

SEATON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
18th JANUARY 2016
SEATON VILLAGE HALL 7.00PM

Present:

Mr J Lang Chairman
Mr N Greenfield
Mr R Clarke
Mr D Coop

In attendance:

Mr John Hill Clerk
Councillor J Lammie Rutland County Council DC

MINUTES

1. APOLOGIES:

Mrs C Lammie

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Councillors Lang and Coop for item 11 Allotments.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:

Councillor Lang proposed and Councillor Greenfield seconded that the Minutes of the Meeting of 9th September 2015 should be signed as a correct record; all were in favour.

4. MATTERS ARISING (NOT ON THE AGENDA):

Verges: Councillor Clarke had liaised with The Highways Department at Rutland County Council and he and Councillor Lang had met to resolve the issue of verge ownership and condition along the narrow section at the eastern end of Main Street. The hedges at Nos. 6 & 8 have been cut back and the wall at no. 6 is to be removed.

Disputed invoice – Ground Control: Rutland County Council had spoken to Ground Control on behalf of Seaton Parish Council and secured a promise that the invoice for grass cutting and weed control for 2014 would be issued soon. However, nothing has been forthcoming and, in view of the efforts to bring this to a conclusion, Members resolved to let the matter lie but keep a balance in the reserves to cover any costs that might still arise.

Charlotte Rudkin Plaque: This matter is on going and the Chairman will continue to liaise with Vicky Sanderlin McLoughlin.

Church Lane Drains: Councillor Clarke has resolved the issue of blocked drains with Rutland County Council District Council. Although the drains are now clear they could still be inundated in the event of exceptionally heavy rain. No further comments have been received from local residents.

5. FINANCIAL MATTERS:

Accounts update:

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Petty Cash | £51.93 (- £10 for this meeting) |
| Current Account | |
| Nationwide | £3272.15 (including £425 grant for computer equipment) + interest |
| West Brom | |
| Deposit Account | £5798.09 (including £400 Bonfire Party donation) + interest |
| Restricted Capital Account | £326.29 + interest |

Payment:

On a proposal by Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Lang and agreed by all, the following payment was approved:

John Hill – Clerk’s half-year salary (net of tax) £611.20

Retrospective approval of Payments:

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

HMRC – PAYE 2nd & 3rd quarter Tax 2 x £76.40

Caroline Lammie – Bark for play area £130.00

Odd Jobs – Allotment fence repair £22.60

Cory - grass cutting & weed removal - £38.40 & £115.20

Budget & Precept:

The Clerk had circulated previously a Draft budget and Precept for 2016/17.

The Council noted that strong financial control had been maintained throughout 2015/16. Expenditure was therefore forecast to be around 5% below budget. Most costs for 2016/17 were expected to be broadly in line with those for 2015/16, but significant increases are possible in website support in August when LCC will cease to provide this support in-house. Despite this, the Council felt that SPC reserves remained strong and sufficient for forecast requirements. They therefore agreed unanimously that the precept could be reduced for 2016/17, demonstrating the Council's continuing commitment to maintain high quality services and value for money.

Therefore, on a proposition by Councillor Lang, seconded by Councillor Greenfield, the Precept for 2016/17 was set at £3,441.72 (£3,500 net of Local Council Tax Support Grant 2016/17 £58.28). All were in favour.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT ANNUAL REVIEW:

The Parish Council’s Risk Management Strategy had been circulated to facilitate the annual review. The Clerk had added a section to incorporate the risk of defaulting on the online publication of certain documents and data in compliance with the new Transparency Code. Members felt that the proposed new wording ‘*Meeting the requirements of the statutory Transparency Code in terms of publication of*

specifically required documents and data online within the timescales specified should be added to Seaton Parish Council's Risk Management policy. On a proposition by Councillor Coop, seconded by Councillor Lang, all were in favour of adopting the document as amended for the coming year.

7. HIGHWAYS ISSUES:

Traffic calming measures:

An item from Rutland County Council DC had been circulated inviting parishes to submit highways proposals to be considered for inclusion in the new Integrated Transport Capital Programme.

Members discussed, in general terms, the possibilities for a bid involving traffic calming measures in Seaton. The new programme and the proposals for the future administration of village street lighting are on the agenda for the next Parish Councils' Forum on 28th January 2016. County Councillor Lammie will attend and report back to the next Parish Council meeting.

The issue of traffic calming in Seaton will be flagged up on the web site.

8. TRANSPARENCY CODE AND FUND:

New computer and scanner for Seaton Parish Council:

The LRALC has indicated that it is bad practice for Parish Councils to rely on computer equipment privately owned by the Clerk. It has published a scheme for obtaining grant aid to purchase this equipment and Seaton has applied for and secured a grant for £425.

Despite some reservations, members instructed the Clerk to use the grant to purchase the appropriate computer and scanner.

9. PARISH WEB SITE:

From August 2016, Leicestershire County Council will no longer provide a support service for parish web sites, including Seaton. A Tender exercise is being carried out to nominate a successor service but is not yet complete. Therefore, the future is unclear at this stage with regard to continuity and cost of providing a service at least suitable for the online publishing requirements of the Transparency Code. Depending upon the complexity proposed for an individual site, there will be set up costs in addition to the annual support fee.

Councillor Greenfield informed the meeting that there had been at least 3,500 'hits' on Seaton's site so far. Councillor Lang will distribute an A5 size leaflet around the village advertising Seaton's web site *seatonrutland.com* and soliciting news items and events information.

10. THOMPSON'S FIELD:

Play area resurfacing:

The resurfacing programme being carried out by Councillor's Coop and Lammie will continue. The area around the swings has been grassed and is growing well.

Elsewhere bark is being relocated and raked to improve the depth around other pieces

of play equipment. Councillor Coop has obtained further supplies of suitable bark FOC and will continue to do so when possible.

Grass cutting & weed treatment contract for 2016:

The current contractor Cory's costs have risen from £32 to £35/cut for the 2016 season, maintaining £10/visit for weed removal. Although members felt that a 9.3% increase in a low inflation period was excessive, the basic cost is still not unreasonable and, in general, Cory has done a good job both in grass cutting and weed treatment. It was therefore agreed to stay with this contractor for the coming season.

The Clerk will speak to Cory about emptying the playing field rubbish bin. Councillor Clarke will obtain a £30 voucher for hedge trimming services.

11. PLAYING FIELD LICENCE AGREEMENT/BONFIRE EVENT:

Members discussed the recent Bonfire Party and agreed that it was a very successful event. There was also agreement that circumstances around organising the event and drawing up a suitable licence agreement had been complicated and protracted.

The view was expressed that a basic licence agreement template is required which can be adapted to suit particular types of usage of Thompson's Field. Councillor Lammie has offered to help develop such an agreement and Councillor Clarke volunteered to help with this. The Chairman requested that the licence template is kept as simple as possible.

12. ALLOTMENTS:

It was agreed that Councillors Lang and Coop, who had previously declared an interest, should be allowed to speak on this item in order to progress matters.

Allotment rent review: Members reviewed the position and decided that, because inflationary pressures are currently very low, it is reasonable to maintain allotment rents for 2016 at the current level. Annual reviews will continue.

There is one vacant plot available (ex Mr Robin Whittle). The Clerk will advertise this on the notice boards and in the George & Dragon.

As requested by Members, Cory has quoted for cutting the intermediate grass areas around and between the plots: £18/visit providing that this can coincide with grass cutting on the playing field. After discussion, it was agreed that this is a reasonable price; the cutting frequency would need to match that of the playing field if the grass length is to be maintained at an acceptable level.

It is proposed, in principle, that this cost should be met by the allotment holders and Hilary Williams will be asked to discuss this with them in the first instance.

The Clerk pointed out that, if VAT is to be reclaimed, the Parish Council would need to reimburse Cory and recover the cost from the tenants.

13. FINANCIAL PROCEDURES:

The Clerk reported on the LRALC's circular regarding strict guidelines on financial procedures, particularly those involving purchasing goods and services. The imposition of a system whereby, subsequent to the receipt of each good or service, the Parish Council or a subcommittee would have to meet to approve payment, is simply

impracticable. Ad hoc meetings would have to be called on a frequent and unplanned basis in order to meet the various payment deadlines imposed by each individual supplier.

Members agreed that the present procedures are fully transparent and provide a complete audit trail which safeguards the public money used. Therefore the present system will be maintained.

14. PARISH COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS:

Councillor Lang introduced this item saying that there is no set procedure for between-meeting communications amongst Councillors, particularly e-mails, with copies sent out in a random way.

The Clerk endorsed this saying that, in principle, all councillors and the Clerk should be kept apprised of any work carried out for and on behalf of the Parish Council.

However, there was also general agreement that it would be good practice to avoid, where possible, a proliferation of copy e-mails. Therefore, the main aim will be to inform all Councillors whenever an informal meeting (for example a site meeting) is to be held outside the normal Parish Council schedule.

15. BINS FOR RUBBISH AND DOG FAECES:

Following an enquiry from a resident with regard to placing a bin for rubbish and dog faeces in the vicinity of Grange Lane, the Clerk had obtained prices for bin purchase and emptying. After discussion Members felt, on balance, that no extra bins should be provided at this time.

16. DEFIBRILLATORS:

The subject of placing a heart defibrillator unit in the ex 'phone box on Main Street had been discussed previously and considered as probably not time-effective in the event of sudden cardiac arrest (SCA). However, the matter was raised again by a resident. Ex Councillor Dr Hilary Williams was consulted again and on this occasion advised that the time may now be right to reconsider obtaining a defibrillator for Seaton. There is also an indication that the unit could be made more accessible and time-effective by attaching a purpose built container to the village hall. The defibrillator could then be rapidly accessed by virtue of an entry code provided by the 999 operator.

Training needs are apparently minimal and the Clerk has ascertained from the Parish Council's insurance broker that there are no adverse insurance implications.

Members decided therefore to take the matter a stage further. Councillor Greenfield will talk to Brian and Sally Kirby with regard to fundraising for the unit and also to the village hall committee for in-principle permission to site the defibrillator at the hall.

17. CLEAN FOR THE QUEEN:

This is an initiative to encourage villages to have a major clean up to coincide with the Queen's 90th birthday celebrations later in the year.

After discussion Members decided to publicise this on the Parish Council web site, encouraging a response from those interested for an ad hoc informal clean up, if they wished, in the spirit of the event.

18. CORRESPONDENCE:

The following items were tabled:

RCC – Circular re parish street lighting proposals;

R Clarke – letter re fencing on his property.

19. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING:

It was proposed to hold the next Parish Council meeting on Monday 21st March 2016 at 7.00pm in the village hall.

The meeting closed at 21.07 hrs.