

Minutes of Scarning Parish Council Meeting held in Scarning Village Hall on 20 November 2023

Present: F Bradford (Chair), T Abel, M Blackburn, S Bunn, C Hewson, M Steward. In attendance: N Hartley (Parish Clerk), six members of the public.

Public Participation

Mrs Goldsworthy confirmed that plants/shrubs have definitely been taken from the flower box nearest to the church.

The Council was asked about the 'dips' in Dereham Road. The Chair noted that the Council had been advised that these did not currently meet Norfolk County Council's criteria for repair. She noted that Cllr Richmond had met with officers from Norfolk County Council and had been asked for a report of his meeting to cover not only the 'dips,' but also flooding at the junction of the A47 with Draytonhall Lane. The Clerk will chase Cllr Richmond for his report of the meeting.

Members of the Playing Field Committee made various comments with regard to item 8 (see below). It was noted that the tennis courts were used throughout the year and that the income from the hire of the courts was the Playing Field Committee's sole source of income. It was felt the trees would look 'unsightly' with 2/3 metres trimmed off and that the trees had been trimmed so much in the past as to lose their shape. It was noted that cutting back the trees would improve the visual splay when exiting the car park.

The Chair said she had attended the meeting with the Tree Officer that had been arranged by the Playing Field Committee. She had reported back the outcome of the meeting to the Parish Council. She said the Parish Council would carry out whatever works were agreed as soon as was possible. She noted the Parish Council seeks to work with all the parish organisations in unity and for the benefit of the whole parish.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Porter, Cllrs L Turner and P Hewett (Breckland Council), and Cllr W Richmond (Norfolk County Council).

2 Resignation of Councillor Mallard

It was noted that Cllr Mallard had resigned from the Council.

3 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Hewson declared an interest in any matter relating to Shipdham Lane Playing Field.

Cllr Abel declared an interest in the planning application at Pennymeadow Nursery, as he had given the land away. He noted he has monetary interest in the application.

4 Minutes

Cllr Abel objected to two paragraphs in the draft minutes. The draft minutes were amended to reflect the fact that he had not organised the meeting with the Tree Officer and that this had been arranged by the Vice Chair of the Playing Field Committee. Following these amendments, it was **RESOLVED** to approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2023 as a true and accurate record. The minutes were signed by the Chair.

5 Matters Arising

Cllr Blackburn said it would be beneficial to let residents know it was better to report problems to Norfolk County Council online (using the Report a Problem facility on the County Council's website) as opposed to phoning the County Council as it was easier to identify areas online.

Cllr Blackburn noted that with regard to a recent request for a group WhatsApp on the Parish Council phone this was not necessary and that residents should either phone or email the Parish Clerk to report faults/problems with Parish Council owned assets/facilities.

6 Finance

6.1 The Council approved the following payments in accordance with its Budget:-

N Hartley, clerk's salary, £917.61

HMRC, clerk's PAYE, £12

N Hartley, reimbursement for Top up card for Council phone, £10

N Hartley, reimbursement of expenses, £157.95

NGF Play Ltd, replace limiters on Air Skier and Air Walker (Shipdham Lane), £198

TOP Garden Services, grass cutting in Scarning churchyard (Sept), £283.50 (Section 137)

TOP Garden Services, grass & verge cutting (Sept), £837.36

TOP Garden Services, grass cutting in Scarning churchyard (Oct), £189 (Section 137)

TOP Garden Services, grass & verge cutting (Oct), £558.24

S Goldsworthy, reimbursement for winter plants for flower boxes, £17.80

Westcotec Ltd, replacement battery solar light Dereham Road bus shelter, £293.20

Walton Associates, maintenance of church clock, £100 (Section 137)

6.2 The meeting received a report of actual to budgeted expenditure (copy attached to the minutes).

6.3 The Internal Control Officer (Cllr Blackburn) noted that she had carried out the next set of quarterly checks and that everything was in order.

7 Planning

7.1 Breckland Council decisions:-

The Grange, Dereham Road	3PL/2023/0717/F
New field shelter/log store	Approved

7.2 Applications considered:-

Land adjacent Pennymeadow Nursery, Podmore Lane	3PL/2023/1003/F
Erection of a bungalow and a new carport garage	No objection

4 Home Field Close	3PL/2023/1043/HOU
Proposed single storey extension(s) to rear and alterations	No objection

7.3 The Chair updated the Council on the outline Planning Application for a care home on land east of Draytonhall Lane (3PL/2022/1220/O). She had attended the planning meeting at Breckland Council and spoken on behalf of the Parish Council to object against the application, as previously discussed by the Council. She noted that the Planning Officers were in favour of the application and that the decision had been close. It was felt that in future the Parish Council should send a representative to speak in similar instances.

8 Oak Trees next to Shipdham Lane Playing Field

The Clerk had sent the following in notes to councillors in advance of the meeting.

The Parish Council previously had no responsibility for the oak trees next to the tennis courts. The trees were maintained by the Playing Field Committee. The Playing Field Committee is a separate charity, with its own accounts and its own constitution. It is not a committee of the Parish Council.

The Playing Field Committee derives an income from the tennis courts.

In September 2022, the Playing Field Committee indicated that it wanted to cut down the two trees. As a consequence, Breckland Council placed Tree Preservation Orders on both trees.

The Parish Council objected to the TPOs on the grounds of health and safety. The appeal was unsuccessful.

The Playing Field Committee handed responsibility for the trees to the Parish Council.

The Parish Council agreed to cut the lower branches to the height of the fence surrounding each court, as these interfere with play.

The Playing Field Committee arranged a meeting with the Tree Officer. The Tree Officer agreed to an overall crown reduction (awaiting confirmation from the Tree Officer if this is the whole tree or only the top) on both trees of 2-3 metres to reduce the amount of leaves and acorns falling on to the courts.

It was noted that the three contractors contacted by the Parish Council for quotes to carry out this work stated it will not reduce the amount of leaves and acorns falling on to the courts.

At a previous Council meeting, Cllr Hewson had mentioned an 'anonymous' donor who was prepared to resurface court number two (this being the court furthest from Dereham Road).

It was noted that the Parish Council is responsible for the trees. The Playing Field Committee is responsible for the maintenance of the tennis courts.

The guidance from the Council's insurers is that the Parish Council is only responsible for the trees. The leaves/acorns that shed onto the tennis courts are the responsibility of the Playing Field Committee to make sure the courts are safe for players to use. Any claims arising from the leaves/acorns would not be the Parish Council's negligence. The negligence would be with the Committee for not carrying out risk assessments and making sure the court are safe for public use.

In advance of the meeting councillors had been supplied with replies from some hirers of the tennis courts in relation to leaves and acorns on the courts.

The Chair said that at the meeting with the Tree Officer she had asked if the trees could be felled to which the answer was no. The question had been asked by the Playing Field Committee if the TPOs could be moved to other trees to which the answer was also no.

Cllr Abel suggested that it might be possible for the Parish Council to object against the TPOs to the Secretary of State.

The Council considered three quotes to carry out the crown reduction as defined by the Tree Officer (see above). It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Norfolk Trees to carry out a 3 metre overall crown reduction of both trees; and to cut back the lower overhanging branches to the height of the surrounding fence, as previously agreed.

9 Grant Application Scarning Playing Field Committee (Maintenance Costs)

The Council considered an application for £3,100 toward the annual maintenance costs of Shipdham Lane Playing Field. It was **RESOLVED** to agree a grant of £3,100 to be paid in April 2024.

10 Grant Application Scarning Playing Field Committee (Trim Trail)

The Council considered an application for £10,000 toward a replacement Trim Trail on the Shipdham Lane playing field. The Chair asked Cllr Hewson as Chair of the Playing Field Committee if the Committee was looking for other grants to help fund the purchase of equipment. Cllr Hewson said it was not. It was noted that the Parish Council is applying for grants to fund the purchase of new equipment for the Blackthorn Drive play area in order to reduce the cost to the parish. It was **RESOLVED** that the Playing Field Committee will reapply for a grant at a later date and that it will seek guidance on the grants that may be available to it.

11 Black Horse Close to Hill Rise Hedge Cutting

It was noted that a flail mower will not cut the areas at the bottom of the hedge. It was suggested these lower areas should be sprayed in April. It was **RESOLVED** to obtain quotes to cover the cost of spraying the lower parts of the hedge and to cut the remainder.

12 Blackthorn Drive Working Group Update

Cllr Bradford noted that Cllr Mallard had resigned from the Working Group and that Cllr Porter had also resigned from the Group as he did not have sufficient time to fully devote himself to helping. The member of the public had also not been able to commit fully to the project. The Clerk will help with obtaining grants/meetings of the Group and Cllr Steward will also help. Cllr Blackburn will place a request on social media asking for residents to come forward if they want to join the Working Group.

13 Replacement of Air Skier (Blackthorn Drive Play Area)

It was noted that the Air Skier is damaged beyond repair. The cost of a replacement is £2,296.80. It was **RESOLVED** to purchase a replacement from NGF Play Ltd. The Council acknowledged that the equipment is well used and that other pieces of equipment will need to be replaced at some point.

14 BCS Mower

It was noted that there were two parties interested in purchasing the mower for £400. It was **RESOLVED** to sell the mower to DRP Horticultural Services, which had previously maintained the mower.

15 Parish Partnership Scheme Bids

The Council considered three applications for the Parish Partnership Scheme bids. It was **RESOLVED** to apply for another SAM2 (static or mobile); to move the children's play area sign from Dereham Road to Shipdham Lane; and to install a car parking sign

from Dereham Road to the car park on the Shipdham Lane Playing Field. Alan Glistler (Chair of the Village Hall Estate & Trust) was at the meeting and was asked if the Trust might contribute to the cost of the car parking sign. He said that signage is an integral part of the new car parking on the Playing Field. The Clerk will ask the Trust to consider the request at its next meeting.

16 Speed Watch

Cllr Mallard is no longer able to act as the Speed Watch coordinator. It was noted that Cathy Geary is happy to return as the coordinator for the group from July 2024. She acknowledged that the equipment may have to be returned if the group does not hold at least one session a month between now and July 2024. There are currently about thirteen volunteers in the group. The Council will continue to advertise for a coordinator and for further volunteers. The Council will see how the flexible the Police is prepared to be in terms of the group retaining the equipment.

17 Civil Parking Enforcement

A request had been made to Civil Parking Enforcement to come to Scarning School at drop off and/or pick up to help with the parking problems. The reply was that they were 'inundated with school requests at the moment,' but that a request had been tasked and that it would be prioritised for pick up time as the issues were normally greater at this time.

18 Report from Social Media Officer

Cllr Blackburn noted that the Christmas Fair of 2 December is being advertised. She is continuing to advertise for a Speed Watch coordinator and volunteers, as above.

19 Representatives Reports

It was noted that any issues regarding the tennis courts should be sent to the secretary of the Playing Field Committee.

20 Items for Inclusion in Next Agenda

Parish Partnership Scheme bids

Report from the Village Hall re a car parking sign

21 Date for Budget Meeting

The Budget Committee will meet on 27 November at 7pm.

22 Next Council Meeting

The next Council meeting will be in the Village Hall on December 4 at 7pm.

23 Playing Field Committee Representative

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Abel as a representative to the Playing Field Committee to replace Cllr Mallard. Cllr Bunn will remain as the other representative.

24 Budget Committee

Cllr Mallard was a member of the Budget Committee. There were no applicants to replace her on the current committee, but it was acknowledged that the Committee puts together a proposal for the consideration of the whole Council.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9.05pm.

Scarning Parish Council Actual to Budgeted Expenditure

Running Costs	Budgeted	Expenditure	Notes
Insurance	750	708.10	
Clerk's salary & Paye	10,500	6,496.90	
Clerk's expenses	500	154.25	
Council phone	50	20.00	
Payroll services	100	54.00	
Office supplies & repairs (photocopier)	250	70.03	
Internal Auditor	150	120.00	
External Auditor	550	252.00	
Norfolk Parish Training Subscription	400	420.00	
Fee to Information Commissioner	35	35.00	
Microsoft subscription – Council laptop	60	59.99	
Council website - Wix	120		
Parish website Costs	100	25.00	
Hire of Village Hall	275		
Council Training	250	140.00	
Capital Costs			
Cutting roadside verges/meadows play areas (see below)	4,500	3,502.32	
Street lighting	2,500	835.95	
Street light maintenance	300	1,066.04	Includes two new Leds
Tree survey	500		
Tree works	1,000		
Solar lights – repairs	100		
Church clock maintenance	100		

Defibrillator costs	450	298.00	Move school defibrillator - £246
SAM2	100		
Flower boxes	150	40.25	
General repairs	500		
Grit/dog bins	-	290.00	
Noticeboard spare keys	-	9.27	
Blackthorn Drive Play Area			
Grass cutting	Included in verges figure above		
New play equipment	5,000		
Repairs to play equipment	1,000	75.00	
Play Safety Reports	250	240.00	
Maintenance of Outdoor Fitness equipment	500		
Ted Ellis Play Area			
Fence/gates	300		
Shipdham Lane Playing Field			
Outdoor Fitness equipment maintenance	250		
Zip wire maintenance	200	164.70	Replacement seat
Grants and Donations			
Grants	5,000	3,100.00	Grant to Playing Field Committee
Payment for Mower to Scarning Playing Field Committee		4,800.00	
Grass cutting in churchyard	1,500	1,039.50	
Remembrance Day wreath (Section 137)	50	50.00	
Additional			

Christmas tree	300		
Litter picking	75	23.50	
Elections	2,085	-	Funds not used as no elections held. c/f £2,085
Events (Coronation)	1,000		
TOTAL	£42,000	£24,089.80	
Bank reconciliation as at 1 November 2023			
Barclays Current Account £35,768.69 (less unpaid cheque £11.80)			
Scottish Widows £22,084.20	£57,841.09		
Balance c/f £37,660.26			
Add receipts £44,270.63			
Less payments £24,089.80	£57,841.09		