

**SEATON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**  
**15<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2018**  
**SEATON VILLAGE HALL 7.00PM**

Present:

Mr N Greenfield Chairman

Mr D Coop

Mr R Clarke

Mrs C Lammie

Mrs S Machin (part)

In attendance:

Mr John Hill Clerk

Four members of the public

**MINUTES**

**1. APOLOGIES:**

None

**2. CO-OPTION OF NEW COUNCILLOR:**

Having previously established that she is willing to stand, Councillor Clarke proposed and Councillor Lammie seconded that Mrs. Siobhan Machin, a resident of Seaton, should be co-opted onto Seaton Parish Council. All were in favour.

Mrs Machin joined the meeting later and signed an Acceptance of Office. She will complete the Register of Interests form and return it within the 28 day period.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:**

Councillor Clarke for item 9 Highways – Footpath E311. Members agreed that Councillor Clarke should be able to contribute to the discussion on this issue.

**4. PLANNING APPLICATION 2017/1158/FUL – 1 CHURCH LANE:**

Members discussed the validity of this Application because of substantive doubts about the boundary as shown on the submitted plan. The Clerk has been in contact with Rutland County Council Planning Department and has been informed that, provided the boundary shown on the plan coincides with the existing fence line of the property, the Application will be determined. It is for the applicant and neighbouring property holders to resolve any boundary issues. If, however the boundaries submitted prove to be incorrect, the Application would fail. Members also noted that the correct notice does not appear to have been served on the other landowners within the Application site plan.

Material planning issues were then discussed with contributions from members of the public. It was generally agreed that the scale of development is disproportionate to the land area and it will be very detrimental to neighbouring properties in terms of loss of light and outlook. It is also out of step with recent Applications and developments in the area. The Chairman proposed therefore that a Draft a response questioning the validity of the Application and formally objecting to it should be circulated for final approval. Councillor Clarke seconded this and agreed to produce the Draft. All were in favour.

## 5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:

Councillor Clarke proposed and Councillor Coop seconded that the Minutes of the Meeting of 11th September 2017 should be signed as a correct record; all were in favour.

## 6. MATTERS ARISING (NOT ON THE AGENDA):

**Signatories:** The change of signatories for the Nationwide Current Account is now completed. The remaining action is for Councillor Coop to visit the Nationwide to have his signature placed in the latest passbook. Signatures have not yet been changed on the West Brom BS accounts.

**Defibrillator:** Councillor Greenfield reported that he has placed further information regarding this on the SPC website.

**Bank Records:** Councillor Greenfield signed off a reconciliation of passbook records to paid invoices prior to the meeting.

## 7. FINANCIAL MATTERS:

**Allotment rent review:** On a proposition by Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Coop, all were in favour of retaining Allotment rents at last year's level. The issue of any extra payment to cover the cutting of the Allotment grass paths by an external contractor will be considered when tenants have decided whether they can do this work on a regular basis. Councillor Coop will discuss this with them. In the meantime, the extra that was charged in 2017 will be paid back because Biffa did not cut the grass.

The ex Tring (large) plot is now vacant. This could be split if there is sufficient interest.

### Accounts update:

Petty Cash	£90.35 (- £10 for this meeting)
Current Account	
Nationwide	£3213.57 + interest
West Brom	
Deposit Account	£5556.43 + interest
Restricted Capital Account	£326.96 + interest (Account to be closed)

### Payment:

On a proposal by Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Lammie and agreed by all, the following payments were approved:

John Hill – Clerk's half-year salary (net of tax)	£623.60
HMRC – PAYE 3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter tax	£77.95
Black Velvet (Mole disposal playing field)	£45.00

### Retrospective approval of Payments:

On a proposal by Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Greenfield, Members unanimously approved, retrospectively, the following payments:

RCC street lighting costs	£121.00
Odd-jobs (J Mayfield) Gates & Fencing	£380.00 & £178.00
HMRC – PAYE 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter tax	£77.95
Biffa - grass cutting	£307.20 & £153.60
Robin Clarke Padlocks & Hedges	£17.98 & £30.00
Black Velvet Mole eradication	£85.00
LRALC – Chairman's training	£35.00

Councillor Clarke will obtain a gift voucher (£26) in recognition of the work of the Internal Auditor

**Budget & Precept:**

The Clerk had circulated previously a Draft budget and Precept recommendation for 2018/19 indicating a possible Precept of £3,400. After discussion, in anticipation of expenditure on further work on the children's play area and possible funding for a Data Protection Officer, on a proposition by Councillor Greenfield, seconded by Councillor Lammie, the Precept for 2018/19 was retained at last year's level (£3600 *confirmed subsequent to the meeting*). All were in favour.

**Audit arrangements:** PKF Littlejohn has been appointed external auditor for this region. Small Councils (less than £25,000 turnover) do not need to use this service. Members have already agreed that the current internal auditor, plus additional regular checks on the accounts, will offer adequate protection of Seaton Parish Council's finances.

**8. RISK MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT ANNUAL REVIEW:**

The Parish Council's Risk Management Strategy had been circulated to facilitate the annual review. Two additional risks had been identified: 1. The security of the Council's finances when relying on internal audit, plus regular checks, only; 2. The introduction of a new law, from May 2018, requiring the Parish Council to employ a Data Protection Officer (DPO) to ensure compliance.

1. Has already been considered and agreed; 2. Will be deferred until the Government's advice is clear on the role of DPO.

On a proposition by Councillor Lammie, seconded by Councillor Clarke, all were in favour of adopting the document as amended for the coming year.

**9. HIGHWAYS ISSUES:**

**Footpath E311:** This footpath is on Councillor Clarke's land but the responsibility for its upkeep as a public right of way lies with the Highways Authority. Therefore, because of his local knowledge and expertise, members agreed that Councillor Clarke should participate in progressing the issue.

Councillors Greenfield and Clarke had met with a representative of the County Council, to assess the practicalities and cost of modifying the steep access steps from the Main Street. The Highways Authority is unwilling to underwrite the resulting estimate of £11,000 and this is unaffordable for the Parish Council, particularly when weighed against the proportion of Seaton residents who use the footpath.

Members of the public (two in number), who were invited to comment, stressed the dangers that the steps presented to the many walkers, including those from outside the village, that use the path. There is a desire to find at least an interim solution that is cheaper. Rutland County Council should also be encouraged to put up a warning sign on the field side saying that care is needed when negotiating the steps.

Councillors Greenfield and Clarke will take these points back to the Highways Authority, as a matter of urgency, seeking an appropriate, rapid and affordable solution.

**Parking:** Following up on the previous meeting, Councillor Clarke has spoken to the relevant residents off Thompson's Lane (with the exception of No. 8 Main Street) asking if more care can be taken when parking vehicles to avoid potential obstruction to emergency vehicles and dangers to passing traffic.

The suggestion has also been made of creating a layby in Church Lane to offer an alternative to Main Street parking close to the George & Dragon.

The County Council has suggested a bid for funding might be made within the Integrated Transport Capital Programme. Councillor Clarke to follow this up.

**Street Lighting:** The apparent costs have risen considerably since the assessment was made by the County Council when the Parish Council was relieved of the responsibility for maintenance, repair and upgrading of the street lighting in Seaton. This is due to a steep increase in energy costs and also because two lamps in West Lane have been added to the inventory. There was also some doubt about the number of the more expensive to run heritage lamps. The Clerk has met with the Highways Department's consultant to reconcile the situation but a subsequent report is still awaited.

Additionally, the method of charging is being updated by which payment will be for the current year, rather than in arrears. As a result, two bills will be received in the 2017/18 financial year; the budget and Precept have been adjusted accordingly.

**Overflowing Drains:** After discussion, it was generally agreed that one routine clear out of the drains per year is unlikely to be sufficient and that, more regular, more thorough maintenance should be carried out. Councillor Clarke will follow up on his correspondence on this with the County Council.

#### **10. THOMPSON'S FIELD:**

**Grass cutting contract 2018/19:** The Clerk reported that Biffa does not propose to increase charges in the 2018/19 season: £32/cut (16 cuts); £10/visit (on demand) weed killing; £18/cut allotment paths (if required) and £2.50 to empty the bin (once/month). On a proposition by Councillor Coop, seconded by Councillor Greenfield, it was unanimously agreed to award Biffa the contract again. This would include cutting the grass paths in the allotment area if not carried out by the tenants.

The issue of Mole infestation on the playing field has been dealt with and it was reported that the playing field appears to be clear at the moment.

#### **Play area resurfacing:**

The resurfacing programme being carried out by Councillor's Coop and Lammie has continued. The top end area has been grassed and is growing well. There was a discussion regarding continuity and whether putting special rubber matting under the swings is an option. The Clerk has been in touch with Wing and Rearsby Parish Councils to check on costs, etc. for this option but responses are still awaited.

A small working party of members will meet shortly to look at the current state of the children's play area with regard to condition of the equipment and surface. The old wooden surround will be removed.

As requested, the Clerk has obtained quotations for new seats for the infants' swings. Councillor Lammie suggested that the two older seats on the bigger swings should also be replaced. This was agreed unanimously.

#### **11. ALLOTMENTS:**

**Risk assessment:** The Parish Council's insurers had recommended that a risk assessment be carried out on the Allotments. Councillor Lammie will circulate a template that may be used as a basis for this.

Brian Kirby has vacated his plot and, with the Parish Council's agreement, the Trings had asked to move onto Mr. Kirby's plot, leaving their own (large plot) available for tenancy.

**12. DATA PROTECTION OFFICER:**

The new law requiring Parish Councils to use the services of an experienced Data Protection Officer (DPO) comes into force in May 2018. However, the Government still has not come to a definitive conclusion regarding whether it is possible for the Parish Clerk to undertake these duties.

Members decided to wait for more clarity before deciding on the way forward. In the meantime, the Clerk will attend an LRALC course on this subject on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018.

**13. CORRESPONDENCE:**

The following items were tabled:

RCC: 2018/0008/FUL – 32 Main Street; There were no objections to this Planning Application;

Brain tumour circular;

Job Centre Resource Link: it was agreed to put this on the SPC website, the Clerk will send the link to Councillor Greenfield.

**14. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING:**

It was proposed to hold the next Parish Council meeting on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2018 at 7.00pm in the village hall.

The meeting closed at 20.50 hrs.