

HILGAY PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Full Council Meeting

held on Thursday, 7th of March 2024 at 7.00pm in Hilgay Village Hall.

Present:

Councillors

Cllr P Mesher – Chair
Cllr S Annan – Vice Chair
Cllr J Dix
Cllr A Greening
Cllr M Orwell
Cllr C Wills
Cllr M Storey Norfolk County & KL&WNBC
Cllr P Hodson KL&WNBC.

Clerk Mr D R Williams

Member(s) of public 2

180/23 To receive and accept apologies and reasons for absence.

- There were apologies from Cllr R Munday(unwell) Cllr J Heatrick (Personal)

181/23 Declarations of interest (under the West Norfolk Borough Council Code of Conduct) and any requests for dispensation

- Cllr C Wills and Cllr P Mesher declared that they had a non-pecuniary interest as members of the Hilgay Charities Board. Item 172/23 on the agenda.

182/23 To agree the minutes of the Council Meeting held on the 1st of February 2024 (Items 162/23 to 180/23).

They were accepted with an amendment to item 165/23 Cllr C Wills indicated there was a small misspelling of the word stating. Clerk to amend the minutes.

Proposed by Cllr C Wills and seconded by Cllr J Dix all present agreed.

183/23 An open forum for Public Participation (15 mins – 3 mins per person max): an opportunity to hear from Members of the Public, Borough Councillors, and County Councillors.

- There were two members of the public. One spoke on the toilet Block and asked was it considered to repurpose the building. The Chair indicated it had and that the electricity had now been disconnected and the water would be in a short

while. Also, a contractor had been chosen and once all prelims had been completed the building would be demolished.

- Councillor P Hodson gave a short update on matters at Kings Lynn & West Norfolk Borough council. He stated the email Councillors had received from the deputy Leader stating what the Borough Council had achieved since taking office was not what he had asked for. Councillor P Hodson had asked for what the independent party were doing. The Clerk had asked about grant monies for the 80th D-Day celebrations. Councillor P Hodson thanked the Clerk for asking as there were no grants set up and the Officers are now looking at this and we will wait to hear in due course. Councillor P Hodson informed the Council that he will let them know in due course and will probably be May when we know. The Chair asked about planning query, on behalf of Cllr R Munday which was a retrospective application. Councillor P Hodson would take the matter up on behalf of the resident.
- Councillor M Storey Norfolk County & KL&WNBC gave a report on the Norfolk County Council budget which has been agreed for the 24/25 fiscal year. The Budget is set at 520 million pounds. Councillor M Storey stated that Norfolk County Council is not one of the Councils in financial strife across the country fourteen of which are bankrupt and in need of Government intervention. Councillor M Storey then quoted from the Norfolk County Council website with numerous events and media statement. The Chair asked Councillor M Storey Norfolk County & KL&WNBC how we receive the funding for the gateway project. He was informed that the funding would come from Mr Andy Wallace the highways Manager once all allocations have been put in place and before the end of the fiscal year. The Chair thanked Councillor M Storey Norfolk County & KL&WNBC for the information. A question was the cost of rebranding.

Councillor P Hodson left the meeting at 19:23hrs.

184/23 To Update on the Budget and Precept for fiscal year 2024 to 2025.

- The Clerk informed the meeting that all matters had now been completed prior to the start of the new financial year. With just the AGAR for the financial year we are now in.

185/23 Chair's announcements and matters for consideration.

Update on Hilgay school playing field.

- The Chair asked the member of the public could they advise on the history of the playing field and play equipment. There was discussion around the funds raised

by the parents of the school and what was then new equipment in 2010 and then the lease agreement in 2016 which was recorded by the land registry. The Chair spoke with Rebecca Lamb who is the building surveyor for DEMAT. They could not lease the land to the Parish Council as it was not a solution available. But could possibly give the Parish Council a licence to operate and maintain the play equipment where it now resides. The Chair thought the legal fees for this licence would cost in the region of a £1000. The Chair asked if the Council were happy for him to carry on negotiations with Rebecca Lamb.

Proposed by Cllr C Wills and seconded by Cllr J Dix all agreed who attended.

- **Update on Ten Mile Bank School meeting.**

The Chair thanked Cllr M Orwell for her notes of the meeting attached as annex A to the minutes.

Proposed by Cllr C Wills and seconded by Cllr M Orwell all agreed.

The Chair stated that DEMAT were looking to close the school quickly. Cllr J Dix stated that a letter had been sent to the parents by Elizabeth Truss who stated she was looking to extend the closure time by another year. There was a short discussion using the notes as reference. Cllr C Wills thanked Councillor M Storey Norfolk County & KL&WNBC for his strong support for Ten Mile Bank in the meeting.

Update Highways responses.

- The Clerk on behalf of Cllr R Munday that those pots holes he reported with pictures had been actioned. Cllr M Storey Norfolk County & KL&WNBC had sent the email on from Cllr Munday. The potholes in Ten Mile bank had not yet been actioned. The Chair did point out that the trees in the Dyke and the water from the highway was channelled under to road to the Dyke, which has made it a highways issue. THE Clerk would write to Mr Wallace to request trees are removed from the Dyke.

Update Closed Church yard wall.

- The Clerk informed the meeting that no response had been received from the Borough Council Officer. The Chair asked Cllr C Wills if the Clerk to Hilgay Charities received a response to his email. Unfortunately, the answer was no. The Clerk was to write to Councillor Hodson to seek information as to why there has not been any further response.

186/23 Updates from working parties.

- **Finance:** The Chair on behalf of the Council thanked Cllr S Annan and the Clerk for the monies received for the first three completed VAT126 reports. The sum of £7,797.71. The Chair stated that there was £7,494.06 in the community account and £20,617.46 in the Business account. The Clerk informed the meeting that at after receiving the Vat monies, the sum of £3,000 was replaced into the business account. The Clerk also requested a proposer and seconder for the purchase of the hedge cutter as the old one was not economical to repair. Therefore, a new one was purchased from Lawn Boy Ltd who also accepted the old one in part exchange. The cost £240 was agreed by all present.

Proposed by Cllr C Wills and Seconded by Cllr S Annan all present agreed.

- **Planning:** Cllr A Greening stated there was no new planning issues to discuss.
- **Allotments:** Cllr S Annan reported the allotments were ok.
- **Footpaths:** Cllr S Annan reported that a fence had been going up around the field at Woodhall where the footpaths are the Maintenance Officer agreed. This would make the designated footpath very difficult to negotiate in the spring. Mill Hill the fence is pushed right up to the edge. The footpath obstruction would need to be reported to the Norfolk County rights of way officer. Cllr S Annan to send the Clerk the details and he will email the Officer at County Hall.
- **Infrastructure:** Cllr C Wills nothing to report.
- **Communications:** Cllr M Orwell informed the Council there was nothing to report at this meeting.
- **Asset Register.** Councillor A Greening asked the Clerk to request the maker of the street head lamps be identified for the register and how many we hold in reserve. The Clerk wanted to purchase a plastic bin to place on the Ely Road bus stop. Also, two galvanised inners for two of the cast iron bins now in place. The Clerk informed Cllr Greening and the meeting the Parish Council was not required to calculate depreciation of assets as they only affected the resulting AGAR when they had been removed due to no longer used or replaced.

Proposed by Cllr C Wills and seconded by Cllr S Annan all present agreed.

187/23 Planning Applications

- (a) To receive results on decisions: **23/02218/F (R)**
- (b) To discuss applications received: **None**

The Clerk informed the meeting there was a result of the planning application 23/02218/F which had been refused. Nothing else was received.

188/23 **Finance:** To approve the payment of accounts for January 2024 and February 2024.

To approve payments as per schedule presented.

Payments from 21/01/2024 to 21/02/2024

21 February 2024 (2023-2024)

**Hilgay Parish Council
PAYMENTS LIST**

Voucher Code	Date	Minute	Bank	Cheque No	Description	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
102	21/01/2024		Community Barclays	(Street lighting mainter	Streetlight Maintenance	K&M Lighting Services	S	42.80	8.56	51.36
103	30/01/2024		Community Barclays	(Supply of 44 Privet Pla	Hedge Plants for Planting	Bay Tree GC	S	275.00	55.00	330.00
104	05/02/2024		Community Barclays	(Grass Cutting April 20:	Grass Cutting	Holly Landscapes	S	174.97	34.99	209.96
105	05/02/2024		Community Barclays	(Servicing hand held ec	Maintenance Equipment repair	Lawn-Boy : Farm Services	S	56.54	11.31	67.85
106	05/02/2024		Community Barclays	(Servicing hand held ec	Maintenance Equipment repair	Lawn-Boy : Farm Services	S	63.31	12.66	75.97
107	05/02/2024		Community Barclays	(Servicing hand held ec	Maintenance Equipment repair	Lawn-Boy : Farm Services	S	85.65	17.13	102.78
108	05/02/2024		Community Barclays	(Servicing hand held ec	Maintenance Equipment repair	Lawn-Boy : Farm Services	S	61.54	12.31	73.85
109	05/02/2024		Community Barclays	(electric supply for stre	Electricity	Npower street lighting	L	440.20	22.01	462.21
111	05/02/2024		Community Barclays	(Rod for repair to Hilga	Maintenance Supplies	Thomas B Bonnett	S	2.50	0.50	3.00
112	05/02/2024		Community Barclays	(Street lighting mainter	Streetlight Maintenance	K&M Lighting Services	S	42.80	8.56	51.36
113	05/02/2024		Community Barclays	(to supply and fit 3 x LI	Streetlight Maintenance	K&M Lighting Services	S	660.00	132.00	792.00
114	05/02/2024		Community Barclays	(Street lighting mainter	Streetlight Maintenance	K&M Lighting Services	S	42.80	8.56	51.36
115	05/02/2024		Community Barclays	(Clerk Salary for JAN 24	Clerk Salary	David Williams	Z	609.54		609.54
116	05/02/2024		Community Barclays	(MO Salary for JAN 24	Maintenance - Salary	HPC Maintenance Officer	Z	619.59		619.59
117	05/02/2024		Community Barclays	(Mower winter service	Maintenance Equipment repair	Thurlow Nunn Standen Ltd	S	714.44	142.89	857.33
118	08/02/2024		Community Barclays	(Heavy Duty Refuse Ba	Maintenance Supplies	Barker DBS	S	3.30	0.66	3.96
119	14/02/2024		Community Barclays	(Street lighting mainter	Electricity	K&M Lighting Services	S	42.80	8.56	51.36
Total								3,937.78	475.70	4,413.48

Proposed by Cllr J Dix and seconded by Cllr S Annan all present agreed.

189/23 **To discuss the D-Day 80 event.**

- Councillor M Orwell gave a brief update on the last meeting of the 80th Celebrations group. Due to Councillor R Munday being unwell, Cllr M Orwell gave a short briefing as per the bullet points.
 - The plan is to hold the first half of the evening at Bay Tree Garden Centre.
 - Then Cllr R Munday would be contacting the police to assist with people crossing the road back to the field where the beacon will be lit.

- Children organised walk with jam jars for lantern walk from Bay tree up to the beacon.
- Silver Band have offered to provide entertainment.
- The dramatic society from Downham Market walking round in period costumes.
- A Town Cryer and master of ceremonies.
- Food available at Bay Tree
- Story boards and static vehicle are to be decided.
- Bouncy Castle and Games.

The Chair asked about communication and the group were putting a flyer page in the Riverside News. The Councillors had a short discussion about funding and the proposal was to have a budget of £750 for the event. This was agreed by all.

Proposed by Cllr P Mesher and seconded by Cllr M Orwell all present agreed.

190/23 To update disconnection of water to Riverfield Toilet Block.

- The Clerk informed the meeting that he was still in the process of the form being accepted so this was on going.

191/23 To be updated on Green Space application.

- Cllr M Orwell thought this would be difficult. Cllr A Greening and Cllr S Annan thought that it was better to apply for both playing fields and the green space opposite the Hilgay Playing field. There was some discussion and Cllr A Greening offered to read the documents and take the applications forward.

Cllr M Storey Norfolk County & KL&WNBC left the meeting at 20:29 hrs

192/23 Late correspondence not on the agenda.

- Cllr M Orwell raised the point of the public having access to the meeting. Especially youths entering the Village Hall. The Clerk informed the meeting that as a public meeting the doors cannot be locked. After some discussion the meetings would remain as is.
- Cllr C Wills requested that a message is placed on social media advertising vacancies on the Parish Council. Cllr M Orwell to take this forward.
- The Chair raised the issue of parking outside Ten Mile Bank Village Hall. Cllr J Dix would raise it with the PCC.

193/23 To discuss Document Management Policy sent out prior to the meeting.

- The Clerk informed the meeting the amendments have been completed and thanked all the Councillors for their input and they are now ratified and will be

published in the coming weeks on the Parish Council website. The Clerk also raised through the Chair that the filing cabinets do need to be sifted and April was a good time after the completion of the AGAR and internal audit.

194/23 To discuss items for information for the social media pages.

- Nothing to place on the pages at the time of the meeting.

Agenda items for the next meeting

- Update on the D-Day 80 event.
- Update on the Water disconnection.
- Ten Mile Bank / Hilgay playing fields updates.
- Riverfield toilet block update

The date of the next meeting will be on

Thursday **4th of April 2024** at 7.00pm in Ten Mile Bank Village Hall.

161/23 Exclusion of Press and Public – To consider resolution under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

The Chair to ask for a proposer and Seconder to move this item.

Nothing to discuss.

The meeting closed at 20:46pm

Annex A to the minutes.

Meeting of Hilgay Parish Council at 3pm on the 6th of March 2024 at Ten Mile Bank Village Hall and then on to the school

Present:

Pete Mesher Chair

Colin Wills

Richard Munday

Julia Dix

Andy Greening

Marianne Orwell

Councillor Martin Storey

Chris Griggs - Estates Infrastructure/Portfolio Manager Norfolk Council

Rachel Lamb DEMAT

Meeting opened by PC Chair inviting Chris Griggs to update all present.

Schedule of actions:

- There will be a consultation to formally approve the process to begin amalgamation of TMB/Hilgay Schools.
- Followed by DEMAT's interest in TMB school to be handed back to Norfolk CC
- This will require updating with the land registry.
- The Secretary of State must give formal authorisation for and disposal of School facilities and accompanying land.
- Future use of the school building and playing field are at the very earliest stages of consideration,

Children's services will maintain the building and field for 12 months from the date of closure.

Decision

It will be for either Children's services to retain the school/field or hand over to corporate property team for commercial sale.

Should it go to the corporate property team, the school/field could be put up for auction to the highest bidder for possible re-development, housing was briefly mentioned as one possibility.

Councillor Wills interjected at this point with reasons why redevelopment would be undesirable to the community, and Councillor Dix also spoke about the detriment to the village of losing the school completely.

Chris Griggs continued-- Children's services are unlikely to use the school in its current form in the future due to the low numbers of children in the area, and the forecast of very few expected to be needing the school in the near future.

Rachel Lamb from DEMAT interjects at this point to advise of a possible 2 stage consideration, using the premises for some other form of education, or alternative use.

Councillor Wills made further comments regarding the school and its facilities, being more than able to be used for a variety of purposes.

Chair Pete Mesher raised the idea of the School and Playing field being treated as separate issues with the possibility of the field being leased on its own to the parish council, with retention of the access between School and field.

Chris Griggs felt this would not be an option as should the Children's services retain the school for any alternative use, then the field would need to remain part of the lease. However, if it is decided that there is no chance of the School being used for any form of education in the future then potentially the field might be considered for a separate lease.

Councillors Wills and Dix again spoke of the detriment to the village to lose the Field, emphasising how important it is as the village's only safe play area for the children.

Chris Griggs recapped the fact that once the Secretary of State gives permission, and children's services do not retain it, the building and land becomes a commercial decision for disposal and that the value is in both the building and land being available for sale together.

He felt that with the practicalities of all that needs to be done, getting to this point could be 2 years into the future.

Councillor Greening raised the possibility of there, being a trade off if the playing field goes to Corporate Properties to be sold off, where we 'acquire' a portion of the field to remain as a green space. Chris Griggs implied that it might have to be a cost land

value, but Councillor Greening felt that there might be a compromise to be had if it comes to it.

At this point Councillor Martin Storey Norfolk County Councillor spoke to advise that in his opinion there is a case for the school to be put to use as a SEN facility, bearing in mind at the moment the planned date of availability for the SEN facility in Downham market is not known, or if it will be of sufficient capacity for the community needs.

He advised that Ten Mile Bank put the case for the village to retain the field as a community asset, as the village has nothing else, and in fact should be able to keep both the building and the field. he emphasised that as Councillor he intends to fight for what's best for the village, he said the future must be considered and how important the school and field is to the community he would come down in favour of keeping it.

Further discussion round the room continued with a lean toward using the School as an SEN facility in tandem with the field, the field to continue use as it is for the village outside of school time, mention was made of the funds and Grant money set aside to replace and update all the play equipment, which is currently held in abeyance.

Chris Griggs advised that use of the field by the village can continue while decisions are being made, but that at the point DEMAT relinquishes the lease back to council control use of the field would then be stopped.

At this point, other possible uses for the building were mentioned,

- a) NHS hub for physio or other satellite healthcare
- b) Nursery or pre school
- c) Community Shop
- d) Possibility to house refugees
- e) Use by Retired People as a community hub.

Basically, it would be advertised, and applications invited for consideration.

It was mentioned again that as the Downham market SEN facility is some years away from becoming available that Ten Mile Bank would be the ideal solution.

Chris Griggs pointed out that at the end of the day it may well come down to simple profitability determining the fate of the school and land.

Martin Storey again pointed out the need for this green space to be retained and indicated that any planning application would be unlikely to be passed by planning. He also asked that both he and the Parish council were to be kept informed of every step of the decision-making process.

At this point the meeting ended, and all adjourned to the school to look at the building and grounds.

All agreed it was an ideal place for children to learn, and at the very least perfect for SEN children to have a safe and calm space.

Notes taken by Councillor M Orwell

Dated 06.03.2024.