

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting of the Dersingham Parish Council held virtually on Tuesday 4th May 2021.

Present: Councillor C Shepherd (Chairman), Councillor B Anderson (Vice Chairman), Councillor M Shepherd, Councillor T Bubb, Councillor D Wright, Councillor M Noble, Councillor G Billard, Councillor J Stokes, Councillor V Brundle, Councillor R Anderson, Councillor D Hipkin, Councillor A Watkins and Councillor R Frost,

Also, Present: Luisa Cantera (Locum -Clerk) Geraldine Scanlon (Communications Officer and Minute taker).

0 Members of the public.

- 13236 To elect the Chairman of the Council.**
Councillor B Anderson nominated Councillor C Shepherd; Councillor Frost seconded the nomination. Votes were taken on nominated Councillor C Shepherd. **It was resolved that Councillor C Shepherd was duly elected as Chair for the coming year.**
- 13237 To elect the Vice-Chairman of the Council.**
Councillor Frost nominated Councillor B Anderson; Councillor Wright seconded the nomination. Votes were taken on nominated Councillor B Anderson. **It was resolved that Councillor B Anderson was duly elected as Vice Chair for the coming year.**
- 13238 To Receive and Consider Apologies for Absence.**
It was resolved to accept apologies from Councillor J Houston
- 13239 To Receive Declarations of Interest and request for Dispensations by Councillors in any of the Agenda Items listed.**
None received.
- 13240 To review and approve the Standing Orders.**
Councillor C Shepherd proposed Standing Orders be deferred to Finance & Administration Committee to review and report back to Full Council. **It was resolved to approve the proposal.**
- 13241 To review and approve the Financial Regulations.**
Councillor C Shepherd proposed Financial Regulations be deferred to Finance & Administration Committee to review and report back to Full Council. **It was resolved to approve the proposal.**
- 13242 To review Committee membership for the coming year.**
Each Committee membership was reviewed with the following outcome.
- Communications Committee**
Councillor C Shepherd advised Councillor Wright wished to withdraw from the Communications Committee however Councillor Stokes had expressed an interest in joining the Committee. **It was resolved for Councillor Stokes to join the Communications Committee.**

Cllr Coral Shepherd (Chairman)
Cllr Robert Anderson
Cllr Tony Bubb
Cllr Martin Noble
Cllr Jordan Stokes
Mrs Geraldine Scanlon (Communications Officer)
Mr Stephen Martyn (Website)
Mrs Jo Halpin-Jones (Editor)
Mr Rob Smyth (Assistant Editor)

Environment Committee

Cllr Robert Frost (Chairman)
Cllr Brian Anderson
Cllr Robert Anderson
Cllr Tony Bubb
Cllr Coral Shepherd
Cllr Jordan Stokes
Cllr Ann Watkins

Finance and Administration Committee

Councillor C Shepherd reported Councillor Billard had withdrawn from the Finance Committee and asked for volunteers to join the Committee. There were no volunteers.

Cllr Mike Shepherd (Chairman)
Cllr Brian Anderson
Cllr Robert Frost
Cllr Dane Hipkin
Cllr Coral Shepherd

Planning Committee.

Councillor C Shepherd asked Councillor Brundle to join the Planning Committee. Councillor Brundle agreed to join.

Cllr George Billard
Cllr Valerie Brundle
Cllr Robert Frost
Cllr Dane Hipkin
Cllr Martin Noble
Cllr Coral Shepherd
[Chairperson to be appointed at next meeting]

Staffing Committee

Cllr Coral Shepherd (Chairman)
Cllr Brian Anderson
Cllr Martin Noble
Cllr Dennis Wright

13243

Appointment of Parish Council representatives to serve the following outside bodies/organisations.

Sportsground Management Committee.

Councillors D Wright, R Frost and The Chairman.

Councillor C Shepherd requested a list of Councillors names and contact details be forwarded to the Sportsground Management Committee to enable meeting invites etc to be issued.

Safer Neighbourhood Action Project (SNAP)

Councillor Bubb and Councillor Noble.

Dersingham Social Club.

Councillor D Wright

Norfolk Playing Fields Association.

Councillor D Wright.

Tree Warden.

Cllr B Anderson

Heacham & District Community Transport Scheme.

Councillor Frost advised he was willing to remain the Parish representative however he has never received any communication from the scheme. The Locum Clerk advised she would ensure they hold the correct contact details for Councillor Frost.

United Charities Trustees

Councillors D Wright, T Bubb and M Noble.

DVCA Trustee.

Councillor C Shepherd.

13244

To receive attached reports from:

The Chairman advised all reports had been circulated prior to the meeting therefore it was agreed the following reports would not be read out except for the Environment Committee report.

Councillor C Shepherd thanked both Councillors and staff for their moral and practical support throughout the last year.

The skatepark was discussed regarding completion and site security during the construction. Councillor C Shepherd advised the site would be secured by the contractors who have advised the skatepark would be completed 4-6 weeks after the start date, which is yet to be confirmed. She suggested a working group be formed to discuss an official opening of the skatepark. The Locum Clerk advised an inspection of the skatepark would need to be organised prior to the official opening.

a) Communication – Councillor C Shepherd.

Communications Committee Annual Report 4/5/21

The communications committee currently deals with our village magazine, Village Voice, the parish council website, social media and village noticeboards. We meet every other month and like everyone else have had a challenging two years.

Despite the restrictions of various lockdowns due to covid-19 we have continued to produce Village Voice, more or less on schedule. Looking back when I last presented an annual in May 2019 Jo Halpin Jones had only recently taken over the role of editor. I would like to thank Jo for all her amazing work during the last two years, which she has approached in a calm, professional manner. Village Voice continues to be delivered to every residential property in the village, come rain, shine, wind or snow by a dedicated team of volunteers and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them. I know from personal experience it can be a challenge to find letter boxes and avoid losing fingers because of fierce springs and excited pets. I would also like to extend my thanks to Geraldine, who compiles Village Voice, coordinating the distributors and liaises with advertisers and to Sarah, obtains the fees from the advertisers.

To keep the village up to date with our activities we maintain 4 notice boards around the village – outside Thaxters, the Coop, opposite the Coop and at the library. We will be looking at the condition of all of them in the coming months and after the problems of covid-19 will be discussing with the DVCA new noticeboards at the Village Centre.

Our website continues to be maintained by Stephen Martyn. It now contains a wide variety of information about the parish council and the village a calendar of our meetings, agendas and minutes and policies as well as information about village groups and societies. Over the last year Steve has developed a specific page for information about local responses to Covid-19. We were also able to respond very quickly to the death of the Duke of Edinburgh. Many thanks to Steve for all his work throughout the year.

The parish council Facebook page continues to be maintained and numbers of followers is slowly increasing. Whilst it is not the work of this committee, I would like to mention the village group Facebook page, it has almost 3000 followers and reflects the variety of village life from lost cats, to traffic reports and everything in between. Many thanks to Councillor Jordan Stokes who was responsible for its setting up.

Finally, my thanks go to all members of the committee and especially to the Parish Council staff who have to implement our decisions.
Coral Shepherd

b) Planning Committee – Councillor C Shepherd.

Planning Committee Annual Report 4/5/21

The main focus of this committee is to look at planning applications submitted to the Borough for proposals within the village and we comment on behalf of the Council on the impact of the proposals on the village. Due to covid-19 we have met sporadically but have been kept busy not only looking in detail at planning applications but also other planning issues that affect the parish

Last year we looked at and commented on the Planning White Paper that proposes a major overhaul of the planning system. It was a detailed consultation and the focus of the White Paper was on housing.

A reminder that we do receive CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) money from the Borough and we can use this to provide infrastructure. CIL is a levy on certain planning applications and that money mainly goes to the Borough Council but we do receive a small percentage (currently 15%, that would increase to 25% with the production of a neighbourhood plan). We have placed the payments we receive in a reserve and we have used some of the money to provide a new defibrillator outside the Spar.

Coral Shepherd

C) Environment Committee – Councillor R Frost.

I have a few points covering the last two years starting with the War Memorial Gardens which have been an on-going problem even before I joined the council. This has now been sorted, in the last 9 months, we had to replace all the sleepers which were rotten and were letting the soil fall out onto the brick weave, they were used as raised beds. A contractor was employed to replace them however it wasn't done to our specification. The contractor only replaced the top tier (a bit of a mix up in communications). So had to return to site and had to replace all the sleepers.

With the 75th VJ anniversary looming the committee decided to tidy the beds and replace some of the shrubs. So, a new specification was agreed and put out to tender. The tender was agreed, and a professional landscape gardener was employed to get it finished, they ran out of time it did not get completed and the contract had to be terminated.

We then had an offer from a Dersingham parishioner who said he would like to tend the gardens, etc. It has been weeded; the brick weave has been cleaned. The flower beds had the spring bulbs removed and replanted and it looks very much better. The parishioner takes pride in his work. The committee would like to thank the parishioner for all his hard work and the progress is on-going with more planting. And other remedial work such as the railings which need some attention, but this is for the future.

The Warren – A parishioner asked if we could have some seating arrangements on the Warren. It was agreed by the committee that instead of a bench we would have a log seat, thanks to Councilor Bubb for contacting the Sandringham estate and for arranging for this to happen. This log is placed by the gate. It was going to be flat topped but decided to leave it natural to be in keeping with the Warren. The parishioners seem to be happy as it is.

The committee has ordered two more logs to be placed on the Warren, we have had a site meeting and have decided where the other two to be placed. They will be delivered shortly. We have had a site meeting about setting more trees within the Warren going forward.

Skate Park – After many years and lots of discussion, we have sorted the design, the planning permission in place, tenders sent and accepted and a date to start work, we can now see the light at the end of the tunnel. And we would like to thank our

Chairperson for all her hard work for the grant applications, etc. We are almost there just a little more to raise.

We have reports from parishioners about dirty seats and benches, some of the benches have been cleaned. We have now new cleaning contracts in place and all the benches and seats, bus shelters. Dog waste bins are to be cleaned on a regular basis.

Children's Play area – The play area was closed due to Covid-19 – before reopening the area was deep cleaned and safety checked, this has done now on a regular basis. This area is well used and nice to see families enjoying this facility.

Trees - Reports from parishioners about trees need trimming, now have been trimmed. The tree on Mountbatten (Electric substation has been taken down- due to trunk being badly cracked and could have fallen over in the wind).

Christmas lights – 2020 the Christmas lights, we found that some lights were not working, and they were replaced with domestic lights to see us through that time. The committee have discussed removing all the lights from the trees as they were affecting the growth of the trees. We are looking at new ideas for lighting for this coming Christmas, because we need to make it an extra special occasion.

Village Sign – Reported by a parishioner that the sign base was unsafe state, the work was put out to tender and agreed by the committee, the contractor has now completed the works and now looks fine.

Robert Frost, Chairman
4 May 2021

d) Finance & Administration Committee -Councillor M Shepherd.

Finance and Administration Committee Annual Report 2021

It has been two years since my last Annual report and as we all know a lot has happened in that time.

This committee advises Council on the setting of the Precept with input from other committees. Over the last two years we have managed to reduce the precept slightly each year, whilst allocating funds for unfinished and new projects including the proposed skatepark. This has been achieved without adversely affecting the services we provide.

The committee also oversees general administration of the council, grants, leases, licenses, and policies which are not personnel related or deemed to be the responsibility of other committees.

Work around the Sportsground and Village Centre leases is ongoing, and has proved particularly frustrating, due to slow progress due to the Pandemic and other circumstances outside our control.

Much has been achieved to address procedural and transparency issues highlighted by the Dersingham Centre Review and the 2019 Internal Audit. An improvement plan was produced, and a number of significant changes were made, some of which directly enabled the Councils financial business to continue during The Clerks recent absence.

Provision was made in the 2020/21 budget for a project to improve our internal communications by updating our IT systems. Unfortunately, this project was stalled at an early stage due to the pandemic, but the provision has been carried forward to this year. It is hoped to re-start this project soon.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to The Clerk/RFO for her help and support over the last two years.

Mike Shepherd, Chairman of Finance and Administration Committee May 2021

e) Chairman's Report - Councillor C Shepherd.

Chairman's Annual Report 2019-21

I had the honour of being elected as the Chairman of Dersingham Parish Council in May 2019. I began with the hope and aspirations of many a Chairman before me and spent a few months learning what being a Parish Council chairman was all about. However, by the beginning of 2020 we had learnt about a new disease, covid 19, and by March a global pandemic was announced, shortly followed by a national lockdown.

I won't dwell on the reactions but simply say that the village coped magnificently. The Parish Council found itself unable to meet for a few weeks. We were then introduced to the virtual world and after a few start up glitches we began meeting via Zoom. What started as somewhat of a novelty has become a way of life and I am really proud that we have carried on with business as usual.

There have been no significant interruptions to the services we provide for the community – the grass was cut, streetlights maintained, dog and litter bins emptied. Last summer we carried out some renovations to the War Memorial Gardens and I am pleased to say that they are now returned to a garden of which we can all be proud. We did have a few hiccoughs with the publication and delivery of Village Voice, but we still managed to deliver them to everyone in the village, more or less on time. A big thank you to our editor and all of those who give up their time to deliver the magazine.

One of the saddest moments for me of the last year was when we had to close the childrens playground at a time when there was the greatest need. Since it reopened it has been so well used and come rain or shine there are always children playing. This takes me onto the skatepark, ever since the old wooden ramp was demolished we had promised a new facility. After a couple of false starts we have been working for the last year on obtaining grants and now have funding in place for work to start within the next few weeks. I would like to thank FCC for their grant of £66,000 which has enabled us to move the project forward so that there will soon be somewhere for those who have grown out of the playground to exercise. There has been a renewed

interest in team sports at the Sports Ground and the Parish Council is working with the Sports Ground Management Committee to facilitate refurbishment of the pavilion.

The Village Centre, which is run on behalf of the Parish Council by the Dersingham Village Centre Association, and the Social Club that is run by a management committee its membership have both had a difficult year with lockdowns. However, both have risen to the challenge, the Centre is now reopen and the Social Club is hoping to reopen next month when further lifting of restrictions will take place. Both are looking forward to a summer of “business as normal”.

Going back to 2019, we completed a major review of the spending on the construction of the Village Centre. The report is available to read on our website. As a result of the review we have made some procedural changes to the way we work to ensure greater transparency and scrutiny. For the past 3 years we have been able to reduce the precept, and I am pleased to say that despite in the reduction in our income we have not had to reduce our services.

Looking forward we have a few ongoing projects – I have already mentioned the skatepark which should be open in time for the school summer holidays. The existing Christmas lights at the Recreation Ground in Hunstanton Road have been in place for several years and we are looking to carry out some improvements this year. We will be having additional log seats at The Warren and in the autumn will be carrying out some tree planting.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of my fellow councillors for their help and support, both practical and moral, during what has been a challenging period. I would also like to say a particular big thank you to our staff who have carried on calmly throughout. Without them we would not be able to function.

Most of us have experienced sadness or health problems in our own families or among friends. Many things have changed and some of the changes will last. I feel that as a community and parish council we are stronger. With the roll out of the vaccine there will soon be opportunities to meet again and return to a new normal way of life.

Thank you
Coral Shepherd, Chairman, May 2021

13245 Finance
a) To receive the quarterly internal audit controller report (January-March 2021)

Councillor M Shepherd advised the Internal Audit Controller Report had been circulated prior to the last Full Council meeting. He reported the bank reconciliation check for January-March were all in order. There is one minor issue that he will resolve with the Clerk once she returns to work.

Councillor C Shepherd reported the Internal Auditor was due to carry out checks next week.

b) To agree any urgent payments.

Councillor C Shepherd advised there was one payment for authorisation. An invoice of £572.68 had been received from Edge for the Locum work carried out in the Clerks absence. **It was resolved to approve the payment and for the Locum Clerk to write a letter of thanks to Edge for the work carried out.**

Councillor C Shepherd reminded Councillor's meetings would now be conducted face-to-face. Full Council meetings would be held in the main hall at the village centre, adhering to current COVID rules. Meetings would have to take place on Tuesdays as the hall has a regular booking Monday evening. After discussion it was agreed Committee meetings would be held as working groups to allow them to be held via Zoom, with proposals being ratified by Full Council.

Councillor M Shepherd suggested a contingency plan be discussed regarding the process of payments should Councillors decide they are not willing to meet face to face, leaving the Full Council meeting non-quorate. After discussion the Locum Clerk suggested the item be placed on the next agenda to allow her to investigate options available regarding the Clerk being given delegation to make payments with the authorisation form Committee Chairman and Vice Chairman.

- 13246 To confirm the date of the next full Council meeting: 25th May 2021 at 6.30pm at the Dersingham Village Centre, and date of next Annual Parish Council meeting.**
Annual Parish Council meeting (provisionally) 9th May 2022

With no further business the meeting was closed at 8.05pm.

Action points Dersingham Annual Parish Meeting 4th May 2021

Locum Clerk

- Add Review of Standing Order to Finance & Administration Committee agenda
- Add Review of Financial Regulations to Finance & Administration Committee agenda.
- Add Councillor Stokes to Communications Committee
- Add Councillor Brundle to Planning Committee
- Contact Heacham & District Community Transport scheme to ensure they hold correct contact details for Councillor Frost.
- To look into skatepark inspection upon completion.
- To write a letter of thanks to Edge regarding work undertaken in the Clerks absence.