**STRENSALL WITH TOWTHORPE PARISH COUNCIL**

The Village Hall, Northfields, Strensall, York YO325XW

e-mail: strensalltowthorpePC@outlook.com phone: 01904 491569

Chairman : Mr A H Fisher

**MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD REMOTELY ON TUESDAY 11 AUGUST 2020 AT 7.15PM**

**Councillors Present:** Andrew Bolton \*\* Chris Chambers John Chapman Dr Helen Cox Tony Fisher \* Tony Gavin Duncan Hill Lawrence Mattinson Susan Nunn Kevin Ogilvy

**In Attendance:** Fiona Hill - Parish Clerk

**Public Present:** 0

\* City of York Council Strensall Ward Councillor

\*\* AB sent apologies, but arrived late

1. **To note apologies for absence and approve the reasons given:** Dennis Baxter – Does not have broadband to enable him to join remote meeting

Resolved – Approved

1. **To receive any declarations of interest under the Parish Council Code of Conduct or**

**Members register of interests:**

None

1. **To approve the minutes of the monthly Parish Council meeting of 14th July 2020:**

Resolved – Approved/endorsed (Unanimous, proposed SN, seconded HC)

1. **To receive report from Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer on matters**

**arising/ongoing issues:**

Parish Council

On 17 July 2020, I circulated the YLCA White Rose Update in which the advice was that the advice from National Association of Local Councils was that remote meeting should continue. In the email I said that the government guidance had been updated in the previous week as follows: “From 1 October, if prevalence remains around or below current levels, we will bring back audiences in stadiums, and allow conferences and other business events to recommence in a COVID-19 Secure way. In November, our ambition is to scale back remaining social distancing measures, but this is contingent on a number of factors, including consideration of the specific challenges as we move into winter”. Therefore, I was expecting NALC/YLCA to advise that in-person meetings could commence in October 2020. However, last week the Prime Minister “squeezed the brake pedal” on easing coronavirus lockdown restrictions, so I think remote meeting may have to continue for some time yet.

Here are the dates of forthcoming meetings, which will start at 7.15 p.m. - Tue08Sep20, Tue13Oct20, Tue10Nov20, Tue08Dec20

Subject to the village hall successfully re-opening throughout August, I am planning to re-open the Parish Council office on Monday 14 September. Visits to the office will be, for both Councillors and public by appointment only, following government guidance and face covering must be worn.

The last ever edition of Outreach will be September/October 2020. The editor said ”This decision has not been made lightly but with move to Internet and Facebook pages as well as the delivery of Handy Mag it is not economically viable anymore for the small number of people who are not on the Internet (many more have gone on-line as a result of Co-vid and social distancing)”. The Parish Council has asked the committee, in line with the caveat attached to the grant awarded, if they found a cheaper printing option that reduced the shortfall between printing costs and advertising/donation income and if so, with the reduced number of printed editions, is there any unspent grant funding?

Planning Committee

Here are the dates of forthcoming meetings, which will start at 6.30 p.m. - Tue25Aug20, Tue08Sep20, Tue22Sep20, Tue13Oct20, Tue27Oct20, Tue10Nov20, Tue24Nov20, Tue08Dec20, Tue22Dec20

Cemetery Committee

The Boundary fence was in a state of near collapse, so three quotes were requested and two were received. The contract was awarded to Mick Duck and the work has been completed.

After a complaint was received about a cremated remains plot, the Parish Clerk visited and closely inspected every grave. Photographs were taken of five graves, which were found to be violate the rules, regarding the number of items on or around the headstone. Four families were written to and one grave was monitored. The monitored grave was cleared after a birthday and the families of two appear to have brought their graves within the rules. The remaining two graves were cleared by the Parish Clerk and the items placed in boxes and stored in the shed.

Finance Committee

The Parish Clerk is acutely aware that this committee is unable to achieve meaningful work remotely and it is nearly impossible to conduct internal controls remotely. With this in mind, I will ensure this is rectified as soon as in-person meetings re-start.

Bank Statements as at 31 July 2020:

Treasurers Account £43944.98

Cemetery Account £7930.13

Contingency Account £62497.93

Premium Account £18656.98

Contingency Bonds £15000.00

Premium Bonds £10000.00

Total £158030.02

Made Up Of

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Double Taxation | Received 09Jan19 |  | 7622 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Ring-fenced Funds: | New Planters (Bought 6) | 2000 |  |
|  |  | Cowslip Bridge | 14000 |  |
|  |  | Neighbourhood Plan | 5000 | 21000 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Ear-Marked Funds: | Tree Works | 15000 |  |
|  |  | Grants |  | 6000 |  |
|  |  | Play Area Maintenance | 15000 | 36000 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| General Reserve: |  |  |  | 93408 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Good Practice = Precept x up to 2 = | 104000 |  | -10592 |

Income/Receipts – July 2020

Cemetery £883.00

Interest £0.67

Expenditure/Payments – July 2020

Cartmell’s Gardens Cemetery Grass Cutting £455.50

Business Stream Cemetery Water Rates £7.43

Parish Clerk Salary/HMRC

All Design Print Neighbourhood Plan £120.00

Information Commissioners Office Subscription £35.00

O2 Mobile £20.21

Postage Office Postage Stamps £8.14

Mike Duck Fencing Himalyan Balsam Removal £320.00

Play Area Committee

The Play Areas are now open, with Covid19 signage fitted by City of York Council.

The inspection rota has been updated, inspections are taking place weekly, but currently reports are by email.

Ashfield Leisure have completed the Post-ROSPA work, as agreed before lock-down.

Image Playgrounds, are due to repair the table in Northfields Junior Play Area, but this may not be until September 2020.

The porthole on a piece of equipment in Northfields Junior Play Area was smashed by persons unknown and Jupiter Play & Leisure are assisting the Parish Council to find a replacement.

Trees, Allotments & Open Spaces Committee

Although the final year of the current five-year tree risk assessment is not until 2021, there is only one task, a tree to fell left to do in year five. Therefore, it was felt that it would be prudent to obtain three quotes for the next period, which would be for three not five years. Three quotes were requested/obtained and the contract was awarded to Bartlett Tree Specialists. Hopefully, this work will be done during August 2020.

Himalayan Balsam had become an issue from Lords Moor Lane leased land and along the highway verge opposite the army camp. Cllr Hill would deal with the leased land, but a contractor would be needed to deal with the highway verge. Three quotes were requested, one quote was received, so the contract was awarded to Mike Duck. This has addressed the issue for now, but it will need to be dealt with ongoing.

I have contacted Townscape, who have provided the planters previously and the currently quote is £284.58 per planter, carriage £280.00, so the total is £1418.32 plus VAT. I have requested three quotes for the handling/fixing of new planters and the disposing of old planters, but to date I am awaiting responses.

The allotment gate post had fallen over, taking the gate with it. Two quotes were requested/obtained and the contract was awarded to York Landscapes Limited and the work has been done.

A parishioner had contacted the Parish Council expressing concerns about a tree overhanging their property. Due to concerns that the resident may irretrievably damage the tree, the committee agreed that it would be better for the Parish Council to arrange for the tree to be crown lifted. Three quotes were requested/obtained and the contract was awarded to Lewis Tree Services.

Two Oaks In Northfields Junior Play Area

During the evening of Saturday 06 June 2020, via social media the Parish Council became aware that a branch had broken loose and was balancing in the tree. Using the Parish Clerk Delegated Powers, Canopy Care Tree Services was asked to remove the branch. The offending branch was removed and made safe by 20.00 the same day by Canopy Care Tree Services.

On closer inspection, the branch showed signs of rot, which put the health of the two trees in doubt.

Due to Covid19, the play areas were closed, but due to the easing of lock-down, the play areas would start to re-open. The Trees, Allotments and Open Spaces Committee agreed that this play area should remain closed and an inspection of the trees would be conducted.

Three quotes for the inspection were requested/received, with the contracted awarded to BHA Trees.

BHA inspected the trees from the ground, issued a report and the conclusion was:

5.1 Both trees are currently healthy and safe to retain. The only work required is removal of the branch from T0716 that overhangs the car park.

5.2 I recommend the trees are re-inspected in 2023

The Village Hall Committee arranged for the removal of the branch overhanging the car park (5.1) on 24 July 2020, using their own contractor

The Play Area was re-opened.

Cllr Hill welcomed the report but in view of the Oak on MOD land, that had recently broken apart, he expressed concerns about having play equipment under the trees

A meeting was arranged with both the Trees, Allotments and Open Spaces Committee along with the Play Area Committee. It was agreed that the Play Area be closed again, until a climbed assessment could be conducted.

The Parish Clerk emailed BHA – “Thank you for this report, which the Parish Council have read with interest. As the trees are within a Play Area, the Parish Council would like to ask you to conduct a “climbed assessment”. Due to a number of Oak trees, which have dropped large limbs in the area recently, the Parish Council have taken the decision to close the play area until the assessment is done. Would it be possible to conduct this assessment at your earliest convenience?

BHA responded as follows – “I’m happy to arrange a climbing inspection, but it is very easy to see from ground level that there are no structural problems with any of the major branches because of how open the crowns are.  If the crown was very dense and it was difficult to see structural and scaffold branches, I would advocate a climbing inspection, but in this case I am more than happy to confirm that both trees are safe. However, if you definitely require a climbing inspection, I will arrange this as soon as I am able”.

The Parish Clerk emailed members of both committees as follows “In view of the advice below, I do not think there is any justification for the play area remaining closed. My proposal is as follows:

* The Play Area will open immediately

* City of York Council, as owners of the land, will be fully informed.

* Due to the unique situation of the trees, an inspection will be arranged annually.

This is in line with how Haxby Town Council deal with trees in their play areas

I would be grateful if you could vote - IN FAVOUR, AGAINST, ABSTAIN - today, so this issue can be dealt with promptly

Cllrs responded as follows:

Votes in favour                 -              Cllrs Chambers, Chapman, Fisher and Nunn

Votes against                    -              Cllrs Hill\* and Ogilvy

\* “Very much against. Please put on the agenda for the main council as I think that this situation could have serious ramifications for it in the future and feel that they need to be made aware”.

Therefore, the proposal was agreed by majority and the play area was again unlocked.

The Chairman has spoken to City of York Council and a number of Parish/Town Councils, who are satisfied that all reasonable steps have been taken, as it would be difficult to justify the expense of moving play equipment from under the trees, to further out into Northfields Play Park, with such a small risk expressed by BHA.

In addition, the HSE have issued a report “Management of risk from falling trees or branches” which can be viewed via link <https://www.hse.gov.uk/foi/internalops/sims/ag_food/010705.htm>

Agenda Items Deferred Until Future Meetings

* North Yorkshire Police Reports
* Speeding
* Floral Displays – Hanging Baskets, Christmas Trees
* DMMOs – West Pit, Tesco’s Snicket
* Footpath Issues – Cowslip Bridge, Lock House river bank slippage, unauthorised diversion/barbed wire

1. **To adopt/re-adopt policies as follows:**
2. Business Continuity Plan
3. Standing Orders

Resolved – Adopted/Re-adopted.

The Business Continuity Plan would be populated with information on a continual basis and would be invoked by the Parish Clerk in consultation with the Chairman

1. **To discuss the two ordinary vacancies following the Local Elections 2019**

There had been one expression of interest and the Parish Clerk had arrange a meeting later this week.

1. **To receive matters raised by/with City of York Ward Councillors:**
2. Earwisk PC – Offer of outdoor exercise equipment

Resolved – The Parish Council would decline this offer, due to concerns about anti-social behaviour and lack of suitable site.

Proposed: LM, seconded: SN, 8 votes in favour, 1 vote against)

Cllr Fisher reported that he would be challenging City of York Council about Double Taxation and in particular, he asked the Parish Clerk to try to establish how much was paid for maintaining the play areas.

1. **To receive matters raised by/with Parish Councillors** a) On street parking, which causes obstruction to large vehicle

Cllr Fisher agreed to speak to City of York Council about the possibility of road markings

Parking on verges was discussed. It is not illegal to park on verges, causing damage to verges is illegal, but proving it is difficult. The Parish Council has placed notices on car windscreens in the past, which has had some success.

Cllr Mattinson reported anti-social behaviour along Southfields Road. A number of youth congregate on the grassed area owned by Yorkshire Housing. Residents were feeling intimidated and calls to North Yorkshire Police were fruitless. Cllr Fisher would speak to Sgt. Lee Pointon.

1. **To confirm the date of the next meeting as Tuesday 08th September 2020 @ 7.15 p.m.**

Resolved – Agreed

Cllr Fisher reported that Yorkshire Wildlife Trust had expressed an interest in working with the Parish Council on land owned/leased by the Parish Council, but the free 40 minute Zoom session ended before he could elaborate…..