

**Approved Minutes of the Meeting of Rippingale Parish Council,
held Remotely via Zoom on Thursday 12 November 2020**

Present: Cllrs C. Charlton (Chairman), S. Charlton, E. Field-Lucas, A. Vaughan & J. Howard

In Attendance: Michelle Free (Clerk/RFO)

Public Forum

There were no Press or Public in attendance, so it was agreed to commence the Council Meeting at 7.01pm

Agenda Items

1. To Receive Apologies for Absence

449. Apologies were received from Cllr Fuller.

2. To Receive any new Declarations of Interest

450. There were no new Declarations of Interest to be recorded. Cllr Field-Lucas would be excluded from approval of expenditure at Item 6.2.1 (*Para 467*) due to a submitted expense claim. Cllr S. Charlton would be excluded from discussion and vote regarding the Site for Development at Item 7.4 (*Para 476*) due to a DPI.

3. To Approve Minutes of the Last Meeting

451. The previously circulated DRAFT Minutes were considered for approval. **The Council unanimously resolved to accept the Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 October 2020 as a true and accurate record.** Chairman to sign the file copy previously issued. **Clerk to publish the approved Minutes.**

4. To Co-Opt New Councillor

452. No applications for the remaining Vacancy had been received. **Chairman to readvertise Cllr vacancy in next Newsletter.**

4.1 To Review & Allocate Lead Cllr Roles & Responsibilities

453. The nominated Cllrs and the allocated roles and responsibilities were discussed. **It was unanimously resolved to have no nominated lead for Flood Warden; it would be a Full Council and all Cllrs responsibility.** Cllrs Vaughan & Howard volunteered to become the Village Hall liaisons. **Clerk to update and publish the individual Cllr Roles & Responsibilities.**

5. To Receive External & Community Group Reports & Updates

5.1 Police, County & District Council Reports

454. There were no Reports from the **Police, District or County** Councils.

5.2 Community Groups & Organisations

455. **RJPFT.** The Chairman stated that a Grant of £500 had been awarded by the Lincolnshire Playing Field Trust. The RFO stated that a cheque for the current balance (£11,109.90) was included for approval under item 6.2.1 (*Para 467*), subject to the approval of the Review & Resolution of the New Play Equipment at Item 7.2 (*Para 474*).

456. **Neighbourhood Plan.** The Chairman requested that it was formally Minuted that Mr. M. Hallas had resigned from the Committee. Gratitude for Mr Hallas' contribution and all the work completed was expressed and unanimously acknowledged by the Council.

457. The Chairman confirmed that the DRAFT Plan had been updated to reflect the previous discussions and, as agreed by the Council via email, a density (number of houses per hectare) of 14 for any proposed development had been included. A Zoom Meeting had been held with the Consultants and the cost proposal was in progress. The updated documents still needed to go to the Consultants then to SKDC for review, prior to the 6-week public consultation and Referendum, due to be held around May 2021. The RFO requested confirmation on whether the current grant funding could be retained. **Chairman to confirm spending deadline of the NP Grant Funding.**

458. **Feast.** Cllr Field-Lucas had received no updates.

459. **Parochial Church Council.** Cllr Field-Lucas stated that there had been no feedback from the PCC. The Council had been made aware that an elderly and long-term PCC Committee Member had had to step down due to being unable to complete the new requirement of Safeguarding training. The need for the Church to protect themselves and any vulnerable persons was understood but it was hoped that the individual could be excluded from pastoral roles or supervised. **Cllr Field-Lucas to feedback the Council's comments to the PCC.**

460. **VHMC.** A copy of the end of year accounts had been sent to Cllr Field-Lucas and the Clerk by the VHMC Chairman. There were queries regarding the changes in some figures, and the role of the

auditor. These changes, and the role of the Council as Trustee, would be discussed as part of the handover to the new Council Liaisons, Cllrs Vaughan and Howard.

461. **Allotments.** The Clerk confirmed that the letters to all Plot Holders regarding the removal of surplus and fallen produce and husbandry to deter rats had been hand-delivered. No responses or comments had been received.

5.2.1 To Review & Resolve Remeasured Allotment Plots & Changes to Tenancy Agreements

462. The remeasuring of the Allotment Garden Plots had been completed by Cllrs S. Charlton & Field-Lucas with assistance from the RGAG Chairman and Mr B. Flatters; as directed, the Clerk had sent them letters of thanks. Some of the actual Plot sizes were obviously and significantly larger than the sizes held on file and paid for; some seemingly deliberately extended without Council consent. There were still husbandry issues on some plots and a need for clear boundary corner marking posts. This was also an opportunity to address the Plot numbering to make it more logical for anyone unfamiliar with the layout. The Tenancy Agreement would need to be updated with the revised sizes and specify the requirement for good husbandry to deter all pests, including rats. The annual rent review was discussed at item 6.3.2 (*Para 472*).

463. As Plot Holder, Cllr Vaughan had a personal interest in the Allotment Garden Plots. However, it was **unanimously resolved for the Clerk to write an appropriate letter to all Plot Holders regarding the changed Plot sizes, husbandry requirements and plot marking; letters to include option for Tenants to be in attendance for an additional remeasure if contested, in line with Covid-19 restrictions. Updating of the Tenancy Agreement amendments delegated to Cllrs S. Charlton & Field-Lucas, and the Clerk. Final wording to be approved by Council via email prior to issue.**

Zoom session ended at 7.35pm then reinstated at 7.39pm under same login details due to time out.

6. Financial Matters:

6.1 To Receive & Approve the FY2019/20 External Audit Report

464. The completed External Audit report had been received, published on the Noticeboard and website, and previously circulated by the RFO. There were no matters or comments arising. The Chairman thanked the RFO for her ongoing efforts in maintaining the accounts.

6.2 To Receive FY2020/21 Accounts to Date & Transactions Since Last Meeting

465. The Accounts to 31 October and the transactions since the October Meeting had been previously circulated; the forecast outturn of the Income & Expenditure had been updated to assist with the FY2021/22 DRAFT Budget; the annual expenditure may exceed £50,000 due to the Play Equipment, which would incur higher Audit fees. To minimise the handling of documents due to Covid-19, the reconciled bank statements and outstanding invoices had been previously issued to the Chairman for inspection. There were no queries or questions from the Council.

6.2.1 Approval of Income & Expenditure List

466. The previously circulated list was presented for approval. The list included the balance for the New Play Equipment Installation; the War Memorial Cleaning, which included an increase due to the requirement for additional sealant and a return visit; replacement Defibrillator batteries; an expense claim for Cllr Field-Lucas; regular payments such as Grass Cutting and Newsletter Printing. To minimise the handling of documents, the list and invoices had been sent to all Cllrs in advance, only the cheque book and transactions sheet required sharing for signing. The purchase of replacement Defibrillator batteries could be deferred however, **the Council unanimously resolved to purchase Defibrillator batteries now due to the ongoing pandemic and forthcoming winter period.**

467. **Subject to the 5% reduction of the Play Equipment balance as per item 7.2 (*Para 473*), the Council resolved to approve the list of income & expenditure;** Cllr Field-Lucas abstained from the discussion and vote regarding her expenses claim. The -£0.10 difference between the Clerk Salary SO and the HMRC amount owed, identified by the Chairman, was due to the SO being rounded down to account for the fluctuating Income Tax deductions. **The Chairman signed the cheque and transactions sheet; to be forwarded to Cllr S. Charlton for second signatures. Clerk to submit BACS payments.**

6.3 To Review DRAFT FY2021/22 Budget & Consider Precept & Projects

468. A DRAFT Budget based on the current forecast outturn, same Precept and the expected income and expenditure had been prepared by the RFO and previously circulated to all Council Members.

469. **The Council unanimously agreed that the Precept should not be increased;** this was likely to equate to a small deduction for residents.

470. Improvements and projects for consideration included: maintenance/refurbishment of the tennis court surface, inside perimeter and gravel boards; extension of the 30mph zones at the edges of the village; reduction in quantity and replacement/refurbishment of the village entrance signs; removal of the hedge behind the new play equipment to prolong its life; long-term plan for replacement of the Portacabin. **Chairman to include the road sign project in the Newsletter to engage resident opinion. Clerk to publish DRAFT Budget once estimated project costings were known.**

6.3.1 Annual Review of the Clerk Contract & Salary

471. Due to the absence of any public the discussions were held in open session. The current contract had been previously circulated to all Cllrs. The Clerk stated that she felt there was no need to increase the current Scale Point, which would incur additional costs for the Council; a further reduction in the annual office payment for FY2021/22 was also suggested by the Clerk. The inclusion of a Display Screen Assessment for the homeworking by the Clerk had been highlighted by the Insurance Company. **The Council unanimously resolved to accept the Contract proposals. Contract to be updated as part of Clerk Annual Appraisal.** Cllr Field-Lucas stated that the annual Appraisal had been delayed due to Covid-19 but was aimed to be completed by the end of the year; **Council Members to respond promptly when asked for comments/feedback.**

6.3.2 Annual Review of Allotment Garden Plot Rent Increase

472. Due to the unprecedented demand for Allotment Gardens nationwide, the national average was now £0.29/sqm. The Rippingale Allotment Gardens was currently £0.13/sqm was usually subjected to £0.01 increase pa. As Plot Holder, Cllr Vaughan had a personal interest in the Allotment Garden Plots. However, the Council **unanimously resolved to retain the £0.01/sqm increase for FY2021/22. Clerk to implement the rent increase in 2021/22 invoices.**

7. Parish Matters:

7.1 Update on Coronavirus Impact & To Review Changes to Local Restrictions

473. In line with the current lockdown restrictions, the Tennis Court had been closed and new Notices displayed. Updated guidance notices had also been published on both entrances to the Allotments; the Clerk had also provided a copy for the RGAG Secretary to display on their Noticeboard. New and existing play equipment should be used in line with Government restrictions. **Ongoing.**

7.2 To Review & Resolve JPF New Play Equipment Installation

474. All of the new equipment had been installed and was already in use; the feedback via social media had been very positive. The container and vehicles were still on site and the entrance area had been churned up due to sub-contractors not using the boards supplied. The surface of the rubber mulch area under some of the play equipment has minor flaws which need resealing. The Chairman had highlighted the issues to Sovereign Designs Play Systems Ltd and was awaiting resolution. 5% of the remaining balance would be retained by the Council until the issues were satisfactorily addressed.

7.3 To Review & Appoint Casual Worker for JPF Maintenance

475. The applicant for the Casual Worker Contract was discussed. **The Council unanimously resolved to award the Casual Worker contract to K. Lewis, subject to acceptance the contract requirements. Clerk to notify and issue Contract.**

Zoom session ended at 8.15pm then reinstated at 8.17pm under same login details due to time out.

7.4 To Review & Resolve Renewal of Sites for Development

476. Due to an existing DPI, Cllr S. Charlton abstained from the discussion and vote and left the Meeting and was removed to the Zoom Waiting Room by the Clerk. The option to resubmit the whole of the allotment field as a potential area for development and any associated limitations was discussed; the land was previously submitted by the Council in 2007 following consultation with residents. Other village areas previously submitted, included White Rose Farm, land adjacent to the Allotment Field, and land to the rear of Doctor's Lane/East Street. The intention to resubmit the Allotment Field had been included in the Newsletter; no comments had been received. **The remaining Cllrs voted unanimously to resubmit the Allotment Field as part of the SKDC Call for Development Sites. Clerk to submit the Application and required map to SKDC in line with agreed uses and legal wording as per the Deed.** Clerk readmitted Cllr S. Charlton to the Meeting.

7.5 To Review & Resolve comments on the SKDC Local Plan Consultation

477. The previously circulated Local Plan to 2041 and comments by Cllr C. Charlton as NP Chairman were discussed; the Plan included a 16% increase in the uplift of houses, 8% in Grantham alone. It was unclear if the option for 3 houses/year via infill was still included, and the impact that this would have on Rippingale. **The Council unanimously resolved to delegate the Council response to**

agreement by email to enable the infill option to be confirmed. Chairman to circulate Plan wording.

8. Planning Updates.

478. The Clerk confirmed that application **S20/1527** (Outline Planning Permission for one Dwelling at rear of 155 Station Street) had been refused by SKDC. Applications **S20/0677** (Amended LBC for alterations to Loft Space at The Old School, High Street), and **S20/1103** (Erection of detached 2-storey building at The Willows) were still Pending.

9. Admin Matters:

9.1 To Receive the Clerk Report & Correspondence

479. The Clerk Report and correspondence overview had been previously circulated; the hardcopy correspondence had been issued to the Chairman prior to the Meeting. Following a recent webinar, the Clerk had arranged a demo of the Scribe accounts package as a possible option for the Council accounts; the issues with the RBS package previously used by the Council (lack of access for Cllrs to inspect the detailed figures) had been addressed. Although there was a cost associated with the package, this could be beneficial for Cllrs unfamiliar with accounts management. **Details of Accounts Software package to be discussed at Clerk appraisal review.**

480. Further to the resolutions at the last Meeting, the Allotment Hedge Cutting Quote had been accepted by the Council via email (as per Min Ref: 2020.10.08.7.4 *Para 439*); Cllr S. Charlton had been excluded from the discussion and decision. The work was due to be completed as part of the annual hedge cutting in November. Also, Cllr Fuller had been unable to obtain spray marking paint for the allotment remeasuring (Min Ref:2020.10.08.9, *corrected Para 447*). Paint had been purchased by Cllr Field-Lucas and reclaimed at item 6.2.1 (*Para 467*) above.

10. To Receive any Urgent Reports

481. During the cleaning of the War Memorial, a slight lean, towards Middle Street, was discovered. The cleaning contractor believed there was no immediate risk of toppling. A 'French Drain' may be required to restabilize the Memorial at some point in the future; costs unknown and the work would require a Faculty and Listed Building Consent. **War Memorial lean to be monitored and reviewed in Spring.**

482. The contracted grass cutting had only been done once in October; w/c the 5th. As this was the last cut until spring, the need for a further cut, as per the Contract, was required. **Clerk to contact Environment SK.**

483. The fault regarding the tree root trip hazard on the Village Green footpath was still pending. **Ongoing.**

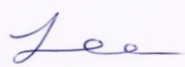
11. Items for Inclusion at Next Meeting

484. Approval of the Clerk's Appraisal and any additional Projects for FY2021/22. **Clerk to action.**

There being no more business, the Chairman closed the Meeting at 8.42pm.

Post-Meeting Public Forum

There were no Press or Public in attendance, so a Post Meeting Public Forum was not required.



Michelle Free, Clerk

27 November 2020