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## **Digby Parish Council**

Notes from the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at 7pm, in Digby War Memorial Hall.

PRESENT – Ian Davies, Chairman (ID); James Bourne (JB); Darren Drysdale (DD); Karen Groves (KG) and Mike Lewington (ML)

In attendance – Angie McDonald, Clerk and Proper Officer.

### **Public Forum**

There were no members of the public present.

### **District & County Councillors' Matters**

District Councillor Amelia Bailey (AB) spoke about the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum and there is a survey about Lincoln Christmas Market.

She has requested information on exactly how many emergency vehicles are available in the county after a recent seriously critically injured person was expected to wait 8hrs for an ambulance.

County Councillor Rob Kendrick (RK) reported over 600 properties have been flooded in the county and inquiries are taking place. The Devolution consultation is taking place and responses from the public would be appreciated.

For the festive period a light show is taking place in the castle.

JB stated Digby had held a public flood meeting and none of the invited outside agencies attended.

We will be inviting them in the new year to walk around the village and expect the LCC Flood Officer to attend. RK agreed to pass on this information. JB also stated we need more support from LCC

Flood Officer regarding the riparian ownership of dykes and help in keeping them clear.

Also, the two bales reported back in July are still on the road side. RK will look into this if the Clerk can forward the ref no.

### **1. Chairman's Opening Remarks (23/180)**

a) Welcome.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and welcomed Mike Lewington to his first meeting. ID then went on to report he has been subject to verbal abuse from residents of the village on several occasions since the flooding has occurred, and if further abuse occurs, he will have tender his resignation from the council. The members of the council were horrified this has been happening and DD expressed his thanks on behalf of all the council, for the way ID had chaired the public meeting in the face of none of the external responsible agencies turning up.

### **2. Apologies (23/181)**

a) Apologies.

Apologies have been received, and accepted from Ken Hand (KH) due to a recent injury.

### **3. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest & Applications of Dispensation (23/182)**

a) ML declared an interest in item 5a, planning and GG/ ML declared an interest in item 9a Greendykes.

### **4. Signing of the Minutes (23/183)**

a) It was proposed by GG, seconded by JB and RESOLVED to accept the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023 as a true and accurate record of that meeting.

b) It was agreed to accept the notes from the Public Meeting on Flood issues held on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023 as a true and accurate record of that meeting.

### **5. Planning Matters (23/184)**

a) Planning Applications Received

23/1334/HOUS 31 Chestnut Close, Erection of single storey side and rear extension.

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ML declared an interest and took no part in the decision made by the council.

There were no objections or comments.

b) Decision Notice Received.

Nil to date.

#### **6. General Parish Matters (23/185)**

a) Footpath 'The Smoot' from North Street to Green Dykes.

RK has notified the council, the footpath is still in the process of being adopted, however the footway works team will patch the damaged areas currently marked by the Highway Officer and then slurry seal it at a later date. The decision to repair it has been made despite it not yet being adopted.

b) Update on producing a newsletter/information sheet from the Parish Council

This is still being worked on due to the additional information requested due to the flooding.

c) Village Hall Garden Footway Lighting.

After the flooding in November the footway lights stopped working. These have since been reset and 5 bulbs now need replacing. After consultation with the council members JB has instructed the electrician to carry out this maintenance work.

#### **7. Highways (23/186)**

a) To report any pot holes or Highways issues.

The grit bins have been refilled.

b) New Street Light Request for B1188

The formal request and all the relevant paperwork had been sent to NKDC and acknowledged. We are now awaiting their decision.

c) Public Footpath No.5

There were no updates to report.

d) Jubilee Footpath – Overgrown Area.

The overgrown area of footpath at the rear of The Chase has now been cut back.

#### **8. The Village Hall (23/187)**

a) Minutes from the Village Hall Committee.

The latest minutes have been received and distributed to the councillors. DD reported the Internet installation will be free for 2 years. He has not been able to obtain the information on what happens after that period.

b) Flood support.

During the flooding the village hall was opened for the residents that had to leave their homes. Once the electricity bill has been looked at and averaged out, the committee will decide whether a possible donation may be requested.

c) Grant Request

A request for a grant to help towards the insurance for the Village Hall has been received from the Village Hall Committee. In principle there were no objections, it was agreed to set an amount when the cost of the policy is known.

**Action: Clerk to ask the committee for a copy of the cost of the insurance.**

d) Review the Gardener's Contract.

The grass will not longer be cut by KH, he has kindly carried out this task free of charge since coming on the council.

A review of the gardener's hours now needs to include the cutting of the village hall grass. The garden working group will discuss this and report back to the next meeting, the current rate is 4hrs a month. The gardener has stated his hourly rate is to increase to £18.00 from the 1<sup>st</sup> Jan.

**Action: Item to be added to next agenda.**

#### **9. Drainage (22/188)**

a) Public Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> Nov – The following list was drawn up from comments and suggestions raised at the meeting.

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1. Lobby the Environment Agency (EA), the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Steve Barclay, and our local MP, Dr Caroline Johnson to request the River Witham and its adjoining water courses to be dug out to the original width and depth to hold more water. It was suggested to join with other parish councils to lobby. i.e. Bloxham, Walcott, Dorrington, Scopwick. The EA need to provide evidence for not needing the Beck to be dug out.

**Action: The Parish Council to lobby the above list and request to village support this.**

2. LCC Flood Team have been notified, by the Parish Council, the addresses of the houses that suffered flooding. The residents have been notified they need to confirm the details of their flooding to the LCC Flood Team to be added to the Section 19 report.

**Action: The Chairman has been informed 17 properties have completed a report.**

3. Road Closure – It was agreed to request permission to close and open roads during localised flooding.

**Action: Permission has been granted from Highways to locally close and re-open the roads around the village where flooding occurs. The Chairman will confirm there is supply of cones available.**

4. Request multi-agencies visit to village, including Anglian Water to assess the situation.

**Action: The Clerk to arrange a meeting with the EA, IDB, LCC Flood Officer and Anglian water to walk around the village.**

5. Carry out a survey of residents for number of sandbags that may be required.

**Action: It was agreed to carry out this survey via the newsletter that is being produced.**

6. Access to the Village Hall – The village hall committee have agreed to a It was proposed by JB, seconded by ID Purchase Key box JB/ID

**Action: A key box will be purchased to store a key for emergencies, members of the village hall committee and the parish council will have the combination number.**

7. Dykes to the south of the village - Can they be dug out?

The land in this area is all private, it will be discussed with the LCC Flood Officer if a major drainage scheme, with joint authorities, could be considered to possibly prevent water entering the village from the south.

**Action: Discuss further drainage improvements with the LCC Flood Officer.**

8. Production of Fact Sheet for households.

**Action: These can be produced and be placed permanently in the noticeboards. Residents can be sign posted to them from the newsletter.**

9. Possibility of a shed to store sandbags. At this time this is not a viable option.

10. Regular checking of water courses to keep them clear.

**Action: Volunteers will be asked for via the Newsletter, to notify the parish council of any issues, before it becomes at serious problem.**

11. Contact with the Flood Agencies was very difficult, when power was turned off.

**Action: It was agreed to produce an Emergency Plan to guide volunteers to co-ordinate a local response. The Chairman agreed to research a draft bullet point list that can be held in the village hall.**

12. Follow up public meeting for February.

**Action: This has provisionally been booked for 26<sup>th</sup> Feb. Awaiting confirmation from the Village Hall booking clerk.**

b) Further Drainage Issues.

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During the early part of December, 2 trees have been reported to have fallen into the water courses. One on North Drain and one at Greendykes. The IDB have been notified about the tree in North Drain. The tree in the Greendykes is part of the riparian responsibility but as the parish council has agreed to clear the dyke as a one-off gesture to improve water flow, it will be arranged for the tree to be removed. A quote for £300 for clearing out the dyke has been given to GG from T Robinson. There is additional £125.00 to remove the tree. It was proposed by JB, seconded by ID to accept the total quote of £425.00 to complete the work.

**Action: GG to notify T Robinson to carry out the work.**

#### **10. Playing Field, Play Areas and Village General (23/189)**

a) Report of Monthly inspection of Play Equipment.

The monthly inspection was completed by KH, he reported that due to the wet weather several pieces of equipment are slippery and moles are active in the play area.

**Action: The Clerk will request the mole man comes out to the clear the area.**

b) Update on the Bowls Club lease.

Due to the flooding issues this item has been put on hold.

c) Update on the improvements to the playing field road.

JB stated he is awaiting a price for the road repairs and ID has chased the repairs to the dug out.

d) Drainage on the Eastern boundary of the field.

It was agreed advice is required on how best to improve the drainage in this area. IDB will be invited to look at this part of the field.

**Action: Clerk to arrange a meeting on site with the IDB representative.**

#### **11. Allotments (23/190)**

a) Updates from the Allotment Committee.

Road repairs are still delayed until the water clears.

#### **12. Finance (23/191)**

a) Bank Balances and Approval of Bank Reconciliation

The bank balances were reported as

PC General Account 16,470.15

Allotment Account 6,851.48

Mary Gresswell Trust 5.48

b) Income

There was no income received since the last meeting.

c) Approval of the following Payments,

It was proposed by GG, seconded by JB and all agreed the following payments are made.

Item	Cost	VAT	Total
SalariesExpenses	1181.87	8.00	1189.87
CJP Garden Services			97.50
Digby Elves	41.00	8.20	49.20

d) To Approve the Budget and set the Precept.

The budget for 2024/25, which was produced by the Finance Working Group, had been sent to all the councillors prior to the meeting. The only change was to increase the contingency to £4,000 for the year to help towards any unplanned costs due to the flooding issues. Therefore, the Expenditure is expected to be 24,907.00 and the Income £1,534.00 for the year so a Precept of £23,373.00 will be required. Using the NKDC calculator this is a 9.42% increase on last year. This equates to a £8.81 increase on a Band D property, which is 0.73p per month.

It was proposed by JB, seconded by ID and RESOLVED to request a Precept of £23,373.00.

**Action: The Clerk to submit the Precept request to NKDC.**

#### **13. Correspondence (23/192)**

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- a) LALC Newsletter - Distributed to all councillors
- b) NKDC Newsletter - Distributed to all councillors
- c) Greater Lincolnshire Devolution consultation – open until 29<sup>th</sup> Jan 24
- d) GoCompare have produced a guide on useful information in case of flooding and are requesting a link to our website. It was agreed this information is widely available via search engines so should be linked via the website.
- e) Request to use the football pitch on the playing field - The group have been informed there is already a club using the pitch.

**14. Dates of Future Meetings (23/193)**

Parish Council meetings

For 2024 – Second Wednesday of the month -10<sup>th</sup> Jan, 14<sup>th</sup> Feb, 13<sup>th</sup> Mar, 10<sup>th</sup> Apr, 8<sup>th</sup> May, 12<sup>th</sup> Jun, 10<sup>th</sup> Jul, 14<sup>th</sup> Aug, 11<sup>th</sup> Sep, 9<sup>th</sup> Oct, 13<sup>th</sup> Nov and 11<sup>th</sup> Dec.

**15. Any Business to Note for the Next Agenda (23/194)**

**16. Closed Session (23/195)**

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

- a) To review the rates of pay for the litter picker.  
It was agreed the rate of pay will be increased in line with the recommendations from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.

21.38 hrs There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed.