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

*For the community...by the community...*

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# FULL PARISH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

07 August 2023 – 7pm

## MINUTES

### Present:

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

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

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

No questions were raised.

The District Councillor stated the Planning Inspectorate had rejected the appeal against the rejection of the planning permission from the following:

Name: Mr S Westfield

Address of planning permission: Stanholme Cottage, Stanholme Lane, North Thoresby, DN36 5PP

Reference: APP/D2510/W/22/3309830

Detail of planning: The planning application was a proposed development to change the use of a holiday accommodation to one dwelling.

#### 3. **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.***

#### 4. **Apologies from Councillors for any absence**

The Clerk confirmed that he had received apologies from Cllr. Jones and Cllr. Marshall who had given their reason 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 was no objections by the Councillors to the absences of both Councillors.

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

**5. To grant disputations 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 requests for 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.

**6. To approve the minutes of the Full Parish Council Meeting on the 03 July 2023 as a true record:** *Draft minutes of the Full PC Meeting held on Monday 03 July to be approved as the accurate record of the meeting.*

The minutes of the previous Parish Council meeting had been distributed to the Councillors prior to the meeting to allow for any inaccuracies to be brought to the attention of the Clerk.

The Clerk stated that the name of Cllr. Howard had been inadvertently missed from the DRAFT minutes but that had been amended for the minutes to sign.

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 03 July 2023.

- ***Motion to accept that the minutes of the Full PC Meeting on the 03 July 2023 were an accurate record of the meeting was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

**7. To approve the minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting on the 20 July 2023 as a true record:** *Draft minutes of the EOM held on Thursday 20 July to be approved as the accurate record of the meeting.*

The minutes of the previous Parish Council meeting had been distributed to the Councillors 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 meeting on the 20 July 2023.

- ***Motion to accept that the minutes of the EOM on the 20 July 2023 were an accurate record of the meeting was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

## **8. Updates from Clerk - from previous meetings**

The Clerk discussed the following updates:

### *a) Bank*

The previous accepted proposal had now started and the Council had applied for the new bank account with UNITY Bank. It was hoped in the new 2-3 weeks the bank accounts would be open and then resource transferred from the current banking provider.

*b) Payroll Bureau*

The current payroll provider had been given notice and the set up for the new provider had already commenced. This would result in savings of circa £500+ for the community.

*c) Local Association*

The Council had given notice to LALC and had already joined ERNLLCA who they feel will provide better service to this Parish Council.

*d) PC Office consideration*

The Council had looked to see if the Conference room could be used as the Parish Council office as well / or for hiring purposes. The Village Manager had received confirmation from a known contractor who confirmed that there was no fire escape and the windows are too small to make one to a suitable exit - it would need to remove at least one pillar. There was also no fire extinguisher.

*e) Payment of staff*

It was confirmed that payment for staff had now been started as a bank transfer and will be set up as a regular payment once the new bank account is set up. This was to ensure that there was no breach of the employee contract.

*f) Financial Software*

It was confirmed that notice had been given to SCRIBE in that the licence will not be renewed which will produce a saving of circa. £400 a year. The in house system had been designed and was already in use with all the flexibility and adaptability as needed and to suit the Councillors.

*g) Deposits for one off Village Hall Bookings*

The Clerk stated that currently no deposits were taken for one off bookings - which in his opinion was not proper or safe for the Parish Council. He confirmed that this had changed and now proper deposits were requested and payment upfront. This would ensure that there were no bad debts for one off bookings and that the deposits covered any possible cleaning or repair costs.

*h) Data storage and email*

It was confirmed that a new system had been engaged which would not only allow cloud storage of all the council records which would be secure and multiple access, it would also allow an easier e-mail system. The Clerk stated that the system had already been started to be used.

*i) Proper budget management with value for money at the heart of all activity and working with community groups to gradually move to cashless payments - but with safeguards*

The Clerk stated that the budget management for the Village Hall had been reviewed for proper management and that while the VH is a functioning business element of the Council, it also stands in the heart of the community. Thus while proper financial accounting was in place for ensuring income was managed and costs analysed, it would be recommended that a proper review is done, with value for money but also not at the expense of the community. It was confirmed that while bank payments would be encouraged, there would be some group users who need to remain as cash payers. As much help as needed would be offered.

*j) Possible savings of around £5k from some budget lines*

The Clerk confirmed that from an initial review of the budget, there had been £5k savings which may be used in budget lines not being used. Further details would be provided in due course but the initial reviews had been sent to Councillors.

*k) Proper management and support structures for staff*

The Clerk confirmed that he had instigated proper and supporting structures for staff and had recommend various processes to the Council. A lot of procedures would need to be started from scratch as there was insufficient or proper processes currently from previous administrations.

*l) Reviewing of accounting records and financial operations from previous administration of the Parish Council*

The Clerk confirmed that he had started to review all accounting documents for the current year and previous years. He was reviewing the details of all financial transactions and would report back to the Council in due course. This is part of the design of the new financial systems.

*m) Survey of the Village Hall preservation needs with reviews of asbestos and maintenance*

The Clerk confirmed that a full asbestos survey would be carried out in the next few weeks and that a further review of the condition of the Village Hall would be reviewed, including painting.

The council thanked the Clerk for the detailed debrief and for all his hard work since joining the Parish Council.

**9. Application/s for the co-option to the Parish Council - for discussion and agreement**

The Clerk confirmed that he had received an application from a Mr Matthew Philip Spence to be considered by the Parish Council for co-option onto the Council as a full member and that Mr Spence did fulfil one or more of the legal criteria to be eligible to be a Parish Councillor for this Parish.

He confirmed his application was distributed to the Councillors before the meeting to allow Councillors to review the applying details.

The Councillors discussed the application and there was consensus that he would be a great asset to the Parish Council, had local knowledge and has more than the skillset and ability to serve on the Council.

- ***Motion to co-opt MATTHEW PHILIP SPENCE as a full Parish Councillor of North Thoresby, Grainsby and Waithe Parish Council was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

***CLLR. SPENCE SIGNED THE DECLARATION ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE WHICH WAS WITNESSED BY THE PROPER OFFICER.***

***AT THIS POINT THE CHAIR OF THE PARISH COUNCIL WELCOMED CLLR. SPENCE TO THE PARISH COUNCIL AND INVITED HIM TO FULL PARTICIPATION OF ALL REMAINING MATTERS WITH ALL THE RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF A PARISH COUNCILLOR.***

**10. Review of Safeguarding requirement and Safeguarding Officer - for discussion and agreement**

The Chair opened the agenda point by stating that it was appropriate and best practice that as the Village Hall did hold meetings, hires and performances that may include younger members or vulnerable adults of the Community, it was felt that the Council should appoint a Safeguarding Officer. He confirmed that

Cllr. Marshall who was fully trained and had experience of managing safeguarding issues had expressed a desire to be appointed as the Safeguarding Officer. She would use her knowledge to undertake the necessary review and ensure that the Council was not only compliant but actually promoted the best practice.

The Chair confirmed that the safeguarding procedure and Safeguarding Officer would be part of the risk assessment. The Councillors discussed the need and all agreed that it was appropriate and necessary, and that Cllr. Marshall would be best person to lead the Council's approach to safeguarding.

- ***Motion to appoint Cllr. Marshall as the Safeguarding Officer was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

#### **11. Grass cutting quotations** - consideration of quotes and agreement

The Clerk confirmed that he had received three quotes for the grass cutting work in the village of North Thorseby and these had been distributed to the Councillors.

- Contractor 1 - this quote was for £785 + VAT for each cut
- Contractor 2 - this quote was for £440 for each cut
- Contractor 3 - this quote was for £192 for each cut.

The Council considered each quote and felt that the cheapest quote, who was the current incumbent of the contract, was the best option for the Community. The quote was from KC LANDSCAPES and the contract offered was for three years at the same price.

The Council discussed the current service received from KC LANDSCAPES and it was agreed that the service provided was to a high standard and perfectly acceptable to continue.

- ***Motion to accept the quote of KC LANDSCAPES as the preferred contractor for the grass cutting contract price of £3,456 for 18 cuts a year for a three year contract was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

#### **12. Contributions to the Village Newsletter** - for discussion and agreement

The Clerk confirmed that following an offer from a local Village Newsletter for space for the Council to publish newsworthy items. It was requested if the Council could contribute £100 to the newsletters which would then allow the Council articles. The Clerk noted that the use of this newsletter (rather than the Council producing it's own) would allow significant savings from the budget for newsletters yet still allow the Council to promote items or articles as needed.

The Councillors agreed that the proposal was in the best interests of the community which not only would allow the Council to have published articles (possibly starting with introduction of all Councillors) but would save the community budgeted resources.

The Clerk confirmed that the budget for newsletter had been agreed by the previous administration in the budget agreement. The actual cost of £100 would be agreed when an invoice is presented.

- ***Motion to allow expenditure of £100 for the Parish Council's newsletter requirements was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

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

The Clerk confirmed that he had distributed to the Councillors the newly designed financial report (as well as bank statements) which included all financial details as from the 01 April 2023. It was confirmed that the report would replace any reports from Scribe. The reports allow the Councillors to review the overall budget and bank position as well as scrutinise individual transactions if required. It also included a degree of forecasting for the Councillors to analyse budget v actual.

The Clerk confirmed that while he was still reviewing the starting points for the financial year and the data imported from the previous year, the main points are as follows:

- The balance in the bank accounts is £37,655 but there were uncashed cheque commitments of £4,322.
- The bank account included some grant monies that had not been spent on specific projects
- The budget agreed last year included various items that were not considered to be effective for the Council currently
- The budget submitted to the Council in January 2023 was surprisingly in effect a deficit budget which would have to be reviewed and possible amendment recommended
- The VAT position of the Council from previous years would need to be fully reviewed for accuracy and completeness
- Overall, the more accurate forecast for budget v actual would be made to the Councillors at the next meeting

The Councillors discussed the submitted financial reports and the new data presented. They thanked the Responsible Financial Officer for the work and that the accounts were now being properly managed from to be able to show the finances of the Parish council.

- ***Motion to accept the financial report and detail provided by the RFO was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

**14. Payment to KC landscapes (missing cheque) - recommendation of repayment options**

The Clerk confirmed that the contractor had contacted the Council to state that the cheque had been initially thought missing but was found - but would need either reissuing or paying via a bank transfer. The Clerk confirmed that the cheque would need to be returned and that once the new bank account with Unity had been set up a bank transfer for the unpaid invoice could be submitted.

The Clerk added that the cheque had been returned and that he would contact the contractor to arrange payment for the outstanding invoice. He also confirmed that as the payment had been agreed at a previous meeting no further authority was needed.

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

PAYEE	EXPENDITURE REASON	AMOUNT
Clerk salary & allowance	Contractual for July 2023	Withheld - confidentiality
Clerk overtime	Overtime for June and July 2023	Withheld - confidentiality
Village Hall Caretaker salary	Contractual for July 2023	Withheld - confidentiality
HMRC	Payment of deductions and statutory liabilities	Withheld - confidentiality

Lincolnshire County Council	Payment of pension deductions and PC liability	Withheld - confidentiality
Clerk's Travel Expenses	Travel for Meetings - June to August	£295.20
Clerk expense claims	Safety posters, fire cabinet, Gmail and postage	£203.64
Expert Security Systems	CCTV service and replacement of locks	£565.00
Councillor Jones invoice	Repayment of staffing costs due to no bank	£1,300
North Thoresby Football Club	Grass cuts for June 2023	£100.00
Cllr Howard expenses	Provisions for the Annual Parish Meeting	£1.65
ERNLLCA	Membership for 2023	£397.36
Duncan & Toplis	Payroll Bureau services for June & July 2023	£132.50
AP Services (Louth) Ltd	Service and parts for boiler, plumbing issues at	£163.72
Cloudnext	Annual website support	£198.98
Parish Mag Printers Ltd	Christmas newsletter - 2021	£198.00

The Clerk confirmed that he had sent details of the expenditure to the Councillors for their review. He confirmed that the expenditure that was marked as 'withheld - confidentiality' had been sent to all Councillors for their note. The Clerk also confirmed that the expenses claimed for travel to the Village Hall which had been agreed at appointment for meetings, with informal and formal as well as hand over reviews. The expenses for the safety and fire posters were needed to ensure that Council met its legal and moral obligations.

The Clerk stated that the main payment he would recommend needed further consideration is the payment to Parish Mags Printers Ltd - this was an invoice for Christmas newsletters in December 2021. This invoice had been verified for its authenticity through proper diligence and that he could confirm it was legitimate. The suppliers could not specifically give a reason for the delay in requesting payment other than upon a recent review they found an invoice still to be paid. They also confirmed that the contact at the PC was a former Councillor who arranged the order.

The councillors discussed the issue in detail and it was confirmed that the former Councillor was the person at the time who would arrange such projects. They also discussed that it was unfortunate that this had taken so long to come to request but that it was legitimate, albeit late in request, the invoice should reluctantly be paid.

- ***Motion to formally agree to the proposed list of expenditure was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

#### 16. Planning applications and results - to discuss and agree the decision on each

- i) ***Details of Planning Permission - Erection of car port (works completed)***  
***Location: Newholme. Station Road, North Thoresby***  
***Decision: Planning permission granted***

The councillors noted this decision.

- ii) ***Details of Planning Permission- To retain a vehicular access.***  
***Location: The Bungalow, Main Road, North Thoresby***  
***Application for permission***

The Clerk confirmed that this application and the supporting details had been passed to the Councillors.

Cllr Snell confirmed that she had thoroughly read through the application and noted that it would not cause any undue additional impact on the nearby road and is acceptable to what is deemed safer for the access.

The Councillors discussed the application and felt that as the area was already used by a lot of traffic, it would be safe for the entrance and exit for the property.

- ***Motion to fully SUPPORT the application was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

*iii) Details of Planning Permission- Internal alterations to first floor stairwell balustrade to provide additional guarding and enclose existing stair spindles at existing children's care home.  
Location: Westbrook Farm, Station Road, North Thoresby, Grimsby, DN36 5QS  
Application for permission*

The Clerk confirmed that this application and the supporting details had been passed to the Councillors.

Cllr Snell confirmed that she had thoroughly read through the application and noted that it would be safer for the users of the property while still maintaining the originality of the property.

- ***Motion to fully SUPPORT the application was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

*iv) Details of Planning Permission: Installation of roof-mounted solar pv system (listed building)  
Location: The Old Rectory, Grainsby Lane, Grainsby, Grimsby, DN36 5PT  
Application for permission for installation on two buildings*

The Clerk confirmed that this application and the supporting details had been passed to the Councillors.

Cllr Snell confirmed that she had thoroughly read through the application and noted that the installation of the equipment would be on garages not on the original building. This would ensure that the panels would not easily be visible and not deter from the listed building.

- ***Motion to fully SUPPORT the application was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

## **17. Training for Councillors - discussions and agreement**

The Clerk stated following the Council's move to ERNLLCA, there were now extensive training opportunities that this organisation provides for Councillors and the staff. This training included individual areas as well as general practice of being a Councillor. He fully recommended that all Councillors review the training opportunities provided by ERNCCLA.

The Chair stated that the training would be for the HR Committee to determine once they had received details from each Councillor. The HR Committee would then discuss the costs with the finance committee for affordability.

The Councillors discussed this and agree that once the HR Committee had met, they would then review the training needs of all Councillors and staff.



#### 18. **Terms of Reference for Finance Committee and HR Committee** - for discussion and agreement

The Clerk stated that he sent to all Councillors his recommendation Terms of Reference for the Finance Committee and the HR Committee. The terms of reference would allow each committee to then operate as needed and then report to the Council as needed.

The Chair stated that it was good practice to have proper committees with separate Chairs for them to allow him to then stand back - this is good governance and was needed.

Cllr Gale noted that she had fully read the ToRs and felt they were fully detailed and appropriate, and would provide a good start from which the Committees could develop their operations as needed.

The Councillors discussed the ToRs and all agreed that they were needed and did provide good governance.

- ***Motion to accept the recommended Terms of Reference for the Finance Committee and the Human Resources Committee was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

#### 19. **Finance Committee Chair and membership** - for full consideration, discussion and agreement

The Clerk stated that while the membership of the Finance Committee had been informally agreed, it was now needed to formalise the membership of the committee as well as the Chair of the Finance Committee. He noted that the current informal membership was Cllr Marshall, Cllr Jones and Cllr Buckenham. The Clerk stated that these Councillors had agreed to be formally nominated and that there was a nomination for Cllr. Marshall to be the Finance Committee Chair.

The Councillors discussed this proposal and agreed that Cllr. Marshall would be a good person to have as the Chair of Finance Committee as shown by her diligence and help to the Clerk.

- ***Motion to confirm the membership of the Finance Committee of Cllr. Marshall, Cllr. Jones and Cllr. Buckenham with Cllr. Marshall being the Chair of the Finance Committee was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

#### 20. **Review of Village Hall Hiring rates and policy** - for discussion and agreement

The Clerk stated he had discussed in detail with the Village Hall Manager about how the hiring of the Village Hall operates, the prices and how it is operated. The main elements the Clerk and Village Hall Manager had amended was the documents used, the process of payment and the way that deposits are handled. This was to ensure the administration was more efficient through modern business practices both for the benefit of the PC as well as the hirer. The Clerk agreed that the VH was a community asset for the benefit of all, and while the PC needs to ensure the VH hiring is run properly, it must not be at the detriment of community groups.

The Clerk stated he was aware that the costs had been reviewed by the previous administration and recommended that at the current time of need, it would be appropriate to keep prices at the same level for this financial year to allow a proper review. This would allow a proper approach and not a reactive ad-hoc approach.

The Council agreed that the PC should keep the focus of the Village Hall as the community centred asset and that a proper review of the Village Hall finances would be needed to make a proper decision.

- ***Motion to agree to the Clerk's recommendation to keep the prices of the hiring of the Village Hall to allow a full, detailed review was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

## **21. Communication strategy for all communication by the Parish Council** - for discussion and agreement

The Clerk stated that he had been asked if he would write and make a recommendation on the format, style and approach of all Parish Council communication as to ensure that it is consistent, professional, appropriate and met the standards expected of the Council. This strategy would then be the foundation of all communication and could be reviewed as needed. He was aware that previous Council approaches were not as consistent as hoped.

The Council agreed with the Clerk's recommendation and agreed that a consistent approach for all communication would be good for the Council and the community.

- ***Motion to accept the recommendation of the Clerk in regard to the communication strategy of the Parish Council was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

## **22. Permission for set up access time to set up in the Village Hall** - for discussion and agreement

The Clerk stated that following the Annual Meeting of the Parish on the 03 July 2023, a request was made by a member of the community group to be permitted to set up for the hires without being charged. This would be reinstating what they had previously been allowed but had been denied by the previous administration. The reason being was that some of the community groups have members who are less abled and thus this decision would be community spirited.

The recommendation by the Clerk was for the Council to give discretion to the Clerk and Village Hall Manager to permit setting up of the hall for subsequent bookings as long as the setting up didn't disturb any bookings.

The Councillors discussed the proposal and felt that it was absolutely in the best interests of all and felt it was unfortunate that the decision to stop the permission to allow set ups had been made by the previous administration.

- ***Motion to allow the Clerk or Village Hall Manager discretion to allow community groups to set up without cost was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

## **23. Consideration of use of conference room in Village Hall** - discussion and agreement

The Clerk stated that he had received an update from the Village Hall Manager who had sought information from a window and door contractor in regard to the Conference Room. This was because there was no fire exit in the Room and no fire extinguisher and if the Council wanted to consider hiring the Room then it would have to be offered in a safe manner. The Village Manager reported to the Clerk that the windows were too small for a proper fire exit and it would need at least one pillar moved near the windows to make a proper fire exit - this would be quite expensive.

The Council discussed the issue and agreed that the Room to hire would have to be properly safe and meeting statutory requirements. It is crucial that everything was done properly to ensure safety. They also discussed that the S106 for a local development may be a route for some or all funding of any work.

They asked that a ball park cost of the work needed to be done was obtained so that further consideration could be made on what to do and how.

#### **24. Risk Assessment** - to agree to the assessment and action

The Chair stated that he had recently undertaken a full risk assessment of the Village Hall to ensure that not only is the location safe for the employees of the Council and the councillors, but also for any regular users of the hall. He stated that through his knowledge and experience he was able to undertake it using an industry standard matrix.

He continued that the risk assessment also included the lone working, the safeguarding (as described in an earlier agenda point) as well as the physical building of the Village Hall. A full risk assessment had been produced and had been circulated to the Councillors for their perusal. It included the elements of risk that needed further discussion such as the lack fencing at the roadside of the Village Hall. The final element was that the risk assessment was a 'live' document and that it would be reviewed on a regular basis.

The Councillors discussed the risk assessment and agreed that it would aid the hirers of the Village Hall to give reassurance the Village Hall was safe for use. They agreed that while there was elements which needed further consideration, it was a good base to which to ensure that risk and safety was considered at all times.

- ***Motion to accept the risk assessment undertaken and abide by the recommendations was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

#### **25. Lone working** - discussion on issues raised

The issue of lone working was covered in the risk assessment detailed discussion in the earlier agenda point.

#### **26. Fencing grant** - discussion of moving forward and agreement

The Chair introduced the point (in conjunction with the risk assessment). The main element is that there may be a risk of not having a fence at the roadside of the Village Hall and if there was an emergency where a lot of people were exiting the village hall from the front fire escape. The issue was that people may fall off the ledge of the wall and cause injury or fall into the road. This had a been a long standing consideration.

The Council discussed the need of the fence and agreed that proper review would be needed - both to ensure that the fence was fit to the surroundings and the neighbourhood, as well as being functional with a possible gate. They felt the design and costs should be investigated further and Cllr Snell offered to ascertain what options were available and best for the Village Hall and then report back to the Council.

The Council asked the Clerk if this matter could be moved to the next meeting for further discussion once further details were known.

#### **27. Reporting of alleged safety concern from trees at the Village Hall** - discussion and agreement how to proceed

The Clerk stated he has received some correspondence from a neighbour of the Village Hall who had expressed concern over the trees at the side of the hall. The neighbour was concerned that that some

branches or parts of the tree could either be a safety risk to any hall users or they could be damage their property.

The Councillors discussed the complaint in detail. They discussed the trees were checked on every two years by a qualified tree surgeon to ensure the tree health and risk was managed properly. It was agree that the next check was due this summer.

The Clerk confirmed that the bi-annual 24 month check will be arranged with a suitably qualified contractor and the report would be fed back to the Council at a later meeting.

The Chair stated that the risk had been included in the risk assessment done for the whole village hall and it was clear that the risk was managed. The Trees' condition would also, as part of the risk assessment, be kept under review.

## 28. Freedom of Information Request by Mr A Shaw - update from the Clerk on the process and cost to the community

The Clerk confirmed that he had received a freedom of information request from a Mr A Shaw - the request included eight separate requests for detail. It was confirmed that the Council has no option but to respond to the request as they are legally obligated under the Freedom of Information Act 1998. The Clerk confirmed that the Council had responded in full to this person within the 20 day statutory timeframe. He concluded by stating that the Council had no choice in using community funds to deal and managed the FOI request and failure to do may have resulted in serious consequences from the Information Commissioners Office including a maximum fine of £20,000,000.

The Clerk stated that following a request from a Councillor on the actual cost of the Clerk meeting the obligation of the FOI, the following was detailed:

In my estimation - in order to ensure that we followed the process properly, I undertook the following work:

- Noting the detail of the FOI
- Responding to the requestor to conform receipt
- Researching legal obligations as to what the PC had to undertake
- Researching any exceptions the PC should be made aware of
- Taking advice from ICO resources
- Reviewing records of the PC
- Replying to the requester
- Making the Councillors aware of all the process and result

The Clerk stated that the calculations were based on the contacted hourly rate, employer NI obligations and employer pension obligations. The total cost was estimated at £66.71

Thus the cost to the community for the request of Mr Shaw was **£66.71** which could have been used for community purposes.

The Councillors discussed this and felt while it was Mr Shaw's legal right to ask for the FOI, it was unfortunate that resources had to be used for this purpose rather than the community.

They also confirmed that in a previous FOI request, Councillors estimated they spent 10 days worth of work - which there was no financial cost, the Councillors time could have been used for community purposes.

## 29. Correspondence

The Clerk confirmed that the Council had received various correspondence from the local community and persons formerly associated with the Parish Council - all of which had been replied as needed. There was correspondence in regard to the change of banks and payroll bureau as well as from the pension fund provider and now the former local association of councils. He confirmed that all urgent and important correspondence had been forwarded to the Councillors through a reply.

The Council briefly discussed the correspondence from various sources and thanked the Clerk.

## 30. To agree the date of the next PC Meeting - Monday 11 September 2023 at 7pm

The Clerk stated that due to a prior commitment before he was appointed, he was unable to attend on the evening of the scheduled PC meeting on the 04 September and thus recommended that the meeting was held on the 11 September 2023.

The Councillors confirmed the need to have the Clerk in person at the meeting and thus were happy to move the scheduled meeting to the 11 September 2023.

- ***Motion to agree the next PC meeting on the 11 September 2023 at 7pm was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

## 31. 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.

The Clerk stated that due to the following agenda points being confidential and meeting the criteria of the aforementioned Act, he recommended that the Council consider moving the meeting into a closed session.

- ***Motion to resolve to move the PC Meeting into a closed session with no public access 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.*

## 32. Consideration of vexatious communication consideration as per Vexatious communication policy - for discussion and agreement

Details of the discussion were noted and included in a separate report which will not be disclosed due to confidentiality and data protection obligations.

- ***Motion to agree that any communication from XXXX and XXXX [name/s redacted for confidentiality] would be treated as vexatious communication was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

## 33. Management of debts owed to the Parish Council - for discussion and agreement

Details of the discussion were noted and included in a separate report which will not be disclosed due to confidentiality and data protection obligations.

- ***Motion to keep the debts owed to the Parish Council under review was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

34. **Agreement to grant individual Councillor permission to liaise with necessary authority** - for discussion and agreement

Details of the discussion were noted and included in a separate report which will not be disclosed due to confidentiality and data protection obligations.

- ***Motion to agree that Cllr. XXXX [name/s redacted for confidentiality] to have the permission of the Parish Council to liaise with the necessary authority /s was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

**The Chair closed the meeting at 9pm.**

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