

Skipwith Parish Council Meeting Minutes on Monday, 4th July 2022 at 8.00pm

Present: Councillors Jonathon Morgan (JM) Chairman, Mike Ward (MW) Vice-Chairman, Kate Baxter (KB), Jeremy Gerken (JK)

Parish Clerk: Isobel Greatrex (IG)

Apologies: Councillor Sharon Worrall (SW)

Guest: Neil Reader, District Councillor

Item No.	Discussion	Action by	Due Date
029	To receive apologies and approve reasons for absence Apologies were received from Sharon Worrall (SW) and reason for absence was approved.		
030	Welcome to new Parish Councillor JM welcomed Jeremy Gerken to his new role as Councillor and thanked him for volunteering and giving up his free time.		
031	Declarations of interest not already declared under the council's Code of Conduct or members Register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests Councillor Mike Ward regarding agenda item 039.1 Allotments as he is an allotment holder.		
032	Public Session Nine members of the public were present. <u>Highway Safety</u> A member of the public asked for an update regarding the pending works to the Skipwith/ North Duffield junction. She informed the PC that she had emailed Highways which had informed her that the works would be carried out in the next two months. JM explained that SW had been following up Highways' actions but had no further update. He acknowledged how dangerous the junction was and suggested the PC write to a more senior person in the department, detailing the chronology regarding the project and lack of action. The member of public also believed that the chicanes have exacerbated speeding at said junction and asked if speed rods could be installed, to which KB responded by saying it had previously been agreed to put them in once the project had been completed. <u>Wildflower Meadow</u> The member of public who had issued a questionnaire to the village residents asking for what they would like to see the area used, provided the PC with the following results from 138 questionnaires issued: <u>"Option A</u> (a wildflower meadow with a few picnic benches. The meadow land would most likely need to be left for the flowers to grow, except perhaps to allow a mown path to and from picnic benches)": 31		

“Option B: (as an area for general recreation use, for children to play safely away from the road. The land would most likely be kept mowed and would be available for play and recreational use by the public and for village events and would most likely contain a few picnic benches)” : 59

“Option C: (neither of the above. I would like to see the area used as.....please specify)” : 5

She asked if the PC was going to take any action based on the above results.

JM replied that he believed it had caused a lot of confusion in the village as some residents had thought the PC had organised the questionnaire but it had no involvement and it had not even been made aware of the distribution beforehand. It was insufficiently detailed for people to make informed decisions. He carried on by saying that if residents wished to understand the PC’s position and the historical facts they should look on Selby Planning department’s website portal and read the PC’s statement. He confirmed that the planning application is for the area to be securely fenced with pedestrian access and a gate added.

He informed the attendees that as objections had reached ten, the decision for the application had been delayed as the application had to now be heard at a Planning Committee meeting, which the PC awaited.

However, late afternoon, a representation had been made from the landowner, Charlie Forbes Adam (CFA), objecting to the application due to the questionnaire results. The PC had been contacted by the Planning Officer to advise that it would probably be in the PC’s best interests to ask for a deferment to the meeting and for the PC to resolve the issue with the landowner.

The member of public said that the critical bit was that it was called a wildflower meadow and that no-one she had spoken to had thought the questionnaire was from the PC.

JM replied that she was going over old ground again and the PC had previously explained why the application was labelled “wildflower meadow.” He explained that the PC had to name and describe the land as part of the planning application and the land was currently a wildflower meadow, agreed by CFA.

Another member of the public, who had been Chairman of the previous PC which had agreed to the lease of the land at the time, explained it had issued a questionnaire to obtain ideas as to what leisure activities people wanted.

MW said there was no intention to say the land would end up being a wildflower meadow and the reason for this had been explained at a previous PC meeting.

KB explained that the planning application was to change the use from agricultural use to public use and said she had no idea what the member of the public was arguing about as the PC’s application was to initially request the installation of a fence and an access gate, which the resident had asked for at the PC meeting of 26th July 2021. KB said the PC planned to wait until a decision had been made by the Planning department, make the area accessible and then issue a survey so an informed decision could be made by parishioners and the PC.

KB continued by saying that she didn’t think it was a very good questionnaire; it was biased and of poor quality and that Option B was exactly what the PC has asked for in the planning application. The PC had wanted to gain approval from the Planning Department for the land to be ready for the school holidays but due to the objections this had been delayed since May, when objections were raised.

Another member of public felt that this was an unfair comment as action had been delayed by 5 – 6 years, to which JM explained that the delay had been due to other interventions being put into place, as, at that time, residents did not want the land to be put to any use. Since that time budgets have been eroded.

The initiator of the questionnaire said she believed her objections were still valid as she wanted a place where children could play, which was not in a wildflower meadow. JM replied by saying that the PC had made clear the point about the wildflower meadow title in the planning application numerous times.

The member of the public informed the PC that the land had been taken out of the stewardship scheme now, to which JM replied that the PC had not been made aware of this.

MW informed the meeting of the content in the planning officers report for the committee meeting later that week, as part of the recommendation that the application be granted in full. The specific section of his report (see Para 5.4 and 5.33 below) are particularly relevant in view of the comments made by the member of the public, who issued the questionnaire, first aired on social media 12 months ago and at each subsequent Parish Council meeting, stating that the Parish Council had not met its legal obligations under S106. The same argument also formed a major part of a letter of objection to the planning proposal.

Para 5.4 The lease attached to the section 106 at Appendix A refers to the lease of a play area. Nowhere within the S106 or the lease agreement is there any requirement that this area MUST be a children's play area or that provision MUST be made for play equipment.

Para 5.33 The application to change the use of the land for recreational purpose is in line with the open space provision intended by S106. Whilst there may be a local preference for a children's play park there is no legal requirement for its provision. The preference for a park is therefore not a material planning consideration in the determination of this application, which should be determined based on the details submitted and the impact of the proposal.

Another parishioner asked if there had been funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) when CFA had discussed the land lease with the Planning department. MW explained that the land was leased by CFA due to the North House Farm development, rather than providing any funds, although the land lease equated to £15,500 at the time. There had been further CIL funds received from the other developments since then but not nearly as much. The resident stated he was concerned about funds and how much was going to be spent on this land in the future.

Another member of public asked what funds the PC held. (It can now be confirmed that as at 31st March 2022 there was £45,555). IG informed him that all the accounts could be found on the PC's website. She explained that if the PC had insufficient funds a precept would need to be raised.

(For those who are not familiar with the term, a precept is the Parish Council's share of the council tax. The precept demand goes to the billing authority, the District Council, which collects the tax for the Parish Council. The 'Precept' is converted into an amount per Council Tax Band that is added onto the Council Tax bill.)

NR reminded everyone that the PC had successfully applied for funds to contribute towards the cost of fencing the area but they needed to be spent within 12 months of the grant being issued.

	He continued by explaining to the public that the PC was there to make decisions on behalf of the public and if they didn't believe in what the Councillors were doing, they should stand for the role themselves. He felt it was very frustrating to listen to the same argument month after month as it seemed to him that both parties wanted the same.		
033	Minutes of the meeting held on 16th May 2022 were approved by all members of the PC as true and accurate record. MW proposed and JM seconded.		
034	County and District Councillor Reports NR informed the PC that he was no longer a Conservative Councillor but other than that, there was nothing to report. He would encourage John Cattanach, the new County Councillor to attend the next PC meeting. He left at 9.00pm.		
035 035.1	Information on the following ongoing issues and to decide further action where necessary: Highway Safety <u>Skipwith/North Duffield Junction</u> See item 032. It was agreed to ask SW for a chronological report regarding this project and JM and IG would then draft a letter to a more senior person at Highways expressing their disappointment and to urge some action. <u>Car Parking opposite Town End Pond</u> The request to Highways for double yellow lines on the Main Street bend has been refused based on the fact that the problem is sporadic and does not occur 24/7.	SW/JM/IG	Asap
035.2	Asset Register Deborah Barton, who had previously offered her help to confirm the PC's allotment land ownership, advised she had not been able to ascertain any further details. It was agreed no further action would be taken as it was believed all avenues had been exhausted.		
035.3	Electricity Box Repair/Notice Board Backings and Door JM thanked Phil Westoby who volunteered his services to carry out these repairs. JM asked Phil's wife (who was present) if she would ask Phil if he would be able to repair the PC notice board too.		
035.4	Wildflower Meadow Further to item 032 it was agreed to request the planning application be deferred and to arrange a meeting with CFA to resolve the issue. KB proposed and JM seconded. IG to request CFA's availability to meet.	IG	Asap
035.5	Grass Verges on Main Street	JM	8 th July

	JM confirmed that he was meeting with Daniel Gath in Skipwith to gain agreement as to when they were going to make the appropriate repairs.		
035.6	<p>Planning Non-Compliance <u>Mulberry Vale</u> IG had written to Selby Planning department for a long-awaited update as to any actions it was taking. JM read out the Officer's response: "This case was reallocated in January 2021 to a temporary officer who was brought in to try and deal with some of the back log of cases. I will therefore check to see if the case has yet been progressed, any further or any outcomes determined and will come back to you as soon as I have this information. I believe outstanding cases will be reassigned again as the temporary officer is leaving the authority and is currently only working one day a week so the case may be assigned back to myself or one of our other officers." <u>North House Farm</u> IG had contacted Highways for another long-awaited update. JM read out their response: "Unfortunately, it looks like this issue accidentally slipped off the radar. Looking back, it looks like the last correspondence we had with the residents was in July 2020. The resident was asked to either remove the boundary treatment or to apply for the land in question to be stopped up. Neither of which seem to have happened. I will organise for another letter to be sent out to the residents giving them one month to state their intentions." They asked if the PC would wish to agree the land could be stopped up, to which the PC agreed to decline this as it would set a precedent for all other residents. JG proposed and KB seconded. IG will respond to Highways.</p>	IG	Asap
035.7	<p>Christmas Lights The Christmas lights on the village green were deemed to be unfit for purpose so JM asked if the PC were prepared to reinvest and purchase some more. It was agreed to put the item on the September agenda so the lights could be switched on prior to the meeting and when it was dark to ascertain how many lights were actually working.</p>	MW	End of August
036 036.1	<p>Planning JG confirmed there was no real update regarding The Rowans planning application, although some small amendments had been made and the application was still in progress. JM confirmed that the village hall had been granted planning permission to replace its existing oil tank to satisfy environmental requirements.</p>		
037 037.1	<p>Matters Requested by Councillors <u>Scarrow Green Pond (JM)</u> JM asked for agreement to remove the saplings surrounding the main tree on the island in the pond. IG confirmed the quote from Yorkshire Landscapes in February was £200. JG proposed and JM seconded. IG to ask York Landscapes to carry out the work after September, at the same time as they would flail the brambles surrounding the pond.</p>	IG	Asap

<p>037.2</p>	<p>KB informed the PC that the water soldier was growing again in the centre of Town End Pond so the PC agreed that it should ask for volunteers to help remove some of it and to ask Headley's or Dixon's to remove the debris. KB agreed to advertise for volunteers in Roundup.</p> <p>MW wished to express the PC's thanks to Phil Westoby for cutting down the hedge opposite the pond which was overgrowing onto the pavement.</p> <p><u>Use of Roundup (KB)</u></p> <p>In order to further communication with the parish KB suggested that it should use the magazine more frequently, even though the issue was out of sync with the PC meeting dates. KB and JG agreed to give it more thought and to be responsible for any news items which could be published in it. JM proposed and MW seconded.</p>	<p>KB</p> <p>KB/JG</p>	<p>Asap</p> <p>Asap</p>
<p>038</p> <p>038.1</p> <p>038.1.1</p> <p>038.1.2</p> <p>038.1.3</p>	<p>Financial Matters</p> <p><u>The following accounts for payment were approved:</u></p> <p>York Landscapes – grass cutting for May - £264 and June - £396 (late invoice)</p> <p>Skipwith Village Hall - Platinum Jubilee Expenses - £369.75</p> <p>Phil Westoby – materials for notice board etc - £75.00 (late invoice)</p> <p>KB proposed and JG seconded the above payments.</p>		
<p>039</p>	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>Allotment Trees</p> <p>An allotment holder read out her own letter to the PC, requesting the PC take some action to reduce the trees height as they are now impinging on the sheds and there is concern over safety and possible damage. She felt that as the allotments are listed as a PC asset then the PC should be covered by its insurance. IG to check, although MW will provide some examples before IG contacts the insurers. It was agreed that IG should contact three tree surgeons, Huw Forrestry, Paul Clifton and Marcus Taparell for initial advice and quotes.</p> <p>MW informed the PC that lack of water to the allotments is a major issue and that there used to be a metering system near the allotments but it is not currently used. Yorkshire Water needs to be contacted to ask if this is still available.</p>	<p>MW/IG</p> <p>IG</p>	<p>Asap</p> <p>Asap</p>
<p>040</p>	<p>Matters for Inclusion on the Agenda for the Next Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highway Safety • PC Notice Board • Wildflower Meadow • Grass Verges 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scarrow Green/Town End Pond• Allotments• Christmas Lights		
	Meeting closed at 9.45pm. The next PC meeting will be held on Monday, 5th September at 8.00pm.		