

Furneux Pelham Parish Council Meeting

07/01/2016
20:00
Village Hall

Notice is hereby given of the above meeting for the purpose of transacting the business set out in the Agenda below, and you are hereby summoned to attend.

Fiona Forth, Parish Clerk 31/12/15

Note taker: Clerk

Councillors: S Bratt, C Cantes, R Gale, E Rowland, H Smart, D White

Agenda

1) Apologies	None received	
2) Adoption of previous minutes	To approve as a correct record and authorise the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2015	All
3) Declarations of interest	To receive any Councillors' declarations of interests	All
4) Matters arising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) State of the roads - email to HCC Councillor b) Allotment footpath funding - email to EHDC c) Litter picking - employment status d) Donations - policy e) Annual review of fixed assets - review and fixed asset register f) Hixham Hall - update 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair Clerk Clerk Clerk Chair Clerk Chair
5) Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Update on current financial position b) Expenditure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to be approved and cheque signed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website hosting £17.00 Village Hall hire £54.00 Hedge cutting £500.00 Clerk's expenses £57.59 Clerk's salary, November £158.02 Clerk's salary, December £158.02 • to be approved for cheque to be signed when due <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clerk's salary, January £158.02 Clerk's salary, February £158.02 • payments made since last meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None c) Donation requests: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herts Air Ambulance - no specific amount, donated £100 prior year • Parochial Parish Council - no specific amount, donated £800 prior year d) Budget for 2016/17 and determination of precept e) Forward financial plan 2017/21 f) Online banking and direct debit mandates g) New audit regime 	Clerk

6) Draft Strategic Land Availability Assessment	Stakeholder consultation	Chair
7) Website	Update	Clerk
8) Allotments	Progress update	D White
9) Village Hall Committee	Update from Parish Council representative	D White
10) Correspondence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Planning applications b) Communications to Parish Clerk c) Communications to or from Councillors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clerk Clerk Councillors

Minutes

1) Apologies

None

2) Adoption of previous minutes

The minutes from the meeting held on 5 November 2015 were adopted unanimously.

3) Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest made.

4) Matters arising

a. State of the roads

Chair has been in touch with Highways. The plan of work for the coming year has not been prepared as yet. However, following a request, information on gullies that need clearing has been provided - just east of the Patient End track and the 3 along Clay Chimneys.

E Rowland highlighted that there was an issue regarding lorries going on to the grass verge at the double bend in The Street which results in the verge becoming muddy and this running down to block gullies. Suggestion made as to whether something could be put on the grass verge to prevent lorries using it. It was generally thought that wooden posts would become displaced by heavier vehicles, so large stones, as on a grass traffic island in Braughing, to be considered. Chair to get financial estimates.

Action: Chair

b. Allotment footpath funding

Clerk, in liaison with D White, applied for a capital grant to obtain funding for an all-weather footpath in the allotments. This was not successful as the capital grant pot was over-subscribed. However, the project was agreed in principle but more detail needed such as the estimate cost supported by quotes and better evidence of need. The Parish Council can reapply for a grant in June 2016. Agreed that a further application was to be made. **Action: Clerk**

c. Litter picking

A concern was raised at the last meeting regarding the litter picking undertaken on the Parish Council's behalf in terms of whether this is employment or not. Advice was received from HAPTC that this should be covered by a self-employed person's contract. The draft contract provided by HAPTC has been tailored to suit the needs of the Parish Council and is currently with F Knight for signing. **Action: obtain signed contract**

It was also noted that E Rowland undertakes litter picking voluntarily on Sundays around the village.

d. Donation policy

At the last meeting it was identified that the Parish Council should have a clear policy to follow when making donations to outside organisations. A draft policy was circulated with the agenda. Concern was raised that the draft policy requires subjective judgements to be made in relation to donation applications. It was agreed to approve the policy on the basis that this is to be used as guidance and to be updated at the review date (July 2016) to be more specific. **Action: Clerk**

In addition, the Parish Council needs to advertise the availability of donations more widely within the village.

When discussing individual donation requests, the merit of the application will be debated and a vote held for the decision.

e. Annual review of fixed assets

Chair highlighted that annual review was not yet complete and is to be completed for the next meeting. He noted that the noticeboard was now back up in the bus shelter by the Brewery Tap.

E Rowland queried whether there was merit in installing a further notice board on The Causeway near the existing bench as there is regular foot traffic there.

Following discussion, it was agreed to reconsider this idea at some point in the future.

In terms of the fixed asset register, for many years an amount of £2,899 was recorded in the annual return that was not linked to specific assets. Following a trawl through old documentation, the Clerk identified that this related to:

- Bus shelter £1,291
- Village Hall Car Park boundary fence £1,608.

In addition, the Car Park land, a gift from Greene King, also needed to be recorded on the register at nil cost.

The issue now arises that a number of other assets owned by the Parish Council are not on the register. For example, benches, village sign. These need to be valued and included on the register this year.

Action: Chair (review) and Clerk (register)

f. Hixham Hall

Chair relayed an update on the Hixham Hall footpath issue from C Hadley. Following extensive research, there are 2 views. Ordnance Survey says it is a right of way but with no evidence (an Other Right of Way with Public Access) but Herts County state that it isn't. Herts County advice is to seek to amend the definitive map which would then require them to investigate this further.

Agreed that the Parish Council had progressed this matter as far as it could. With C Hadley's permission, his email containing the latest information will be forwarded to Albury Parish Council to consider. C Hadley was thanked for his efforts regarding this matter.

5) Finance

a. Update on current financial position

Current financial position, as circulated, noted. The Clerk highlighted that the financial information now includes the Transparency Code funding as this has been received.

No new areas of overspending to report. Whilst the website costs are more than expected given that the domain name was purchased for 10 years, the hosting cost is significantly less than expected - £17 as opposed to £30. These costs are funded from the grant received for this year and the next year.

b. Expenditure to be approved

Expenditure, as noted on the agenda, approved and cheques signed as necessary.

c. Donation requests

2 donation requests deferred from the last meeting were considered in line with the donation policy agreed earlier in the meeting.

Herts Air Ambulance - request discussed. Agreed to not donate.

Parochial Parish Church - request discussed. Concern raised that potentially the Church had sufficient funds to cover the graveyard maintenance. Agreed to support this year but a better understanding of the Church's financial position would be sought in future prior to making a decision.

d. Budget for 2016/17 and determination of precept

Budget for 2016/17 and the forward financial plan taken together, both of which had been circulated with the agenda.

The budget is based on a combination of the expected outturn for 2015/16, known changes and estimation. The budget currently has the same level of precept as the prior year - £3,000 - and decisions required in terms of capital projects and the level of balance to be maintained. Also need to bear in mind that the new homes bonus tapers off dramatically from the next year onwards.

Following discussion, agreed to amend the budget and forward financial plan as follows:

- Allotment costs - increase to £200
- Capital projects to be identified - include £2,500.

Agreed to set the precept at £3,000 for 2016/17. Budget and forward financial plan approved, as amended.

e. Forward financial plan 2016/17 to 2020/21

See above

f. Online banking and direct debit mandates

The Clerk has spoken with the bank.

Online banking is not possible due to the signatory requirements on the account. However, it is possible to have online access to view financial transactions and this is in the process of being arranged. In the meantime, monthly bank statements, at no cost to the Parish Council, are now going to be provided, backdated to April 2015. In terms of direct debits, in order to set these up, the minimum number required each year is 400 and the Parish Council is significantly below this number therefore no further action to be taken.

g. New audit regime

In November, information regarding the new audit regime was circulated. The existing audit arrangements end once the audit on the 2016/17 accounts is complete. The public will, however, still have the right to question the accounts and an external auditor needs to be in place to deal with these.

The options were to be a party to the new arrangements or go it alone. The cost of the new arrangements is expected to be around £100 for 5 years. Costs of going alone are likely to be more than this. If the decision is to go it alone, formal opting out needs to be done by the end of March.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the Parish Council should be a party to the new arrangements.

6) Draft Strategic Land Availability Assessment

Chair discussed the contents of the assessment that had been circulated prior to the meeting. Only 1 site had been identified as suitable for development - land north of Lake Villas - and a development of 5 houses is being proposed on this land. As yet, a planning application has not been made but the developer has been in contact with the Parish Council regarding this. The developer was made aware of previous applications for this site and that the Parish Council would apply its usual protocol of reviewing planning applications when received.

7) Website

The Clerk apologised that the website was not yet up and running. A problem had been encountered with the underlying coding that should be resolved next week. **Action: Clerk**

The good news was, as previously noted, that the Parish Council had been successful in obtaining grant funding to establish the website and maintain it for 2 years. The grant received was for £558.

8) Allotments

D White provided an update. The number of vacant plots remains at 5. Request made for the Chair to obtain more scalping from Highways for the path beside the Church. AGM to be held on the 17th March 2016, 8 pm in the Brewery Tap. Prior to that meeting, the Parish Council will need to determine the fees to be charged for plots in the coming year. Currently these are £35 for a full plot and £17.50 for a half plot. **Action: determine allotment fees next meeting**

9) Village Hall Committee

D White provided a brief update. The carol service had been well attended. There had not been as many 'Santa Stops' around the village as expected. The tuck shop is doing well. The decoration of the stage area has been completed and further decorating work to be undertaken in the main part of the hall. Fencing has been done outside so that the doors can be open in the summer and children will be in a closed off area.

10) Correspondence

a. Planning applications

Noted that there had been 1 planning consent, 2 planning applications refused and 3 consultations since the last meeting. S Bratt highlighted that there is potentially a covenant on the land at The Spinney. The details of the planning consultation have been passed on to the Diocese Registrar. In general, Councillors are responding to the Clerk in respect of planning consultations.

b. Communications to Parish Clerk

All communications have been covered under other agenda items.

c. Communications to or from Councillors

S Bratt mentioned that he had received a phone call from an Albury senior citizen who intended to lobby Albury Parish Council for a community bus service to counter the reduction in bus services. Potential financial support could be sought from this Parish Council in the future.

Chair raised the idea for a community support network in the village to help with things such as changing a light bulb, collecting medication, sweeping snow off footpaths etc. Agreed that the Chair will do further work on this idea for the next meeting. **Action: Chair**

E Rowlands highlighted that 4x4's were causing significant damage to Violets Lane and queried whether it would be possible to put a bridleway gate up to restrict access.

Agreed that this should be looked into. **Action: E Rowlands**

Issue was discussed regarding the use of a footpath as vehicular access which has arisen due to the proposed sale of a property in the village. Considered that this was a legal matter between the parties to the sale, and likely that custom and practice would prevail.

The meeting ended at 21:35.

The next meeting is on 3rd March 2016.