

# Castle Eaton Parish Council

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Castle Eaton Parish Council

16th September 2020

### Present

Cllr D Naidu (Chairman)

Cllr D Sainsbury (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr A Keate

Cllr L Saunders

Cllr R Wilkins

T. Whyborn (Clerk)

Andrew Bottomley (Chairman – Environmental Group)

### 1. Apologies for absence

Borough Cllr Mrs M Penny

### 2. Declarations of Interest

None declared

### 3. Minutes of previous Meeting – May 14<sup>th</sup> 2020

Minutes agreed and signed by Chairman, passed to Clerk

### 4. Matters arising from the Minutes of Meeting 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020

DN raised the issue of Speed Watch.

As requested, pipes which measure the speed of cars have been laid outside The Forge in School Lane. A number of councilors highlighted that the traffic is currently quieter than usual due to the bridge repairs, DN will send a request to MP that the survey is in place for a longer time frame.

## **5. Items for discussion**

### **a. Website**

TW has engaged “Website4Communities” to create an off the shelf website for the Parish council to supersede the old website. The costs are £120/annum for the website and £75 for training. This was agreed unanimously

### **b. Tree to the rear of Church View**

Concerns have been raised by residents regarding the tree at the rear of Church View. The recent high winds led them to take the decision to leave their house for the period of the storm, due to the perceived danger it may cause. The tree is a 70year old Poplar tree, it was assessed last year by SBC, who deemed it to be safe.

LS and AK expressed concerns that the removal of the tree could have a damaging effect on local wildlife. DN pointed out that he would be very concerned if the tree was close to the boundary of his house.

Residents also suggested that people do not park their cars at the rear due to falling branches. DS and AK said that people have never used the rear car park.

AB questioned whether it is SBC or the PC responsibility.

DN will write to SBC to request another visit to reassess the safety of the tree and possible next steps.

### **c. Surface Water and Land Drains**

Thames Water completed the work on the 31<sup>st</sup> August in School Lane, they advised that the roots within the drain have been cut and cleared and that a CCTV survey carried out. The CCTV confirmed the drain is now free from blockages. Regular checks could stop any issues in the future. For any further problems a contact number of 0800 3169800, REF 001119PSXM, has been provided by Thames Water.

## **6. Planning Matters**

None received

## **7. RECESS - Residents may raise any matter related to the work of the Parish Council**

None raised

## 8. Report from Castle Eaton Environmental Group

AB provided a report from the Environmental Group for discussion.

### a. Best Kept Village

The CEEG will be entering the 2021 competition, a schedule of requirements will be drawn up by the group.

DS asked if there was an appetite for this within the village. RW has had mixed reviews from the Garden club, mainly because people were unclear as to what was expected from them.

AK and DS also expressed the opinion that everybody is entitled to live in their property as they wish. DS also pointed out that as a farmer, he has been requested not to cut hedges too often to encourage and protect the wildlife.

### b. Village Grass Cutting

There appears to be confusion over who is responsible and how often various areas of the village greenery are cut.

AB noted that there are areas which should be cut more regularly by someone (contractor or volunteer) to enhance the village. AB suggested that we should get a quote from the existing contractor (David Newman) for cutting all areas on an increased frequency. If the costings are too high, volunteers could be sought from the village to help on a rota basis?

The main areas of concern are:-

The grass verge opposite Corner Bungalow on the entrance to the village from Lush Hill.

The 'D shaped' piece School Lane/Church View

Entrance to Playpark

Playing Field .

TW to request quotes for varying frequencies of grass cutting to the areas of concern.

c. Dog Bins

Although there has been a marked improvement within the village on the matter of dog waste, especially along Blackford Lane.

The agreed approach was to start with an awareness campaign, followed by signage, all being reviewed in 6 to 9 months.

The installation of Dog Waste bins at a later date, if agreed, would be subject to SBC to emptying them. AB confirmed that there is a department within SBC who are responsible for emptying the bins every 2 weeks. DS was concerned that dog bins are a very urban solution.

## 9. Finance

<b>Treasurer Account</b>						
Date		Description	Supplier	Credit	Debit	Balance
09/06/2020	Deposit	Interest		0.02		7,803.00
01/07/2020	Expenditure	PAYE	HMRC		70.45	7,732.55
09/07/2020	Deposit	Interest		0.02		7,732.57
27/07/2020	Expenditure	Grass Cutting	D Newman		1,305.00	6,427.57
10/08/2020	Expenditure	July	T Whyborn		600.00	5,827.57
10/08/2020	Deposit	Interest		0.02		5,827.59
11/08/2020	Expenditure	Zoom	R Wilkins		14.39	5,813.20
11/08/2020	Expenditure	Website	MJ Walsh		30.00	5,783.20
11/08/2020	Expenditure	Zoom	R Wilkins		14.39	5,768.81
13/08/2020	Expenditure	Subs	WALC		15.00	5,753.81
14/08/2020	Expenditure	Insurance	Community 1st		160.65	5,593.16
24/08/2020	Expenditure	Training	WALC		90.00	5,503.16
27/08/2020	Expenditure	Repayment of VAT	Community Benefit Fund		501.33	5,001.83
28/08/2020	Expenditure	August	T Whyborn		600.00	<b>4,401.83</b>
				<b>Current Bank Balance</b>		<b>4,401.83</b>
<b>Expected Receipts/Expenses for September</b>						
	Expenditure	September Salary	T Whyborn		621.23	
	Expenditure	Salary Adj	T Whyborn		33.97	
	Deposit	Precept	Swindon Borough Council	8,232.10		
	Expenditure	Monthly	Qbooks		10.56	
	Expenditure	V Hall Grant	Village Hall		2,118.00	
	Website	Annual	Website Design		120.00	
		<b>Total</b>		<b>8,232.10</b>	<b>2,903.76</b>	
				<b>Bank Balance When Presented</b>		<b>9,730.17</b>
<b>Communiy Benefit Fund</b>						
Date		Description	Supplier	Credit	Debit	Balance
11/05/2020	Deposit			1.75		39,947.32
09/06/2020	Deposit			1.59		39,948.91
09/07/2020	Deposit			1.64		39,950.55
10/08/2020	Deposit			1.40		39,951.95
27/08/2020	Deposit	VAT Repay	PARISH COUNCIL OF 301335	501.33		40,453.28
09/09/2020	Deposit			0.33		40,453.61
				<b>Current Bank Balance</b>		<b>40,453.61</b>

**a. Approve payments**

All payments were ratified and approved

**b. Accounts and Payroll Package**

It was agreed that a new accounting system (QuickBooks) should be implemented to reduce the possibility of user error and increase efficiency of reconciliations and returns to HMRC. A cost of £10 per month.

AB leaves Meeting

**c. 2021/22 budget**

Chairman has distributed Budget to the Councilors

DN steps back from discussion regarding VH grant increase.

The increase from £4236 this year to £4573 next year. David Price and Bill Hughes have put together a detailed analysis to show why the increase is needed. DS confirmed that it is inline to what was agreed in a previous meeting, as the costs are increasing over time for the village hall.

RW expressed concern over the increase as the Village Hall doesn't try to raise funds itself and relies heavily on grants. The analysis also doesn't cover the £10k received for COVID. DN gave an explanation of where the COVID grant was allocated.

£3k covered loss of revenue, a number of payments were given to other village groups to cover their losses over the period. There was also approximately £1k spent to be COVID compliant. The remaining would be used as a contingency fund.

Current Precept will be £16,645, however this may change as the Budget may need to be adjusted due to the potential increase in grass cutting services. The items on the budget will now be expressed as the net value for consistency and percentage increase year on year has been reduced to 1% to reflect current financial conditions.

**d. Community Benefit Fund**

It was confirmed that, as previously agreed, that the outstanding VAT has now been credited to the CBF account. To reduce the administration in the future, where possible, any deduction for the CBF account would equate to net value of the project, as the VAT is recoverable by the PC.

**e. Parish Allowances 2021/22**

Councilors unanimously agreed to decline any payments.

## **10. AOB**

### **a. Bank Signatories**

DN is currently the only person who can authorise online payments, a request to other Councilors to agree to be authorised signatories was agreed by all, DN and TW to send over links.

### **b. Boundary around Village hall, Greenaways Cottage and the Laurels.**

A letter was received by the PC giving clarification of the boundaries and fences between the Village Hall, Greenaways Cottage and properties in The Laurels. No action was required by the PC, but it was agreed that this matter would be minuted.

NB Post meeting, Bill Hughes, Chairman of the Village Hall Committee Trustees was contacted, and responded as follows:

*The land for the Village Hall was not passed to the VHC, but it is leased to the Registered Charity (most recent lease attached) in return for an annual peppercorn rent. However, as it says in the definition of 'Premises', the land is vested to the Official Custodian of Charities and registered as such with the Land Registry, so that its ownership cannot be transferred or the land used for any other purpose than that defined in the Village Hall Trust Deed (I believe this was done to prevent any 'political' maneuvering of publicly held land).*

*I have put David's letter on file in the VHC records, together with the attached documents, and I would suggest that the PC does the same.*

## **11. Date of next Meeting**

Next Meeting 26th November 7pm, ZOOM or 'Face to Face' to be decided depending on COVID regulations

Meeting was adjourned at 8.30pm by Dinesh Naidu - Chairman

Minutes submitted by: Teresa Whyborn - Parish Clerk

Approved by: Dinesh Naidu - Chairman