

Ilketshall St. Andrew Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of 1 February 2021 held remotely, 7.30 p.m.

1. Welcome.

This meeting of the Ilketshall St. Andrew Parish Council was held remotely, using Zoom software, as a consequence of restrictions associated with the Covid-19 pandemic. Invitations for members of the public to attend had been made via a notice on the Village Hall noticeboard and via e-mails to individuals who often attended Parish Council meetings. Six Parish Councillors (Gerald Godfrey (GG), Jacqui Harrison (JH), Andy Spinks (AS) and Rod Apps (RA), plus the two Councillors co-opted since the last meeting of the Parish Council, Penny Ward (PW) and Colin Ward (CW) were present. There was one member of the public present (Lea Ingham).

2. Apologies for absence.

There were no apologies for absence.

3. Minutes.

The Minutes of the meeting of 4 January 2021 were accepted will be signed by the Chair at a later date.

4. Matters Arising from Minutes of 4 January 2021.

1. [Item 2 refers] Rod Apps reported that he had delivered a letter to Carol Bromley expressing condolences on the death of Chris Bromley. Given the fact that Penny Ward and Colin Ward had joined the Parish Council, this meant that there was just one unfilled place on the Parish Council.
2. [Item 5 refers] Rod Apps confirmed that he had arranged for a cheque to be signed and to be delivered to Anne Law for £2,000 for the Village Hall, as reimbursement for insurance costs of the Village Hall in particular.

5. Report from Beccles Southern Relief Road Working Group meeting of 18th December 2020.

This item was carried over from the meeting of the Parish Council of 4 January 2021.

Rod Apps had previously circulated his report from the meeting of the Beccles Southern Relief Road Working Group meeting of 18th December 2020. The central points from that report were that there still seems to be a recognition of the need for a separate sub-group to consider actions to be taken to alleviate traffic problems in the surrounding villages (including Ilketshall St. Andrew) and that a meeting of the proposed sub-group would be arranged for February. There also appeared to be recognition that a weight limit for roads in the villages surrounding Beccles might be an appropriate way of alleviating the HGV problem in particular. The next meeting of the Beccles Southern Relief Road Group was scheduled for 5th March 2021.

6. Questionnaires on the long-term objectives for the Commons

A questionnaire on the long-term objectives for the Ilketshall St. Andrew and St. John Commons had been circulated to households in the two villages in November 2020. There had been a total of 32 responses (from the 140 questionnaires distributed), and an analysis of those responses had been produced. This analysis had been circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting. The Council noted the major findings from that analysis, including the very high importance to the respondents of the objective of providing a habitat for wild flowers, insects and butterflies, of providing a habitat for wild bird populations, and for wild animal populations. While many respondents considered that greater tree planting to make a contribution to offsetting climate change would be appropriate, a number of respondents also stressed the importance of the openness of the Commons and to their historic origins.

7. Appointment of Directors representing the Parishioners to the Board of the Land Management Company for February 2021 onwards.

The Parish Council agreed that, given the circumstances imposed by the coronavirus pandemic, that it would not undertake the process of calling for expressions of interest from parishioners of the two parishes to serve as Directors of the Land Management Company from the Annual General Meeting of the Company from February 15th onwards. The Council would, instead, seek to undertake the process in time for the AGM of the Company in February 2022. The existing three Directors nominated by the Parish Council would therefore continue to serve until February 2022. Given that there had been no expressions of interest from parishioners in the two Parishes apart from those already serving as Directors at the time of the last invitation for expressions of interest (January 2020), it was not thought that this move to suspend the process for a year would meet with any concern.

8. Authority of the Land Management Company.

The Parish Council noted that the County/District Councils were the guardians of the Ilketshall St. Andrew & St. John Commons. It further noted that, not least as a consequence of the constraints on council incomes arising from the austerity policies of recent years, the County/District Councils were not prepared to get involved with issues relating to the Commons, and had passed it down to the Parish Council. It was further noted that the Parish Council does not have the resources to undertake any significant action relating to the Commons, but that the Land Management *did*, currently, have such resources. The Parish Council therefore agreed that it would grant authority to the Land Management Company to act on its behalf, particularly (though not exclusively) in relation to encroachments and incursions. The Parish Council noted that this agreement was essentially a technicality in the event of an individual or organisation challenging the authority of the Land Management Company to take any action. It is not intended that anything would change as a consequence of the formal granting of authority to the Land Management Company, and it was explicitly noted that the Land Management Company would continue to be accountable to the Parish Council.

9. Finance.

It was noted that the cost of the dog poo bin and fixings amounted to £265.69. Rod Apps agreed to settle the account, and the Parish Council agreed to reimburse him for that amount.

[Action: RA]

It was noted that the only other expenditures are the monthly Zoom subscriptions (£14.39). The Parish Council agreed that it would write a cheque to Rod Apps for the accumulated money owing by the end of the financial year, comprising £84.08 for the Vehicle Activated Sign

insurance, £265.69 for the dog poo bin, and 6 months of Zoom subscriptions (October, November & December 2020 and January, February & March 2021), totalling £436.11.

The financial assets of the Parish Council at the end of the financial year would constitute approximately £2,350 in the absence of any unanticipated expenditures, with around £1,200 in the current account. The Parish precept of approximately £4,000 is due to be paid in one instalment in April.

10. Dog Poo Bin.

The Parish Council noted that a Dog Poo Bin had been purchased. It was a green one, to alleviate concerns by some residents that a red one (for example) would be particularly unsightly on the Commons. The intention was that it would be fixed to the signpost at the junction of School Road and Great Common Lane. Gerald Godfrey agreed to take responsibility for positioning it and for liaising with the Council regarding its emptying. It was noted that the cost of emptying would be £1.00 per week, and it was agreed that GG would get the Council to send invoices to RA.

[Action: GG]

11. Play Area.

It was noted that the last safety inspection of the Play Area had been undertaken in April 2020, and that an annual inspection was necessary. Rod Apps agreed to contact David Bracey to undertake an inspection in April 2021.

[Action: RA]

It was noted that the inspection in April 2020 had resulted in a report that had made a number of comparatively minor recommendations. While a number of those recommendations had been implemented, a number had not, and it was agreed that Andy Spinks would take a look at the Play Area, and the gate in particular, in order to see what needed to be done in order to meet the recommendations contained in the report. Rod Apps agreed to investigate the issue of signage and to acquire appropriate additional/replacement signs.

[Action: AS, RA]

12. Bowls Club – Issue of Replacement Mat.

The possibility of the Parish Council funding a replacement mat for the Bowls Club had been raised and discussed at the December 2020 meeting of the Parish Council. In normal times, the regular weekly meetings of the Bowls Club provided an income to the Village Hall, and therefore a replacement mat would indirectly assist the financing of the Village Hall. The current mat is, it is believed, some 30 years old and was unsatisfactory. A quote for a replacement mat had been received and copied to Councillors, which noted that the total cost would be £1,070.

It was noted that the date for any re-opening of the Village Hall was still unknown, given the pandemic. After discussion, it was agreed that a decision on whether to make a contribution towards the purchase of a new mat (which could constitute 100% of the cost), would be deferred until such time as the Village Hall had reopened and a return to something akin to normality could be seen. It was also agreed that if the Parish Council did decide to pay for a replacement mat, that ownership of the mat would be with the Village Hall.

Rod Apps undertook to communicate this decision to those members of the Bowls Club who had been in touch with him regarding the purchase of a new mat.

[Action: RA]

13. Any other business.

Rod Apps noted that an occurrence of fly tipping on Ringsfield Road had been reported to him. He had reported it, along with a photograph, to East Suffolk Council who had then removed it.

Rod Apps reported that Anne Law had successfully applied for grants from the District Council to pay for PPE equipment and materials for when the Village Hall was able to re-open.

The Parish Council received the Minutes of the most recent meeting of the Land Management Company (January 2021). There were no comments made to be fed back to the Land Management Company.

Gerald Godfrey noted that the flooding on the road near the Old School House on School Road was no longer as bad as it had been, but remained hopeful that Highways would undertake some further work to properly deal with the problem.

Jacqui Harrison reported that Martin Parry had been in contact with her. At the Annual Parish Meeting, Martin Parry had undertook to identify 6 people from the village who would be prepared to act as Councillors, but informed Jacqui Harrison that he had not been able to do this. He was, nevertheless, prepared to act as Councillor himself. The Parish Council noted this offer, but also noted that the pressure had been reduced somewhat as a consequence of Penny & Colin Ward becoming Councillors, and that there were also some other possibilities in the offing. The Parish Council therefore asked Jacqui Harrison to communicate back to Martin Parry that the Council was grateful for his offer, but that given the changed circumstances, would not be needed at the moment.

[Action: JH]

Date of next meeting

Monday 29 March 2021, 7.30 p.m. This date was decided on, rather than the usual first Monday of the month, since Monday 5 April is a Bank Holiday.

The meeting ended at 9.00 p.m.