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**Minutes of a Meeting of Harling Parish Council**

**Held in Harling Old School Hall**

**On Tuesday 25th June 2024**

**PRESENT**

Cllr P Edge (Chairman) Cllr K Rayner

Cllr J Jacobs Cllr H Mackenzie

Cllr G Jubb Cllr B Copping

Cllr S Blades

Cllr G Denham

Mrs K Filby (Clerk)

There was one member of the public present

**1. APOLOGIES WERE RECEIVED AND ACCEPTED**

Cllr L Mould & Cllr A Hayward

**2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 20th MAY**

None raised

**3. MINUTES SIGNED AS A TRUE AND CORRECT RECORD BY THE CHAIRMAN**

**4. PUBLIC FORUM**

Mr B Allen thanked Cllr Rayner for his help with installing the upgraded safety rails to the Uniplay tower due to a safety update by HAGS. The matter of the site of this year’s Christmas tree was raised. The Clerk to contact HOSH who were looking into a road closure for the lighting ceremony.

**5. DECLARATION BY COUNCILLORS OF ANY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY**

**OR PERSONAL INTEREST(S) IN ANY AGENDA ITEMS**

None declared

**6. PLANNING**

**a.** Roudham and Larling Parish Council would like to make local residents aware that one of the preferred options under the revised the Breckland Local Plan is to build 1900 dwellings in Larling. This could potentially add a further 5,000+ residents to such a small rural community which will no doubt cause increased pressure on the local amenities such as schools and doctors etc and cause significant increased traffic travelling through the village. 19/24

The following statement has been posted on the Breckland Council Site Survey Map:

Following careful consideration of the draft development plan Harling Parish Council were initially delighted to note that East Harling hasn't been earmarked for further development allocation in the draft development plan. We do feel that our village has seen considerable development in the past 10 years+ and our infrastructure simply can't support anything further. However, we are dismayed to note the proposed site for 1900 homes at Larling. We struggle to understand the logic behind this siting. The site is located 8 miles from the nearest town, and has no mains sewerage, drainage or telecoms provision. It will remove valuable, highly productive arable land from use and impact the local wildlife with significant loss of biodiverse habitats.  1900 homes will generate considerable traffic both during construction and thereafter and while located fairly close to a rail line, the station at Harling Road has no parking and only has two trains that stop there each day. Therefore there will be a heavy reliance on cars.  The new inhabitants will likely be mostly families placing increased pressure on local schools. The most local being East Harling Primary school which has been oversubscribed for many years. Furthermore, Harling GP surgery which has already swept up a considerable number of Watton's patients will be subjected to increased pressure with in excess of circa 6-7,000 additional patients added to their current 9000 patient list. We ask, where is the planning in the selection of this site? While not located in Harling our Parish will feel the impact of this development just as much as if it were located in it. We urge Breckland to reconsider. Development of this size is only suitable adjacent to service centre towns where the infrastructure can absorb it.

b. The Chairman had contact from the agent for the Fox & Kemp land behind the Glebe, 15 houses and 50 houses. One third of the land is not suitable for development. The agent was invited upon request to speak at the Council’s next meeting, during the Public Forum. It was explained that the Council could not make any comment on the plans. He declined the offer as the Council would not give approval, as explained, Parish Councils’ can only make comment on full planning applications received from Breckland Council.

**7. ACCOUNTS**

**a**) Npower - £822.72

**b**) BT -£73.93

**c**) Staff costs - £6580.63

**d**) Rix Petroleum - £315.00

**e**) TT Jones - £277.84

**f**) R Frost - £75

**g**) Community Garden - £26.96

**h**) NALC - £388.80

**i**) URM - £82.08

**j)** New Buckenham silver Band - £200

*The Parish Councillors were presented with copies of receipts of payments and bank reconciliation showing year to date spending and balances for main current account*

**8. FIRST QUARTER BUDGET REVIEW**

We overspent in the first quarter of 2024 by over £9k due to unexpected costs. The Market Place was over budget by £4.7k and LED lanterns, solar lights etc had to be purchased at £4.5k.

Funds carried forward into the new financial year were therefore depleted by this amount.

An input error was made in the 24/25 forecast budget concerning the VAS signs which overstated our expected income by £12k. This was a bookkeeping error only but presented a more positive snapshot of forecast income than was the case.  20/24

Our general expenditure is now looking considerably higher than expected in some areas, for example, insurance premium up by 26% (£1300), street lighting up 19% (£2600) and new additional allotments cost £4000.

We will still comfortably cover our annual expenditure but the cumulative effect of all of the above means a reduction in our previously estimated earmarked funds to £47k now being available for projects.

We continue to have funds earmarked for the final payment of the VAS signs, next phase of the Market Place improvements will reduce to £23,831 (minus £2070 paid April 24) , and the allotment walls if required.

The contingency fund, will become closer to £10k rather than £16k if all projects are executed.

Overall we are in a stable position financially and we still have a healthy balance for new

projects. Point of action next year is to apply for the maximum precept increase allowable in order to mitigate utilities and other cost increases. All capital projects will need to be assessed carefully before committing to and must remain on budget. Council to consider if projects have not been budgeted for, and,if they are essential to the effective running of the village.

A full independent external audit was carried out of the Councils’ accounts in May following these findings

**9. ANNUAL RETURN FOR YEAR ENDING 31st MARCH 2024**

Council approved Section 1 and Section 2 of the Annual Governance Accountant Statement (AGAR)

Council approved the internal auditors report

**10. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED/CLERKS UPDATES**

**a.** An email was received from the Project Manager who is supporting the Church with their lottery fund application. He wishes to speak to the Council to update on their plans. He has been invited to speak during Public Forum at the Councils July meeting

**b.** Bidwells will be submitting plans for a business park at Snetterton as part of the MSV site. A public consultation event will be running on the 16th July

**c.** The Council approved via email on the 3rd June to the removal of the asbestos shed at the allotments at a cost of £1500

**d.** Bridge on Church Road has been hit with considerable damage

**e.** Ongoing concerns raised by residents of West Harling regarding speeds of vehicles. This has been raised with Cllr Askew and NCC Highways once again. NCC Highways invited by the Clerk to meet on site

**11.** **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 23rd July

There will be no meeting in August

K Filby

Clerk 2nd July 2024 21/24