

425.

Digby Parish Council

The notes from the ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL meeting held on Monday 15th May 2023 at 7pm followed by the monthly parish council meeting, in Digby War Memorial Hall.

Present – Ian Davies (ID), Darren Drysdale (DD), Ken Hand (KH) and Karen Groves (KG)
In attendance – Angie McDonald, Clerk and Proper Officer.

ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

1. Election Results. (23/065)

Six of the seven available seats were taken in the uncontested election. The councillors are confirmed as James Bourne, Ian Davies, Darren Drysdale, Gerald Garton, Ken Hand and Karen Groves. There is currently one vacancy. All councillors signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office (23/065)

As the current Chairman was absent KH took the chair.

2. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND SIGNING OF DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE. (23/066).

It was proposed by DD, seconded by KG, that ID is elected as Chairman, all agreed. ID accepted the position and signed the Declaration of Acceptance.

3. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN AND SIGNING OF DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE (23/067)

It was proposed by ID, seconded by DD that GG is elected as Vice-Chairman, all agreed. The Clerk will arrange for GG to sign the Declaration of Acceptance before the next meeting.

The Chairman suspended the meeting for the public forum and reports from the County and District Councillors.

Public Forum

- A 'Thank you' was received for the support the Parish Council gave for the Coronation Celebrations. It was a great day and over a thousand pounds was raised and will be divided between village groups and the church.
- It was noted that the dug out is down for removal. After talks with the football team and Bowls club they would like to see it remain, and are willing to offer man power to help rebuild it.
- It was asked if a survey of the Cross could be looked into as needs cleaning and may need repairing?
- It was asked if the speed limit on the B1188 is still commencing? The Clerk confirmed it is and the LCC consultation has been completed and is now waiting for Highways to set a date for the works.
- Is there any update on the Community Speed Watch? It is an item to be discussed later in the meeting.

District & County Councillors' Matters

The new District Councillor Amelia Bailey introduced herself.

County Councillor Rob Kendrick will be arriving later due to attending another meeting first.

The Monthly meeting re-commenced; the Chairman declared the meeting back in session.

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks (23/068)

- a) Welcome

426.

ID welcomed everyone to be meeting. A vote of thanks was given for JB, for his work as Chairman for the last 8 years.

2. Apologies (23/069)

a) Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from JB on holiday, GG due to work commitments.

3. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest & Applications of Dispensation (23/070)

a) There were declarations of interest from KG & ID for item 11(b)

4. Signing of the Minutes (23/071)

a) It was proposed by KG, seconded by ID and RESOLVED to accept the notes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 12th April 2023 as a true and accurate record of that meeting.

5. Planning Matters (23/072)

a) Planning Applications Received

Request from NKDC for Scoping Opinion for development: For the installation of a gas to grid biofuel plant, plus ancillary infrastructure and equipment, landscaping and access on land at Walcott Farm, Digby Road, Walcott (Adjoining Parish Council Consultation)

There was great concern for the potential increase in heavy traffic through the village (possibly up to 40 vehicles a day), as large vehicles would need to transit pass the historic monument in the centre of the road and the primary school. The residential street parking on Church Street restricts the road to a single lane for much of the day. The location of this application is not suitable for the road infrastructure that surrounds the local area. The roads are in extremely poor condition and not suitable for long term heavy vehicular use. There is much subsidence on the road from Walcott to Digby. The suggestion from the applicant to provide passing places along the route from Digby to Walcott is not the answer due to the very narrow roads, and dykes on either side which restricts the width of the lanes. There are no footpaths from Station Road to the allotments putting pedestrians and cyclists, wishing to use the facilities along this stretch in more danger. A purpose-built road from the site direct to the B1189 may alleviate much of the traffic issues on the very narrow back lanes of both Digby and Walcott, but the lorries serving the plant should be prohibited for coming through the village of Digby. There is also concern about the air pollution as even though the units are sealed, they need to be opened to load the lorries.

Action: The Clerk to forward these comments to NKDC

6. General Parish Matters (23/073)

a) Appointment of members to parish organisations

i) Memorial Hall Committee.

DD agreed to continue as the representative on the Village Hall Committee.

ii) Allotment Association

JB and KG agreed to continue as the representatives on the Allotment Association Committee.

b) Appointment of members to the working groups of the Parish Council

i) Drainage

It was agreed JB and GG remain as the drainage working group

ii) Playing field

It was agreed DD, KH and GG remain as the playing field working group and continue carrying out the equipment inspections.

iii) Finance

It was agreed GG and KG be the finance working group along with the Clerk.

c) Annual Review of Policy Documentations

The relevant documentation was forwarded to the councillors prior to the meeting. It was agreed all the following document are current and all was in order.

i) Standing Orders

ii) Financial Regulations

iii) Complaints procedure

427.

iv) Freedom of Information Publication Scheme

It was agreed not to increase the current schedule of charges for any publication.

v) Data protection Policy

Action: The Clerk to annotate the completed review and update all the documents and update the website.

d) Asset Register and Date to Inspect the Assets.

A copy of the Asset Register was forwarded to the councillors prior to the meeting. It was agreed it was up to date and all was in order. A date will be confirmed in June to carry out the inspection of the assets.

Action: The Clerk to arrange a date for the walk around the village to carry out the inspection.

e) Review details for the Insurance Policy.

All documentation had been forwarded to the councillors prior to the meeting. All agreed it met our requirements and approved the cost of £603.23.

f) Annual Parish Meeting.

The following points were raised at the meeting held on 26th April.

- Concerns were expressed about the Solar farms and the environmental impact to the area, residents have attended the meetings at Scopwick.
- Public footpath No.8. The sign has fell over, and a builder has left rubble making the track dangerous.

Action: The LCC Countryside Officer will be informed.

- Where is the dropped kerb at the end of Greendykes path (Rowston end) it is preventing Mobility Scooters access.

Action: LCC will be reminded they have not responded to this request made several months ago.

- Can a street lighting be put on B1188 in the vicinity of bus stop as it is very dark in the winter. A light would help drivers spot any pedestrians.

Action: The request will be forwarded to our County Councillor.

19.55hrs – The Chairman declared the meeting closed to permit County Councillor Kendrick (RK) to speak as he had just arrived from a previous meeting.

His monthly newsletter had been forwarded to the councillors prior to the meeting. The Clerk asked him to chase the adoption of the footpath, The Smoot, which runs from Greendykes to North Street, as a tree growing along this path is in need of reduction as it is blocking the light to a bungalow in Chestnut Close. RK agreed.

RK was then asked to support the request for a street light on the B1188 in the vicinity of the bus shelter to improve safety of children and residents using the bus service.

A short discussion took place about the roads leading to the Bio fuel application at Walcott and the parish council's concerns.

Action: The Clerk will email these requests to RK for his attention.

20.13 hrs – RK left the meeting and the Chairman declared the Meeting open

g) GDPR review - Individual Email Addresses for Councillors.

It was confirmed all councillors have individual email addresses that are not accessed by other members of their household. It was felt this is compliant with the GDPR requirements, and this decision can be reviewed annually.

7. Highways (23/074)

a) Pot Holes or Highways Issues.

There were no additional pot holes or issues to discuss.

b) Update of School Safety Zone.

428.

The Public Consultation is currently taking place until 15th June. We will be notified of the outcome of this.

c) Community Speed Watch.

The Road Safety Partnership (RSP) now require the volunteers to attend the training before the RSP will check the areas put forward for consideration will be inspected. It was agreed to notify the training for the volunteers. The Clerk will confirm the time scale for obtaining the equipment and the cost of the annual calibration.

Action: The Clerk to book the training, and obtain the information requested for the next meeting.

d) For Information – LCC will be carrying out maintenance of footbridge between Harrowby Close and North Street (Jubilee Way) from 29th May to 2nd June

8. The Village Hall (23/075)

a) The Minutes from the Latest Meeting of the Committee.

DD confirmed the meeting discussed the upcoming coronation, which turned out to be an excellent event. Live and local events are being tendered for. An £8,000 quote to repair the road surface at the entrance to the Hall has been received.

9. Drainage (22/076)

a) LCC - Request Information on Waterway behind North Street.

Clerk has forwarded the information received from GG regarding this area.

b) For information - LCC will be installing reflective posts to protect filter drain at Gresswell Field.

10. Playing Field, Play Areas and Village General (23/077)

a) Monthly Inspection of the Play Equipment.

DD has completed the new inspection guide for the equipment and will distribute to KH, GG and the Clerk. The reported cracked wooden steps on the wooden multi play climbing unit have been replaced by RPM under guarantee.

b) Road Improvements and Dug-Out.

JB has obtained a quote for the road improvements of £5,624.00, the other written quote has not been received yet. It was agreed the way forward will definitely be with the help of a grant. The Clerk confirmed she has received written requests, since the last meeting, from the football club and bowls club to retain the dug out for their use and for the youth of the village. Both groups have offered manual help to repair it. The council agreed to delay their decision of last month to have it removed totally. The Chairman agreed to ask a local builder to look over the site for recommendation on how best to proceed. Whether the existing footings or any of the structure could be used or whether the old dugout needs to be demolished, removed and we need to start from scratch. This way it could be added to the grant request as a complete project. In the meantime, the clerk will produce a performa to send to the local users of the field to complete and gauge their support in the scheme.

c) Consider Request from Digby Pre-school

The Pre-School have requested permission to hold a Dog Show on the playing field as a fund raising event. It was agreed that in principle, yes. After the date is confirmed a full risk assessment and insurance cover will be needed and presented to the council before the event can take place.

Action: The Clerk to notify the pre-school of the requirements.

d) Annual Review of Playing Field Fees.

The fees have not been increased for the last 3 years. It was proposed by KG, seconded by DD and all agreed an increase of 5% will be implemented over all the local users. The Bowls Club will be increased by £3.00 to £63.00, the Pigeon Club increased by £1.75 to £36.75 and the Football Club increased £9.00 to £189.00

11. Allotments (23/078)

a) Allotment Committee Updates.

429.

KG confirmed the AGM had taken place and the re-election of the committee. There were no changes to the officers.

b) Annual Review of Allotment Rents.

KG and ID declared an interest as allotment holders. It was agreed the 5% increase be implemented to the allotment rents which results in a rent for 2023/24 being £15.75 per plot, plus £5.37 to be added for any non-Digby residents holding a plot.

c) Field Rent Review.

It was proposed by DD, seconded by KH and agreed the field rent be increased by 5% to a total of £630.00.

12. Finance (23/079)

a) Bank Balances and Approval of Bank Reconciliation

The bank balances were reported as:-

PC General Account	£29,950.14
Allotment Account	£ 6,212.05
Mary Gresswell Trust	£ 5.45

The bank reconciliation was approved.

b) Income Received.

Nil

c) Approval of Payments

It was proposed by ID, seconded by KG and RESOLVED the following payments are made

Salaries/Expenses	753.10
Witham First District Internal Drainage Board	65.57
Malc Firth	528.00
CJP Garden Services	60.00
Insurance	603.23

d) The Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2022/23

i) Internal Control System

The Internal Auditor has completed and signed the AGAR Form 3, confirming the council has complied, and has in place the relevant procedures and controls of internal control of its finances.

ii) Section 1. Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

The items of the Annual Governance Statement were read out by the Clerk and it was RESOLVED the Governance Statement be approved. The document was signed and dated by the Clerk and Chairman.

iii) Section 2. The Accounting Statements 2022/23

Copies of the completed Accounting Statement and explanation of the variances had been forwarded to the councillors prior to the meeting. The Statement was signed by the RFO.

iv) Approval of the Accounting Statement for 2022/23

It was proposed by KG, seconded by KH and RESOLVED to approve the Accounting Statement. The Chairman signed and dated the statement.

v) Commencement Date for the Exercise of Public Rights

The RFO confirmed the dates will be from 5th June to 14th July. The notices will be posted on the noticeboard and website before the end of the month.

e) Appointment of the Internal Auditor for 2023/24.

The Clerk confirmed Sue Weaver has agreed to remain as the internal Auditor.

13. Correspondence (23/080)

a) LALC Newsletter - Distributed to all councillors

b) NKDC Newsletter - Distributed to all councillors

c) LALC – Associations Management Committee nominees

14. Dates of Future Meetings (23/081)

430.

Parish Council meetings

For 2023 - 12th Jun, 10th Jul, 14th Aug, 11th Sep, 9th Oct, 13th Nov, 11th Dec.

15. Any Business to Note for the Next Agenda (23/082)

Smoot path – update on adoption and reduction of tree

Strim The Smoot

Advertise Vacancy

16. Closed Session (23/083)

For confidential items in accordance with the Public Bodies Act 1960, if required.

This item was not required.

21.25hrs - There being no further business the chairman declared the meeting closed.