

Brampton Ash Parish Council
Approved Minutes of Parish Council Meeting
Held 9 January 2014
At Dingley Village Hall, Church Lane, Dingley, 7.30pm

Present

Steve Power (Chair)	Teresa Hilliard	Heather Shuttleworth
Nick Bevan	Reg Stewart	
Liz Evans (Clerk)		

Action by:

1.	<p>Declarations of Interest <i>To receive disclosures of personal and prejudicial interests from Councillors on matters to be considered at the meeting</i> Councillor Stewart declared an interest in item 10 as the footpath in question crossed his land.</p>	
2.	<p>Apologies for Absence There were no apologies.</p>	
3.	<p>Minutes of Meeting Held 17 October 2013 The minutes of the meeting held 17 October 2013 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.</p>	
4.	<p>Matters Arising from the Above Meeting Item 4.7 Speeding advisory notices had been obtained by NB and were currently being displayed in the village, where they would remain for a four-week period. Item 15.4 The Clerk had received no reply to her request for more information regarding the proposed new Highways Warden role. She would make further enquiries. Item 15.5 Dedication of the plaque commemorating Ron Coulson's service to the parish council had taken place on Sunday 5 January. It had been attended by all members of the parish council and many other members of the village community.</p>	LE
5.	<p>Minutes of Special Meeting Held 21 November 2013 The minutes of the special meeting held 21 November 2013 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.</p>	
6.	<p>Matters Arising from the Above Meeting Item 3 The Chair understood that planning application KET/2013/0666 was to be re-submitted. Item 4 The Clerk advised that a cheque value £30.00 payable to Her Majesty's</p>	

Signed

Chair

Date

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	<p>Revenue and Customs had been cancelled as no payment of tax was due. A cheque valued £30.00 had instead been issued to the Clerk as this amount formed a part of her salary.</p> <p>Item 5.2 The Clerk had found out that the grit bin at the A6 end of Hermitage Road had been removed by Northants County Council (NCC) as that area apparently no longer met the criteria for the provision of a grit bin but she had not, as yet, been able to find out what the criteria were. She was requested to investigate further to find out: i/ the criteria for the above; ii/ the cost to the parish council of obtaining a new bin if the NCC would not supply one; iii/ who would supply grit (assuming that a bin was obtained), and who would bear the cost of it. The Clerk requested councillors to forward to her any information that they had which might support the parish council's case for the supply of a new grit bin (eg, details of any accidents or 'near misses' caused by ice or snow on the road).</p>	<p>LE</p> <p>All Councillors</p>																		
<p>7.</p>	<p>Financial Matters</p> <p><i>7.1 To review the Parish Council's Current Financial Position</i></p> <p>A statement of current income and expenditure was circulated to councillors and signed off by the Chair. Current balances held by the parish council stood at £1935.86, with a payment of £250.00 being due in February 2014 as a donation to lighting the parish church.</p> <p>The parish council's financial security arrangements were reviewed, as required by the Audit Commission (annually) and a motion to approve them was unanimously agreed. Namely: i/ the chequebook is securely held by a councillor who is not an authorised signatory; ii/ cheques are required to be signed by 2 named signatories; iii/ accounts are reconciled to bank statements 4 times per year; iv/ the Clerk, who is also the Responsible Financial Officer, produces a statement of account at 4 meetings per year; v/ an internal audit is carried out annually by a qualified accountant.</p> <p><i>7.2 To set and approve the Parish Council's Budget for 2014-15</i></p> <p>NB requested that councillors consider increasing the salary of the Clerk by £50 to reflect the increased amount of work undertaken; this was unanimously agreed. The proposed budget for 2014-15 is detailed below:</p> <table data-bbox="252 1563 1117 1910"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: right;">£</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Salary (Clerk)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">350.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Expenses (Clerk)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">20.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Church lighting donation</td> <td style="text-align: right;">250.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Society of Local Council Clerks membership</td> <td style="text-align: right;">48.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hire of Dingley Village Hall (£10 per session)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">80.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Insurance</td> <td style="text-align: right;">250.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Audit fee (possible)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">36.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total (approx.)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1034.00</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Parish Precept</p> <p>SP pointed out that, following payment of the final parish grant by Kettering</p>		£	Salary (Clerk)	350.00	Expenses (Clerk)	20.00	Church lighting donation	250.00	Society of Local Council Clerks membership	48.00	Hire of Dingley Village Hall (£10 per session)	80.00	Insurance	250.00	Audit fee (possible)	36.00	Total (approx.)	1034.00	
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	<p>Borough Council (KBC) for the period 2013-14, no further grant income would be forthcoming. Following discussion on the subject it was agreed that, although the parish council could feasibly continue to function for one more year on its current reserves, it would be prudent to introduce a parish precept incrementally, and that it should be set at £330.00 for the year 2014-15. A motion to approve the parish council's budget, including the precept, was proposed by HS, seconded by NB and unanimously agreed.</p> <p>The Chair signed off the precept application form which the Clerk would forward to KBC.</p>	LE
8.	<p>Planning Matters: No planning applications had been received since the previous meeting.</p>	
9.	<p>Community Governance Review <i>(details previously circulated)</i> The Chair explained that KBC is obliged to undertake the review every 15 years to take account of the changing size of some parishes, the continuing relevance of their boundaries and their ability to attract candidates for election to their parish councils. The review could give Brampton Ash the option to group together with adjacent parishes if there was any discernible benefit to be gained from doing so.</p> <p>Councillors discussed the matter: it was considered that Brampton Ash parish council actively represents the interests of its local community, with just one example of this being street maintenance, which is monitored and reported to the local authority by the parish council when problems arise.</p> <p>Having reviewed the document and considered the options, parish councillors unanimously agreed that there appeared to be no discernible benefit in changing the current independent status of Brampton Ash parish council, largely for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brampton Ash parish boundaries are clearly defined 2. The parish council has had no problems in attracting candidates for election 3. The parish could well find itself under-represented if it is grouped with other more populated parishes 4. There appears to be no feasible mechanism for reverting to single-parish status if a grouping proves to be unsuccessful <p>The Clerk would inform KBC of this decision.</p>	LE
10.	<p>Diversion of Public Footpath <i>(details previously circulated)</i> Cllr Stewart had earlier declared an interest in this matter (see Item 1). He had submitted a proposal to Northants County Council (NCC) divert the public footpath which crosses his land and this had been passed to the parish council</p>	

	<p>for its consideration. Details had been circulated to councillors prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Councillors viewed the site on the Ordnance Survey map. This showed that the path in question, which is popular with walkers, links the villages of Brampton Ash, Dingley, Sutton Bassett, Ashley and Weston-by-Welland. It currently leads walkers arriving from those areas directly into the village of Brampton Ash, whereas the proposed diversion would take walkers away from the village by a distance of about 200m. Walkers who do not live locally and who wish to access the path from the village of Brampton Ash would need to park their vehicles in the village and then walk a distance of 200m outside of the village in order to reach it, as would villagers.</p> <p>RS reminded councillors that they had, in the past, given written support to the proposed diversion, subject to an agreement to give villagers access to the existing 'old' path. This support had been rescinded when subsequent developments within the village had clearly demonstrated that it was not feasible to create a 'permissive' path as the conditions attached thereto could give no guarantee of access or permanency, factors which the parish council had not fully appreciated at the time. RS had felt that the decision to rescind support was personally motivated in response to the actions of another villager. NB gave an assurance that there was no personal slight intended to Cllr Stewart, whom he believed to be a man who would honour his word, but he believed that such a path should be open to all, not just villagers. He also pointed out that, if RS was to give up ownership of his property he would be unable to honour his undertaking as there could be no onus on a subsequent owner to allow continuance of a pathway that did not constitute a Right of Way. NB further pointed out that once a village loses a facility, in this case a highly valued one, it is almost certainly never regained.</p> <p>Councillors agreed that they could not support the proposal for the reasons stated above and the Clerk would advise Northamptonshire Highways of this. Cllr Stewart implied that he may not wish to pursue the proposal any further in view of the opposition expressed to Northamptonshire Highways by others, as well as by the parish council.</p> <p>In the course of the above discussions the matter of tensions within the parish council were addressed in detail. This included matters under agenda item 10. Subsequently it was acknowledged that it was vital to the well-being of the parish council and its members to move on from the historical issues that were at the root of these tensions and a line should now be drawn under them by everybody for the good of all concerned.</p>	LE
11.	<p>Highway Matters: Surface flooding</p> <p>In response to a request from KBC Environmental Care Services to identify local areas that are prone to flooding, parish councillors noted that there are</p>	

	<p>3 particular areas where this is known to be likely to occur, namely:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On the hill just beyond the village gateway sign, heading towards the A6 via Hermitage Road, above the small spinney. This area is fed by a spring and is prone to flooding and icing over, creating a dangerous road surface. 2. An area of the A427 close by the Grange. Rainwater run-off from adjacent fields is known to turn to sheet ice in bad weather, and a fatal road accident some years ago was attributed to this. 3. The A427 between Brampton Ash and Stoke Albany, prior to the Stoke Albany slip road has a dip which acts as a natural collecting point for flood-water and run-off from adjacent fields. <p>The Clerk would pass this information on to KBC.</p>	LE
12.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p><i>12.1 To consider queries raised by Councillor Stewart in relation to historical planning matters.</i></p> <p>This matter had been dealt with during discussions on Item 10 of these minutes.</p> <p><i>12.2 To consider any other business</i></p> <p>There was no other business.</p>	
13.	<p>Date And Venue of Next Meeting</p> <p>Thursday 20 March 2014, 7.30pm. Venue to be advised.</p>	

The meeting closed at 9.20pm

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