

**Approved Minutes of the Meeting of Rippingale Parish Council,
held Remotely via Microsoft Teams on Thursday 11 March 2021**

Present: Cllrs C. Charlton (Chairman), A. Vaughan & J. Howard

In Attendance: Michelle Free (Clerk, RFO & Proper Officer)

Public Forum

There were no Press or Public in attendance. The Clerk briefed the Council on two items reported by email:

- Request for a Dog Waste bin to be placed on East Street; no bin on this frequently walked route between Village Hall and Village Green via Station Street and East Street. The Council supported the request in principle but the ownership of the verges, the funding and emptying needed to be confirmed; there was also a dog fouling issue on Grinders Lane. **Clerk to contact SKDC** to see if waste bin could be placed on East Street, which would allow dog waste depositing.
- An enquiry on who was responsible for the underground drainage on Station Street had been raised. The Chairman stated his understanding that SKDC through Black Sluice IDB were responsible for the surface water and dykes and Anglian Water for the sewage; a response from Anglian Water regarding its plans for a long-term solution to the Village's foul water surface flooding was expected by the end of the month. Clerk to advise resident to contact Black Sluice IDB.

No further comments. Chairman closed the Public Forum and opened the Council Meeting at 7.10pm

Agenda Items

1. To Receive Apologies for Absence & Reasons Given

549. Apologies had been received from Cllr Fuller (work commitments).

2. To Receive any new Declarations of Interest

550. There were no new Declarations of Interest to be recorded. As an Allotment Garden Tenant, Cllr Vaughan had a personal interest in item 5.1 (554 to 558). To enable the Council to remain quorate to consider and resolve the business at item 5.1, the Proper Officer granted Cllr Vaughan a Dispensation due to no financial gain or advantage from any foreseeable outcome.

3. To Approve the Minutes of the Last Meeting

551. The previously circulated DRAFT Minutes were considered for approval. **The Council unanimously resolved to accept the Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 February 2021 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

552. No applications or expressions of interest had been received. The vacancies remained advertised in the Newsletter and on the Noticeboard; Cllr Vaughan was aware of a potentially interested candidate and was asked to encourage him to apply.

5. To Receive External & Community Group Reports

553. Cllr Charlton stated that a viable Covid safe 6-week public consultation process (Regulation 14) for the Draft Neighbourhood Plan was being considered by the Consultants. The invoice for the work to date had been chased; the remaining Grant funding would have to be returned at the end of the FY and reapplied for.

5.1 Resolve response to the Allotment Letter

554. The Chairman had received a letter from the RGAG Chairman regarding the letting of Plots to non-residents, the uncut site hedge, a request to site a container and queries from some Tenants about the Agreement. The Council Chairman had sent an initial reply restating that the conditions of the original land purchase limited the allotments to Parish residents, the shared frustrations on the lack of hedge cutting delayed by Covid, staffing issues and wet weather, and asked for more information regarding the Container and that Tenants contact the Clerk directly; Cllr Charlton apologised to the Council for submitting an automatic direct response. The Clerk confirmed that some Agreements had been signed and returned and over 60% of the rents received, the discrepancy with the measuring of 2 plots was still pending, one almost identical Tenancy query had been received prior to the RGAG Chairman's letter, plus a request for an oversized Polytunnel. Formal Council responses were required.

555. *Dispensation for Cllr Vaughan granted at Item 2 (550).* **The Council unanimously resolved that:** a fruit tree was still a tree and must not exceed 2.5m in height; planting of soft fruit shrubs/bushes did not require prior Council approval, ornamental shrubs/bushes did; tenants were responsible for the hedging that forms part of border of their plot; tenants were responsible if poor husbandry led to a vermin nest infestation on their plots. **Chairman to include an entry in the Newsletter** to clarify the requirements for all Tenants.

556. A Container was likely to require Planning Permission as a temporary structure, raised access control and responsibility issues. Further information was required before formal Council consideration. As previously resolved by the Council and notified to the RGAG Cttee, the original land purchase was approved to provide allotment gardens for residents of Rippingale Parish. **Clerk to draft the response to the RGAG Chairman letter and circulate to all Cllrs for approval by email.**

557. The dimensions of the requested Polytunnel was larger than those stated in the Tenancy Agreement. **The Council unanimously resolved that permission could not be granted. Clerk to notify Tenant.**

558. **Cllr Charlton to arrange socially distant meeting with Tenants and the RGAG Chairman and Rep involved in previous measuring to resolve the dimensions. Clerk to forward the recorded dimensions and contacts for the disputed plots to Cllr Charlton.**

6. Parish Matters:

6.1 To Resolve Play Equipment Surface Issues & Final Payment

559. The Chairman stated that, following the visit by the Engineer and the Subcontractor, the surface and basket swing installation issues had been addressed since the last Meeting. Cllrs Charlton & Vaughan had inspected the areas and confirmed the work satisfactory. All Cllrs had acknowledged this by email and authorised the Clerk to release the retention payment.

6.2 To Review Coronavirus Impact & Resolve Changes

560. The national lockdown was ongoing. Although social distancing remained, meeting one other person outdoors in a public place had been permitted. Sports courts were due to open on 29 March, along with the 'rule of 6' or two households in private outdoor areas; non-essential shops and outdoor eating and drinking from 12 April. The Village Hall was not expected to open until May. **Ongoing.**

6.3 To Appoint Tree Works Contractor

561. Cllr Charlton had obtained and previously circulated the details of 3 quotes for the specialised tree maintenance; Cllr Vaughan had not yet commenced the epicormic growth and ivy removal. The Clerk had submitted the TPO works request to SKDC Planning. **The Council unanimously resolved to award Gary's Gardens Tree Services the contract for the Village Green tree works. The trees were subject to a TPO and permission was required before any of the specialist work could commence. Clerk to notify Contractor that appointment was subject to Planning approval. Chairman to forward original quotes to Clerk for files.**

6.4 To Review local Deer & Road Safety issues & Resolve next steps

562. Cllr Howard stated the amazing sight of the increase in the local deer population but highlighted the road safety risk on the A15 in the dip between the 2 Rippingale access roads; Cllr Charlton confirmed this after a personal collision. This was a 60mph stretch of a busy road frequently used for overtaking and the collisions with deer was increasing; it was believed that no fatalities had occurred to date but was thought to only be a matter of time. **The Council unanimously resolved to raise the concerns with LCC Highways; Clerk to liaise with Cllrs Howard and Fuller prior to submission.**

6.5 To Resolve Comments on Planning Applications

563. Applications S20/0677, S20/1103, S20/2192 and the S20/1527 Appeal were still pending.

564. The Council had been invited to comment on **S21/0279** (Outline Planning Permission for residential development with all matters reserved except access on land south of The Old Mill, Grinders Lane); a small extension had been granted to enable resolution at the Meeting. The Council discussed the comments previously circulated. **It was unanimously resolved to object to the proposal on a number of matters, including increased flood risk, inadequate access, pedestrian and vehicle safety, housing density, the inaccuracies in the application, and interpretation of the Local Plan. Clerk to draft the Council response and circulate for approval by email; Cllrs to note 15 March deadline and respond promptly.**

565. The TPO works request at the Village Green submitted by the Clerk on behalf of the Council (S21/0351) had been received for comment. **The Council unanimously resolved its support of the application for essential maintenance. Clerk to respond to SKDC Planning.**

7. Financial Matters:

7.1 To Receive FY2020/21 Accounts to Date & Year End Forecasts

566. The Accounts to 28 February and the income and expenditure forecasts for the year end had been previously circulated by the RFO. The play equipment balance, hedge cutting, Casual Worker (Dec) and Clerk Salary (Feb) had not cleared by month end. SKDC had taken 2 JPF Waste payments under the DD February; the RFO had informed SKDC who confirmed it was their error and a rebate

was due. There had been no additional payments and the receipt of allotment rent income was progressing. The reconciled bank statements and previously outstanding invoices had been issued to the Chairman for inspection in advance. The year-end forecasts were expenditure £47,860; income £35,970; reconciled bank balance of £12,250 to carry forward, including reserves. There were no questions for the RFO.

567. The Internal Auditor report for the Accounts to 30 September had been received and previously circulated to all Cllrs. The Council acknowledged the efforts of the RFO in maintaining the Accounts Records to a very accurately high standard.

7.1.1 To Approve Income & Expenditure List

568. The previously circulated list was presented for approval. In addition to the regular payments, the remaining transactions for the current FY (incl Qtr 4 Income Tax and the NP Grant) and FY2021/22 invoices (incl LALC Membership and Scribe Package), a Gift Card for the Website Co-ord, the purchase of spare ink cartridges and Cllr eTraining for Cllr Howard were considered. The Scribe invoice included the substantial discount negotiated by the Clerk.

569. 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 approve the presented income and expenditure list**, which included a £25 gift token to acknowledge the additional hours spent by the Website Co-ord training on the new system and the Accessibility Guidelines and LALC eTraining for Cllr Howard. **The Chairman signed the cheque and transactions sheet; to be forwarded to Cllr Vaughan for second signature and returned to Clerk. Clerk to purchase gift card and ink cartridges, and submit BACS payments subject to receipt of invoices; all FY2021/22 invoices to be deferred until 1 Apr.**

7.2 To Resolve the Grass Cutting for FY2021/22

570. Following the receipt of the confirmed Contractor prices for the village grass cutting for the next FY, the option to rollover the Contract was formally considered. The prices were in accordance with the annual increase stated in the contract and included in the budget; the actual number of cuts was subject to weather. **The Council unanimously resolved to rollover the Grass Cutting contract with Environment SK. Clerk to send written confirmation of grass cutting rollover and chase completion of the outstanding hedge work.**

8. Admin Matters:

8.1 To Review & Resolve Changes in Part 2 of Annual Policy Review

571. The remaining policies and procedures, legislation changes, minor amendments, model documents and access to the LALC templates had been previously circulated to all Members; the Chairman and Cllrs thanked the Clerk for another detailed review. Due to the UK leaving the EU, a Data Protection Information Assessment (DPIA) was recommended. The Clerk had confirmed that personal data held by the Council was stored on UK servers and no data was transferred outside the UK. The website Accessibility had been tested on 17 Feb and found to be 85% compliant; the creation of webpages for the historical information was still ongoing.

572. **The Council unanimously resolved to accept the legislation and proposed changes, the reviewed risks and responsibilities, Emergency Plan and Health & Safety.** The changes included copy of the submitted Newsletter to be sent to the Clerk for archiving, clarification of probationary period, resignation notice period, increase to the statutory redundancy limits and updated ACAS references in the Clerk Contract and Employee handbook, the availability of information under the data publication scheme, and the Emergency Plan volunteers. The completion of a DPIA was deferred pending outcome of UK and EU/US data transfer agreements. **Clerk to publish the reviewed and amended policies approved by the Council.**

8.2 To Receive Clerk Report

573. The previously circulated Report was discussed. Included in the Report was the correspondence received; the archiving of records, the website publication of the policies and procedures reviewed in Part 1, and the purchase of the additional flood prevention equipment was ongoing; the repairs to the Village Green footpath had been completed by LCC; the completion of the outstanding annual hedge cutting had been chased yet again; the Casual Worker Contract had been updated and the invoice paid; the JPF keys had been returned by former Cllr Warcup but the Flood Warden jacket from former Cllr Moseley was still outstanding.

8.3 To Review Clerk Vacancy Applicants, Appoint Preferred Candidate & Resolve Contract

574. After confirming no knowledge of either applicant, the nominated Panel had interviewed 2 strong candidates. Both applicants had given competent interviews and demonstrated positive attributes and experience. Based on greater financial management experience, **the Council unanimously resolved to appoint** applicant 1 as the replacement Clerk & RFO.

575. Due to the confidential nature of the Contract details to be discussed, the Council unanimously resolved to move into Closed Session in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960; the Chairman read the mandatory statement. No members of public were in attendance.

576. The Clerk expenses and salary scale point were discussed and unanimously resolved. Chairman to sign job offer letter. Clerk to issue Employee Data Forms and Contract for start date of 1 Apr.

8.4 To Review response & Resolve Next Steps to Complaint

577. The Council unanimously resolved to remain in Closed Session due to the currently confidential nature of the business to be discussed.

578. The letter requesting assistance from the Local MP had been drafted by the Clerk and recently circulated to all Members. **Councillor approval of the letter unanimously delegated to resolution by email.**

579. The Council unanimously resolved to move back into open session.

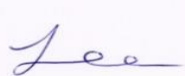
9. Items for Inclusion at Next Meeting

580. In addition to items already raised, the Defibrillator documentation and the approval of the FY2020/21 Accounts to be included on the next Agenda. **Clerk to action.**

There being no more business, the Chairman closed the Meeting at 8.38pm.

Post Meeting Public Forum.

- There was no public in attendance but, despite the reminder in the Newsletter, Cllr Vaughan had received more complaints regarding the continued use of the public footpaths by horse and riders.



Michelle Free, Clerk

24 March 2021

These minutes were approved at Parish Council meeting
15 April 2021.