**LYDDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**HELD ON MONDAY,11th MAY 2020 AT 7.30 PM VIA ZOOM**

Due to current COVID-19 restrictions and, until further notice, the meetings of Lyddington Parish Council (LPC) will be staged via Zoom, a cloud platform for video and audio conferencing. Village parishioners were invited to email comments and questions to the parish clerk prior to the meeting for consideration by LPC.

**COUNCILLORS TAKING PART:**

Cllr L.Hobley (Chair) Cllr M.Fennemore

Cllr T.Fowell (Deputy Chair) Cllr D.Hurwood

Cllr H.East Cllr G.Macfarlane

**CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:**

Parish councillors agreed to consider the parishioner comments, submitted prior to the Annual Parish Meeting, under ‘Matters Arising’ as the suggestions related to improvements to the village environment.

**PRELIMINARY MATTERS**

**1. PREVIOUS QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR**

A member of the public had previously expressed disappointment that the old swings on the Green had been removed due to safety concerns highlighted in the annual safety inspection report. The Chair had explained LPC’s rationale behind the decision to remove the swings and confirmed that it was not possible to amend the problem at the present location.

As part of the query raised, the Deeds for The Green were recalled from safe custody and reviewed to establish its boundaries. Unfortunately, the Deeds have not completely clarified the situation and further investigations will take place once restrictions imposed by COVID-19 have been eased.

**2.** **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr Barney Sturgess

**3**. **ELECTION OF THE CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR OF LPC FOR 2020/21**

Cllr Libby Hobley was re-elected as Chair of LPC for a further year and Cllr Tony Fowell was re-elected as Deputy Chair. Parish councillors voted unanimously for the re-election of Cllr Hobley and Cllr Fowell, who were thanked for their continued and dedicated service.

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**4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

None

**5. MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

The minutes from the meeting held on Monday, 9th March 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by Cllr Libby Hobley.

**REGULAR REPORTS**

**6. LYDDINGTON PLAYING FIELD AND PARK**

**a) Play equipment inspections**

LPC is committed to ensuring that the play equipment provided meets current safety standards and is fully compliant with the conditions stipulated in its employers’ liability insurance policy.

The requested operational check on the play equipment has been arranged for the end of May, however the play park remains closed due to restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**b) Additional improvements to new fence**

The old wood and chain-link fence around the small children’s play area has been replaced. Cllr Dinah Hurwood had raised several points which have been circulated to LPC for consideration.

The issues are:

1) The green link netting has been secured to the top horizontal post with a couple of stainless-steel staples between each vertical post which may not be adequate in the long term. 2) The green horizontal wire is held in place with clips which may need re-enforcing. 3) A further base board along the bottom of the fence that borders the boundary ditch may prevent the wire being pulled up by children.

**ACTIONS**

**Parish clerk to arrange a meeting with the contractor to request a quote for the additional work.**

**c) Lyddington Tennis (LT)**

Cllr Barney Sturgess will provide an update when activities begin again.

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**7. PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The parish clerk had compiled a list of recent Rutland County Council (RCC) decisions and planning applications. LPC’s responses to recent planning applications have been submitted by the stipulated deadlines and acknowledged by RCC. There was one outstanding proposal awaiting comments from parish councillors.

**8. FINANCE**

**a) Bank statement**

The latest Barclays bank statement dated 31st March 2020 - 29th April 2020 shows a closing balance of £24,219.06. The total expenditure of LPC since 9th May 2020 was £3,429.37 and the income figure was £9,180.00. The income includes the precept figure of £9,000.

**b) Council insurance renewal**

Last year LPC accepted a three-year long-term agreement option with its preferred provider, which reduced the annual premium by 5%. LPC agreed to accept the 2019-2020 quote of £894.81 for the total annual premium. Came and Company, the local council brokers, have emailed to say that the renewal date is 31st May 2020 and the price for the 2020-2021 annual premium is £919.47. This is the second year of LPC’s long-term agreement.

Subsequent to the meeting, the parish clerk forwarded an updated asset register to Came and Company which resulted in an increased premium of £970.79.

**c) Audit process 2019-2020**

The local council audit timings have been extended. The publication date for final, audited accounts for local councils will move from 30th September to 30th November 2020.

To give local councils more flexibility, the requirement for the public inspection period, which normally includes the first 10 working days of July, has been removed. Instead, local councils must commence the public inspection period on or before the first working day of September 2020. This means that draft accounts must be approved by 31 August 2020 at the latest.

Authorities must publish the dates of their public inspection period and the government recommends that they provide a public notice on their websites (where available) when the public inspection period would usually commence, explaining why they are departing from normal practice for 2020.

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**d) Play on The Green**

The June performance by the Three Inch Fools has been cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions. It is hoped that it may be possible to rearrange for later in the season.

**e) Staff salary**

The parish clerk submitted an invoice for £428.28 for the period commencing 10th March to 10th May 2020 including an expenses’ claim of £33.35.

**BUSINESS**

**9. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**a) Lyddington Undergrounding Project**

Western Power Distribution hopes to conclude its negotiations in the near future concerning the cabling required to a substation/transformer to enable the remaining overhead electricity lines in the village to be undergrounded.

**b) Lyddington Traffic Survey**

RCC's Integrated Transport Feasibility Study Report was due to be presented to their Highways and Transport Working Group meeting on 31st March but the meeting was cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions. LPC has considered its recommendations and responded with several additional suggestions highlighting that the most preferred option was a reduction in the speed limit to 20 mph.

County Councillor Andrew Brown agreed to petition for a review of the report’s recommendations, when normal business is resumed, with the support of the County Councillor for Uppingham.

**c) Suggestions received from parishioners to improve the village environment.**

**New road surface on Chapel Lane**

The proposal was that LPC should pay for a new road surface on Chapel Lane, the unadopted road that leads to the playing field. In the past the general view has been that the road is the sole responsibility of the homeowners living along Chapel Lane to collectively pay for improvements.

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The parish clerk liaised with the Highways Asset Management and Policy Manager at RCC who concluded that the cost of maintaining the lane’s surface should be divided amongst the responsible parties. The proportion paid by each should reflect their contribution to the damage / deterioration.

LPC also bears some legal responsibility for maintenance, but only in proportion to the damage / deterioration caused by the public visiting the car park to use the playing field.

In the meantime a local farmer has kindly filled in the potholes on Chapel Lane. He explained that it is his normal practice to annually repair the surface when required.

LPC agreed that the annual maintenance currently undertaken provides a suitable surface for the environment and is an appropriate measure. A smoother surface could prove to be problematic as it may encourage cars to travel faster which is undesirable so close to the playground.

**Water supply to the allotments**

The suggestion was to provide a water supply to the allotments. In the past LPC has previously researched and subsequently agreed that the cost of providing water to the allotments would be prohibitive due to the distance from the road. There is also the concern about liability should there be a water leak or someone leaves the tap on.

Another option is to provide water to the allotments by installing a system that captures rainwater. LPC would consider making a contribution to the cost, if the allotment holders came to a joint agreement to install the system and pay the majority of the expenses incurred. The parish clerk has circulated the information for discussion amongst the allotment gardeners.

**New planting: new hedge for the village**

The proposal was to improve the hedge at the back of the playing field as the current hedge has gaps in places.

Amongst the comments received was that thickening out the hedge with ‘whips’ would be an effective solution and The Woodland Trust might be able to suggest an appropriate supplier.

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**Action**

**The parish clerk to contact the parishioner who suggested the additional planting to gain further insight on the location of the failing hedge.**

**New planting: Tree Charter Day - 28th November 2020**

The Woodland Trust is offering free trees that can be ordered from their community tree pack website. Each Charter Branch is allocated a maximum of 420 trees. The appeal to plant more trees has been received before, but no landowner has volunteered a strip of land that would be suitable.

**Mary Parnham Trust**

The suggestion was to spend some of the funds on a project that would provide lasting value to the young families of Lyddington.

One proposal was to buy a portable stage that could be erected when required for performances, but the Village Hall Committee said that they were limited on storage space and could always hire the mobile stage that is used by Music in Lyddington in St Andrew’s Church.

A second proposal was to create a small nature park in a wooded area in the corner of the playing field. The main concern expressed was that a secluded area might encourage further anti-social behaviour on the playing field.

**Action**

**To appeal to parishioners to suggest further ideas that will have lasting value and benefit for the children of Lyddington.**

**A greener Lyddington**

The idea was to promote further pollinator planting in Lyddington and purchase an agreed number of bees/bug houses to offer to villagers.

**Action**

**Parish clerk to contact Buglife, a national charity for information on pollinator plants and recommended bee house suppliers. The information will be shared on the village noticeboards.**

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**Horse droppings on Main Street**

LPC has received two comments from parishioners concerning the increased amount of horse manure on the road.

There is no legal requirement to clear up horse droppings, but the owners of the livery stables in Lyddington are aware that some residents have complained.

**New kerb stones**

There have been requests from parishioners for new kerbing on Main Street to protect the grass verges. LPC agreed to delay any action until RCC reaches a decision concerning measures to slow speeding cars in Lyddington in case the proposals include road narrowing measures.

**10. NEW CEMETERY**

**Boundary wall repair**

LPC is seeking to repair the boundary wall in the New Cemetery that is now free of the ivy growth. The Head of Property Services for RCC explained that the site had been surveyed and the section of wall that requires repair is owned by RCC and is therefore responsible.

The repairs will be funded by RCC’s Central Maintenance Fund. Listed Building Consent will not be required due to the minor nature of the works. The Diocese has already confirmed their approval. RCC has a quote from a contractor but their team is currently furloughed and unable to work due to COVID-19 restrictions.

**Action**

**Cllr Libby Hobley and parish clerk to keep LPC updated on any new developments.**

**OTHER MATTERS**

**11. CLERK’S ITEMS**

**Collection point in Lyddington for Oakham foodbank**

A parishioner who volunteers at the Oakham foodbank has offered to be the village co-ordinator for this scheme.

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Parish councillors agreed the collection point should be the red telephone box on Main Street.

Subsequent to the meeting, it was found that the telephone box was extremely hot due to the current good weather and so it was agreed that the collection point should be moved to the bus shelter.

**Action**

**Parish clerk to contact RCC to register the Lyddington scheme and arrange for a weekly collection of donated food. Information on the launch of the scheme will be circulated on the noticeboards and e-news bulletin.**

**12. OTHER MATTERS (at the discretion of the Chair)**

**a)** **East Midlands Airport Future Airspace**

In February 2017 the Department for Transport published ‘Upgrading UK Airspace’.

This document sets out why and how the airspace in the UK is going through a process of change. Proposed changes will see further commercial aircraft flying below 7,000 feet across Rutland.

Further information about this, including details of how to participate and stay informed can be found online at:

[www.eastmidlandsairport.com/community/future-airspace](http://www.eastmidlandsairport.com/community/future-airspace)

**Action**

**Parish clerk to raise this issue with RCC and circulate information via the village e-news bulletin on how to register feedback on the proposals.**

**b) Street cleaning and grass cutting**

Parked cars on the village’s Main Street can prevent RCC’s crews from being able to clean the highway and trim the verges.

**Action**

**Parish clerk to email RCC for a timetable that can be promoted to parishioners to encourage car owners to move their vehicles off the main road when road cleaning and grass cutting is due to take place.**

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The meeting ended at 9.00pm.

**13. DATE OF THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETINGS**

The date of the next virtual parish council meeting will be Monday, 13th July. Log-in details will be shared on request.

Parish clerk is Fiona Buchanan (T 01572 821636 and 07711 160685)

Chair ……………………………………………………………………..

Date …………………………………………………………………….

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