

**Approved Minutes of the Meeting of Rippingale Parish Council,  
held Remotely via Zoom on Thursday 14 January 2021**

**Present:** Cllrs C. Charlton (Chairman), S. Charlton, E. Field-Lucas (excl. item 5.3 Para 504), A. Vaughan (to item 6.2 Para 518 excl item 6.1.1 Para 513), H. Fuller (excl. item 6.1.1 Para 513) & J. Howard

**In Attendance:** Michelle Free (Clerk/RFO) & 1 Member of Public (Cllr household member)

**Public Forum**

There were no Press or Public in direct attendance, and no questions were raised, so it was agreed to open the Council Meeting at 7.01pm

**Agenda Items**

**1. To Receive Apologies for Absence**

485. Not applicable. All Members present.

**2. To Receive any new Declarations of Interest**

486. There were no new Declarations of Interest to be recorded. Cllr S. Charlton would be excluded from approval of the Feast expenditure at Item 4.1.1 (*Para 490*) due to an existing DPI. As holders of allotment gardens, Cllrs Vaughan and Fuller would be excluded from the resolution of the Tenancy Agreement at item 6.1.1 (*Para 513*).

**3. To Approve the Minutes of the Last Meeting**

487. The previously circulated DRAFT Minutes were considered for approval. **The Council unanimously resolved to accept the Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 November 2020 as a true and accurate record;** the December 2020 Meeting was cancelled. Chairman to sign the file copy previously issued. **Clerk to publish the approved Minutes.**

**4. Financial Matters:**

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

488. The Accounts to 31 December, and end Qtr 3, and the transactions since the November Meeting had been previously circulated. 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. Additional purchases since the last meeting included additional flood warden hi-viz clothing and lights, and the routine payments due for approval at the cancelled December Meeting.

489. Reclaiming the VAT paid prior to the year end was discussed but deferred due to the closeness of the year end. The income and expenditure forecasts were expected to be below £50,000. There were no other questions.

**4.1.1 To Approve Income & Expenditure List**

490. The previously circulated list was presented for approval. The list included reimbursing the Clerk for the gift cards, flood warden equipment and defibrillator batteries; the Feast sponsored Christmas Tree; Allotment rent; and regular payments including grass cutting, waste removal, Newsletter printing and Clerk expenses. The RFO stated that the HCS Co-ord had asked for the quarterly payment to be deferred until the Scheme returns properly. The received Casual Worker invoice was a company not individual one.

491. To minimise the handling of documents, the available hard copies had been issued to the Chairman and electronic copies to all Cllrs in advance; only the cheque book and transactions sheet required sharing for signing. **The Council unanimously resolved to pay the quarterly HCS Co-ord admin payment and request a revised Casual Worker invoice. The Council resolved to approve the presented income and expenditure list;** Cllr S. Charlton abstained from the approval of the Feast invoice. **The Chairman signed the cheques and transactions sheet; to be forwarded to Cllr Field-Lucas for second signatures. Clerk to submit BACS payments subject to receipt of invoices.**

**4.1.2 To Review & Resolve outstanding new Play Equipment works & final payment**

492. The Contractor was chasing settlement of the 5% retention payment. The sub-contractor had apparently returned twice but the requested advance notice for Council attendance had not been received; the Chairman had resent the photos of the flaking rubber mulch. Although the surface was expected to flake with wear, flaking within a week of installation was not acceptable. The ground was also settling and could lead to a trip hazard. The new equipment had been included in the annual inspection (details at item 6.2 *Para 514*). The inspector had reported a low risk missing item from the basket swing. The Chairman and Cllr Vaughan had checked the equipment and could find

no evidence. **Clerk to request specific details from the Inspector. The Council unanimously resolved to defer settlement of the retention payment until all works completed satisfactorily.**

#### **4.2 To Review & Resolve FY2021/22 Budget, Projects & Precept**

493. The RFO confirmed that the updated DRAFT Budget included the estimated costings of the projects being considered. It had been published on the website and Noticeboard and circulated to all Cllrs. It was based on the latest forecast outturn, same Precept, and expected income.

494. The RFO clarified that, due to a reduction in the number of households expected to pay the full Council Tax amount due to the impact of Covid-19, the same Precept may result in an 0.8% increase.

495. Following the Newsletter request for comments on a proposal to install new village entrance signs, the Clerk had received 12 mixed responses from residents. Comments and suggestions included: updating the images and refurbishing the existing picture signs; a village competition for new images; a different style of entrance gate; no gates; and just a gate at the High Street entrance. **The Council unanimously resolved to retain the proposed Budget allocation but defer a decision to enable more discussion and options to be considered.**

496. The Chairman had previously circulated the details of the proposed Tennis Court refurbishment works, which included the re-siting of the net posts, and 3 quotes. **The Council unanimously resolved to refurbish the Tennis Court and chose Soft Surfacing Solutions Ltd as the preferred contractor.**

*Zoom session ended at 7.30pm and reinstated at 7.32pm under same login details due to time out.*

497. Cllr Field-Lucas had previously circulated the quote for the works to address the lean of the War Memorial. Although there was no imminent risk of it falling over, the lean angle was likely to increase over time due to surrounding water; the work was also expected to improve the dampness of the stonework. A Faculty and Listed Building Consent was also required. **The Council unanimously resolved to approve the works to address the War Memorial lean. Cllr Field-Lucas to notify the PCC for Faculty and SKDC consent.**

498. The Clerk stated that there should be sufficient flexibility in the budgeted Clerk expenditure to cover the new Clerk salary and accounting software. See item 6.2 (Paras 514-516) for details.

**499. The Council unanimously resolved to approve the proposed FY2021/22 Budget and maintain the existing Precept. Clerk to publish the approved Budget and request the Precept.**

#### **5. Parish Matters:**

##### **5.1 To Review & Resolve Actions and Equipment Requirements for Flood Warden & Response**

500. The heavy rainfall prior to Christmas caused localised flooding and resulted in some Cllrs and residents clearing blocked drains and culverts, and the deployment of sandbags; raw sewage also overflowed onto the road and into some surrounding gardens in 3 areas: Doctor's Lane, East Street and Station Street; all areas frequently affected by heavy rain and consistently reported to the authorities. The flooding was only realised via a chance social media visit by Cllr Field-Lucas; there were no direct calls to Cllrs or the Clerk.

501. The following had been agreed by email over Christmas: purchase of additional equipment (hi-viz jackets and trousers micro spades and headtorches), replenishment of sand and sandbags, update of flood and emergency plan volunteers, nominated Flood Warden, and return of existing equipment.

**502. The Council unanimously resolved the following: the email purchases; Cllr Fuller as Flood Warden; Chairman to include a call for volunteers in the Newsletter; Clerk to order rakes, spare batteries and Hi-viz vests (delegated maximum cost of £100); equipment to be clearly labelled, one set issued to Flood Warden, spares stored in Portacabin with keys issued to all Cllrs; Clerk to chase return of equipment and keys from former Cllrs.**

##### **5.2 To Review Coronavirus Impact & any Changes to Local Restrictions**

503. Although the Tennis Court had opened following the November lockdown, these facilities had been closed in the new lockdown from 5 January and updated notices had been displayed; the play equipment and allotments were open under the new Government restrictions. The pub, village hall and church had also been forced to close. **Ongoing.**

##### **5.3 To Resolve comments on new Planning Applications**

504. **S20/1951** (Porch extension & Garage conversion at The Granary, High Street). As a neighbour, Cllr Field-Lucas abstained from the discussion and vote and left the Meeting by being removed to the Zoom Waiting Room by the Clerk. The Application was received between Meetings, so the original Council response was agreed by email; Cllr Field-Lucas was also excluded from this. When SKDC published the comments, the Council was contacted by the applicant with claiming false information

and a request to withdraw them. The remaining Cllrs unanimously disputed the claim and **resolved that the comments reflected the agreed response and should remain as is. Clerk to notify the applicant.** The Clerk readmitted Cllr Field-Lucas to the Meeting.

505. New Application **S20/2192** (Conversion of an existing agricultural barn into two dwellings and associated access, parking and residential garden area at Rippingale Fen Farm Long Drove, Aslackby Fen) had been received. **The Council unanimously resolved that there were no objections to the proposed works. Clerk to notify SKDC.**

506. The Clerk stated that the applicant had appealed against the refusal of S20/1527 (to erect one dwelling on land at rear of 155 Station Street). No invitation to comment had been received to date but was expected. S20/0677 (Alterations to loft space at The Old School) and S20/1103 (Erection of detached 2 storey building at The Willows), were still pending.

## 6. To Receive Urgent Reports

**6.1 Police, County & District Council, Community Groups & Organisations**

507. There were no Reports from the **County** and **District** Councils. Cllr Fuller confirmed that the **Police Safer Together Team** liaison was looking to actively engage in with the village; a meeting was planned for next week. **Cllr Fuller to raise the ongoing concerns with speeding vehicles.**

508. **RJPFT.** In addition to the £500 of Grant funding, £250 in compensation had been received from NatWest due to the loss of signatory mandates. A cheque for the balance of £750 had been signed and approved under item 4.1.1 (*Para 491*) but would not be released until the installation of the safety surface was deemed satisfactory by the Council.

509. **Neighbourhood Plan.** The Chairman stated that the final draft Plan was still with the consultant. SKDC had reviewed the draft and confirmed that they were happy with it and the public consultation that had taken place. The next phase was to determine if the 6-week public consultation period could be held virtually; the current spending deadline had been confirmed as 31 March.

510. Due to the ongoing lockdown, there were no updates for the **Feast, PCC** and **VHMC.**

511. **Hospital Car Scheme.** The HCS Co-ord's quarterly report stated that no journeys had taken place due to Covid-19; he had also confirmed the availability of drivers. One long-term driver had retired; **Clerk to write letter of thanks.** Despite his reluctance to accept the payment, due to the Co-ord's continued commitment to the Scheme, the Council unanimously resolved to make the quarterly admin payment at item 4.1.1 (*Para 491*).

512. **Allotments.** As requested, the Clerk had written to all residents regarding the husbandry, plot resizing and renumbering. One tenant had requested a remeasure in their presence; due to the ongoing restrictions this had not yet been done. **Clerk to request tenant place corner markers and provide own measurements in interim.** There were still some husbandry issues at the site. Non-allotment items were being stored in the communal areas, the ponds remained and there was evidence that household items (including plastic), had been brought onto the site and burned both on the burning plot and an unauthorised area. The barrel ponds were also still present, one of which impinged on the hedge maintenance. **Clerk to write to RGAG Committee regarding the husbandry issues and contact SKDC regarding the environmental concerns prior to the next Council walkabout. Cllrs S. Charlton and Fuller agreed to remove the barrel pond adjacent to the hedge; area to be checked for newts prior to removal.**

### 6.1.1 To Review & Resolve Tenancy Agreement changes or extend current year

513. As current tenants of Allotment Gardens, Cllrs Vaughan and Fuller abstained from the discussion and vote and were removed to the Zoom waiting room by the Clerk. The revised Agreement previously circulated by Cllr S. Charlton was discussed. The remaining Cllrs unanimously **resolved to approve the revised Tenancy Agreement, which included an extension of the current period to start the new term on 1 April and clarification on permitted structures, and a statement forbidding ponds and open water to be added.** Cllrs Vaughan and Fuller re-joined the Meeting.

## 6.2 Councillors & Clerk

514. The Clerk appraisal had been completed and signed by all parties and the completed report circulated. Due to the Clerk submitting her notice to leave, no new objectives had been set.

515. The Clerk had submitted notice and offered to stay until the end of April 2021 to complete the FY and prepare the External Audit and give the Council time to find the best possible replacement. The Chairman thanked the Clerk for her professionalism, work ethic, and all the help and support that she had given to him and the Council; this was echoed by the other Cllrs.

516. Prior to the Meeting, the Clerk had circulated DRAFT Clerk & RFO vacancy, job and application documents, which had been updated by the Chairman and presented for Council approval. The details and the advertising options were discussed. **The Council unanimously resolved to accept the proposed vacancy, job and application documents, with a closing date of 26 Feb. Vacancy to be published on website, Noticeboard, village Facebook, LALC and local press, subject to the confirmed costs which was delegated for approval by email. Clerk to publish and obtain quotes for press ad and accounts software.** Interview Panel to include Chairman plus 2 Cllrs and current Clerk, subject to knowledge of any applicants.

517. Cllr Vaughan highlighted the waterlogged footpath from East Street towards the JPF. He had previously used leftover wood chippings to improve the surface but had no more available. He had contacted local tree companies to see if any could be gifted but none were available at present. Footpath confirmed as LCC owned. **Clerk to report to LCC.**

518. Feedback or any decision regarding the Complaint against Cllrs had still not been received. **The Council unanimously resolved for the Clerk to chase a response with a deadline before next Meeting to enable further action to be considered by the Council.**

*Zoom session ended at 8.11pm then reinstated at 8.13pm under same login details due to time out; Cllr Vaughan unable to return by video but response to Para 518 confirmed by telephone.*

519. The Clerk had received thanks from some of the Newsletter Distributors, Mr Diess, Mr Leonard and Mrs Martin, for the gift card recognising their ongoing support to the village.

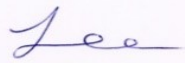
### **7. Items for Inclusion at Next Meeting**

520. In addition to the items already raised, Part 1 of the annual Policy Review. **Clerk to action.**

There being no more business, the Chairman closed the Meeting at 8.25pm.

### **Post-Meeting Public Forum**

There were no comments or questions.



Michelle Free, Clerk

25 January 2021