

RIBCHESTER PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council meeting held at 7.30pm on Monday 14 September 2020 at SS Peter & Paul's Parish Centre, Ribchester.

THIS MEETING WAS HELD UNDER THE GOVERNMENT'S CORONAVIRUS SAFETY REGULATIONS. IT WAS THE FIRST MEETING OF THE PARISH YEAR (COMMENCING APRIL 2020) WHICH IT HAD BEEN POSSIBLE TO HOLD, GIVEN THE PANDEMIC AFFECTING THE COUNTRY SINCE APRIL.

PRESENT:

Chairman: Cllr Carol Milne

Councillors: A Brown, J Dickinson, G Rollinson, D Royle

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs Law-Riding and Wilson.

Cllr Wilson had tendered her resignation on the grounds of personal circumstances.

2 RESOLUTION REGARDING ABSENCE

In light of the advice received from the Borough Solicitor in respect of the disqualification regulation laid down in the Local Government Act 1972 s85 which states:

If a member fails throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of his/her last attendance to attend any meeting of the Council s/he ceases to be a member of the Council unless the failure to attend was due to some reason approved by the Council before the expiry of that period.

it was a matter of some urgency to hold a physical meeting within the six months since the last Council meeting to ensure that no Councillor would be affected by the application of that regulation. Five Councillors were able to do so, one had resigned, and a special resolution was put before the meeting to accept Cllr Law-Riding's apologies for non-attendance, given the current Covid-19 restrictions and his need to isolate within his accommodation.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously) to accept Cllr Law-Riding's apology for absence as being entirely reasonable in the circumstances. It was further noted that Cllr Law-Riding's attendance at the Parish Council meetings had been exemplary over the past 15 years, and that it was highly unfortunate that the current situation had triggered the application of the above statute in the case of such a faithful and highly respected member of Council.

3 RATIFICATION OF ACTIONS TAKEN DURING THE CESSATION OF MEETINGS FROM 1 APRIL – 13 SEPTEMBER 2020.

During the period of cessation of the monthly Parish Council meetings, the work of the Council had been continued by regular correspondence, telephone consultations, notifications published in the Parish Noticeboard etc. The Councillors re-considered the full list of such decisions taken in this period and formally

RATIFIED all such actions taken in response, including the acceptance of the audited year-end accounts as prepared by the new local Auditor, Mr Colin Sharples.

(Attached to this minute is the full list of actions taken, financial decisions authorised and subsequent payments made. The approved Annual Accounts are filed within the Council Office, having been made accessible to the public since the beginning of the month).

The Clerk was requested to send a letter of thanks to Mr Sharples who had been so assiduous in his examination of the Accounts, and for going above and beyond the requirements of audit when he had identified elements within the existing system which could be improved and streamlined. In response to this additional work, it was

RESOLVED to pay an additional amount to him of £50 from the training budget head. Both actions **DONE**

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The matter of the damage to the fence near the brook behind the Roman Baths was raised. It was confirmed that the repairs to date were only temporary (as carried out by the LCC Public Rights of Way team). They were considered sufficiently secure in the circumstances, and would be made permanent at such time as budget constraints would allow. It was further noted that at present there are no plans to replace the full length of fence, although it was acknowledged that this was required.

6 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2020 were confirmed as a true record.

7 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Min 102. Millennium Garden Lectern – update. It was reported that work had stopped on this project during lockdown, as the graphics company staff had been furloughed. Work had recently commenced, and revisions to the proposed wording were currently being actioned. It is still hoped that this can be in be *in situ* before the end of the year.

8 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

There were three current Planning Applications:

3/2020/0550 – White Carr Farm, Dilworth Bottoms, Ribchester. Application for conversion of existing garage to single storey annex accommodation for the farm:

3/2020/0605 – Kays Farm House, Fleet Street Lane, Ribchester. Application for a new entrance porch, single storey extensions and associated alterations. (Resubmission of earlier application)

3/2020/0719 – 19 Church Street, Ribchester. Felling of one tree, Crown reduction of second, by 30%

There were no objections to or comments on any of the applications.

An application 3/2020/0507 within the area of Hothersall Parish Council, to build business units to the South of Blackburn Road was drawn to the attention of the meeting, but no objections or comments were made.

9 FINANCIAL MATTERS/ACCOUNTS

To assist the Councillors in their consideration of the current financial position each month, the running figures in the Cash Book were presented to the meeting. It was suggested that this would be a more accessible way of matching monthly expenditure to the annual budget. This was accepted. The other financial documents (*Amounts Received* and *Payments to Make*) remain unchanged.

RESOLVED To make the following payments:

SS Peter & Pauls Parish Centre – Room Hire - £25

Mr C Sharples – Audit and Training Fees - £270

Clerk's Salary (x2 months) - £857.20

Expenses (Office supplies) - £63.05

NOTED That Since April 2020, £10,446.78 had been received by the Parish Council from the RVBC Precept and Rents.

10 MATTERS RELATING TO PRINCIPAL COUNCILS

Cllr Brown reported that all RVBC meetings were now being conducted via Zoom, the on-line meeting facility. The Chairman queried how this might affect those who can not access technology. It was confirmed that this did not apply within the Council, and it was noted that a large number of staff were still working from home. It was reported that there was still a great deal of concern about the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on the Borough, and that there was a strong likelihood that an increase of numbers of cases per 100,000 would trigger special measure being put in place. However, the current situation had seen the creation of some excellent support systems. Cllr Brown reported that she had received very good reports for example on the creation of Community Hubs.

In the previous week there had been much concern expressed about the plans for re-organisation including the abolition of the District Councils (which was being strongly opposed). Nearby Councils have already responded (eg Leader of Preston CC has written to the Prime Minister about the proposals) and there has been an on-line petition which has gone to Government. Further information is awaited.

Cllr Brown also reported on the white paper on Planning Reforms which had been published. She outlined that all land in the country would be considered for planning applications as being in one of three zones:

- Automatic approvals;
- Land for renewal – which would carry ‘presumed consent’; and
- Protected – which would be Green Belt land, AONBs.

She opined that the paper required expansion and further detail

11 MATTERS RELATING TO THE PARISH

11.1 Environment Agency (EA) Contact re Flooding

A telephone meeting had been arranged between Mr S Townend of the EA and the Parish Clerk. Feedback from residents had been requested by the EA; this had been collected and was read (verbatim) to the EA officer. The strength of feeling expressed about the role played by the EA during the February floods in February was clearly communicated through these collated comments, and made an impact on him. He responded in full to all the points raised, but confirmed that the chief problem in February was the lack of specific reference to the rainfall level in the information available from the Met Office. The main information received was about wind speed and its likely impact on structural damage. In short, the main agencies and organisations able to offer support were not alerted in time to the weather conditions which did, ultimately, affect the village.

He provided a list of actions currently being taken to ameliorate the impact of flooding in the areas bounded by the Rivers Hodder, Calder and Ribble.

His recommendation was to go ahead and form a Ribchester Flood Action Group (along the lines of the very successful Whalley & Billington Group). A formal group would be able to access funding streams.

It was **AGREED** to pursue this plan with some involvement/connection to the Parish Council, to ensure that appropriate structures for making such applications and managing any income would be put in place.

Contact made with Whalley & Billington Flood Action Group for advice and guidance (**DONE**)

11.2 Adoption of Telephone Box for 3rd Defibrillator

The BT telephone box on Blackburn Road, previously rejected for Adoption for the Defibrillator, has now appeared again on this year’s list for adoption. Updates are awaited.

11.3 Letters of thanks to Businesses/Organisations for Contributions to supporting the village during Lockdown.

It was proposed that a letter of thanks on behalf of the Parish Council, signed by the Chairman, should be sent to all those businesses, groups and organisations which had played such an important part in supporting the village and its residents during the Coronavirus lockdown and since. (**DONE**)

11.4 Presentation Key and Cane belonging to the late Mr W Hubbersty

During the summer, a gentleman whose late aunt was related to Mr Hubbersty, who had officially turned on the water supply to Ribchester in 1921, contacted the Parish Council Office to offer a presentation key and silver topped cane to the Parish Council for display in an appropriate place in the village. As Mr Hubbersty is buried in SS Peter & Pauls Churchyard, it was proposed to offer it to the congregation there. (**DONE** – in that offer made, final arrangements to be made).

11.5 Notice of ‘Casual Vacancy’ for Parish Councillor

Given that there will not be a Local Council election until next May, it was proposed to fill the vacancy created by Cllr Wilson’s resignation by a ‘Casual Vacancy’ *pro tem*. Agreed that this should be advertised for one month, and any applicants to be invited to the next meeting to give a short address to the Parish Council as to why they wish to be considered for the post. (**DONE**: one application received)

12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING (TO BE CONFIRMED)

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8.33pm

Confirmed as a true record

_____ Chairman

_____ Date