SOME PRESENT THE AMENDMENTS WERE POSSIBLY AGREED UPON DURESS. THUS SOME OF THE AMENDMENTS UPON ADVICE HAVE BEEN REDACTED FOR PUBLICATION DUE TO THE LEGAL JEOPARDY THAT PUBLISHING THESE AMENDMENTS WOULD PLACE THE PARISH COUNCIL IN. THE FINAL DECISION WAS MADE BY THE PROPER OFFICER AS PER THEIR LEGAL POSITION TO ENSURE THE PARISH COUNCIL IS PROTECTED. THE UN-REDACTED ORIGINAL WILL BE KEPT IN THE PARISH COUNCIL'S RECORDS FOR POSTERITY.






**Areas redacted following advice to ensure Parish Council is not liable for one councillor's viewpoint and libel**

From 13 November Meeting - Minutes Corrections

Item Number	Comment
3	<p>The first question asked by a member of the public was relating to the validity of the public EOM meeting.</p> <p>The chair confirmed the notice was on the board on Thursday Morning, 19 October. The meeting was held Monday 24 October.</p> <p>In item 3 section c of our standing orders it states;  <b>b) The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.</b></p> <p>Consequently Thursday 19 and Monday 24 October doesn't count. Sunday 23 October doesn't count. That leaves Friday 20 and Saturday 21 October. That's two days. Consequently the meeting was not valid. This isn't my opinion, it is as laid down in our standing orders.</p> <p>I propose the records show that the meeting held 24 October be designated as an informal meeting and consequently no formal notes of order are valid.</p>
	
	
	
	<p>Table top sale Leaflets</p> 
	

*W. HD. A. W.  
 BY  
 C. W. G. A. E.*

Item Number	Comment
	
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
8	<p>Closed Session</p> <p>I clearly stated that a paper copy should have been provided to me </p> 
9	
12	<p>Anti Fraud and Corruption</p> <p>Statement by Clr Marshall.</p> 

Item Number	Comment
	
13	Telephone Access item g  and a member of the com
13	Fencing – Item j  discussions are going to be held between The Chair, the clerk and a member of the community who may be able to source competitively priced fencing.
13	Defib Machine – Item k 
14	The vote has been recorded wrongly. I abstained due to not receiving the papers in time for me to read them fully. I would like the vote to be recorded properly
15	
16	