

WALKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 9 April 2024 at 7:00pm.

Present: Councillors Mrs Swann (Chairman), Howard (Vice-chair), Boanas, Garnham and Mrs Holdorf.
Ward Councillor Mrs Stewart. Ten members of the public and Ms Rose (Clerk).

Absent: Councillors, with the exception of the Chairman, are not required to attend the Annual Parish Meeting but may do so as residents.

Note: These minutes will require approval at the next Annual Parish Meeting.

APM.24.01 Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting

The minutes for the meeting of 6 April 2023 were approved.

APM.24.02 Chairman's Report

The Chairman outlined the purpose of the meeting is to deal with Parish Council matters only, East Riding of Yorkshire Council (ERYC) issues raised will be forwarded, residents were reminded that they can report issues themselves to ERYC at any time.

The year started with the Coronation of King Charles III, bunting was placed around the village, lights erected at the pond and school children presented with environmentally friendly water bottles. The village sadly suffered with flooding during the year and thanks are sent to all the volunteers who helped, the Pond Committee is constantly liaising with ERYC regarding flooding. Traffic is a continuing issue in the village, the Parish Council previously rented speed indicator devices on a trial basis which seemed to help calm the traffic, a zebra crossing has since been installed on the Main Street and the Parish Council would like to evaluate the effect of the crossing on traffic before renting any further devices.

Commenting on planning applications is a large Parish Council involvement with the many village developments. The Parish Council is working with the Sherwood and Waudby Charity to finalise a lease for the land which is currently used as allotments.

During the last financial year, the Parish Council has given a donation of £2,227.52 to the Village Hall for new curtains and towards the cost of replacing the radiator covers. £2,261.60 was given to All Hallows Church towards the cost of grass cutting and for clock repairs, £2,000 was given to the Newsletter towards running costs and £750 was pledged to the Playing Field Committee, pending receipt of their annual accounts to assist with grass cutting costs. The Parish Council paid £132 for the rental of the Village Hall for the Ukelele Festival. Pest Control is continuing at the pond and the village assets, such as benches, fences and bollards are being gradually repaired or replaced. Hanging baskets have been ordered again this year and the defibrillator has a new battery and pads.

The Chairman gave thanks to the Parish Council Cleaner/Handyman for his excellent work cleaning the bus shelters and litter picking, he has installed new posts at the pond and maintained many assets in the village. He has removed litter from Fryer's Copse and Memorial Wood. The Clerk was thanked for her hard work.

APM.24.03 Comments and Questions

- a. A resident requested a letter to be sent to Yorkshire Water asking them to replace the drains in the village as they are considered not suitable for purpose. The Parish Council was also asked where residents can get sandbags and when the improvements were going to be made to the footbridge at the pond?

The Parish Council will discuss writing a letter to Yorkshire Water at the next ordinary meeting and investigation will be made regarding sandbags, the Parish Council will be updated at the next ordinary meeting. Ward Cllr Stewart explained that the work on the footbridge was due to start in March but has been delayed due to bad weather and will commence as soon as possible.

- b. A resident asked if the Parish Council has a budget and if so, could it be published on the Parish Council website?

The Clerk confirmed the Parish Council creates a budget each year, discussions begin in October and are finalised in December and offered to send the resident a copy of the latest budget. An item will be placed on the agenda of the next ordinary meeting to discuss routine publication of the annual budget on the Parish Council website.

- c. A resident asked why the Parish Council precept has been raised each year for the past 5 years and wanted to know what extra spending has taken place?

The Clerk explained that the Parish Council has tried to balance the increased costs for goods and services and the obligation to maintain a General Reserve while giving consideration to resident's finances, resulting in moderate increases in the precept. Walkington Parish Council is considered to be a smaller authority and as such the amount of General Reserve should be aimed at twelve-months net revenue expenditure. The General Reserve does not affect the level of earmarked reserves the Parish Council may or should hold and which are reviewed annually during routine budget preparation discussions. The Parish Council finances are subject to both internal and external auditing and if the levels of precept increase, spending or earmarked funds were considered inaccurate this would be raised.

The Chairman indicated that a major part of the increased expenditure was the cost of an investigation regarding the Parish Council financial procedures in 2018-19 by the Auditor which was finalised and invoiced in 2021-22.

A Councillor (acting as a resident) stated that information requests such as this should be put in writing, it was unfair to ask the Clerk for a live detailed response of information relating to the last 5 years.

The Clerk offered to send the resident information and the latest budget report.

- d. A resident asked for further details of the Auditor investigation mentioned above.

The Clerk explained the Auditors found that Councillors did not make proper declarations of interest on all relevant occasions and declaration forms were incorrectly completed. Auditors also indicated during the investigation that not all orders for paid work had been recorded and approved in the meeting minutes. These matters relate to the 2018-19 period only, when major pond renovation works were taking place. There have been no further investigations since this date and procedures have been put in place to ensure orders for work are recorded in the minutes and Councillors are reminded of the constant need to declare interests and update forms where necessary.

- e. A resident raised the issue of cyclists using Beech Walk and the dangers this presents to other users.

Ward Cllr Stewart will make investigations with ERYC and the Parish Council will be updated at the next ordinary meeting.

- f. A resident raised the issue of lack of street lights on Townend Road.

The Chairman stated that the developers should have installed lights during building work and this should have been considered by the planning department when approving the plans. Unfortunately, the main responsibility now lies with ERYC who claim they do not have sufficient funding and keep asking residents to ask the Parish Council to supply the posts and meet ongoing costs. The Parish Council does not have sufficient funding to purchase and meet ongoing costs for all the lampposts requested.

- g. A resident raised the issue of overgrowing trees on Kirk Lane.

The Chairman explained that all Parish Council trees are regularly inspected by an independent Arboriculturalist for insurance purposes and any necessary work is carried out. Residents can remove any parts of trees which are encroaching on their property providing the correct permission is granted by ERYC regarding Tree Protection Orders and/or Conservation Orders.

The meeting closed at 7:50 pm. The chairman thanked residents for attending.

Approved: _____ Date: _____
Chairman