

GREAT BLAKENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE PARISH ROOM, STOWMARKET ROAD ON WEDNESDAY 10th JULY 2013

PRESENT: A. Beckett, Mrs S Fairburn, P. McLauchlan, Mrs P Robinson, R. Simpson, County Councillor J Field and District Councillor M. Blakenham

1.7 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no questions.

2.7 REPORTS OF THE COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

County Councillor Field's report was circulated at the meeting.

Councillor M. Blakenham reported on the District Council's budget, Transformation Enquiry Groups, staff integration of the two Council's and gave an update regarding the tomato greenhouse project and that a planning application will be submitted to MSDC by the end of September. Councillor Blakenham did declare an interest in this item as he is one of the land owners.

3.7 REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY POLICE OFFICER

There was no report from the Police.

4.7 Apologies: None were received.

5.7 Declarations of interest appropriate to any item on the agenda – None were received.

6.7 MINUTES of the meeting of 12th June 2013 were approved and signed.

7.7 CO OPTION OF TWO PARISH COUNCILLORS

The Parish Council has two vacancies. Pursuant to the Local Government Act 1972 Section 85, Miss Loraine Martin was no longer a Parish Councillor due to failure to attend Parish Council business for six consecutive months and following the death of Mr Ron Edrupt.

Both vacancies had been advertised. It was agreed that Mrs Betty Edrupt be co-opted onto the Parish Council. Mrs Edrupt signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

There was still one vacancy.

8.7 WORKPLAN Councillors received an update on all outstanding issues.

The Chairman had received a letter from the Financial Ombudsman concerning the Council's complaint about Barclays Bank. The letter states that Barclays Bank are still unable to provide sufficient information regarding the access to online banking by Mr Hallett and therefore from the evidence provided they are unable to say for sure that Barclays made a mistake by giving Mr Hallett online banking access and will take no further action. They suggest that if the Parish Council wished to proceed with the complaint that they consider whether a court would be a more suitable place to continue the case against Barclays.

Mr Simpson was concerned that the matter should not be left and that he felt that the Parish Council should continue the complaint through the Small Claims Court. The Chairman was reluctant to follow this route due to the amount of time she had already spent on this over the last two years and her time spent in Court to convict Mr Hallett.

It was agreed that the matter should be pursued and that Mr McLauchlan would obtain the application forms to make a claim in the Small Claims Court and that these forms would be completed in conjunction with all members of the Parish Council to help ascertain the amounts to be claimed.

9.7 FINANCE

Monthly payments – It was agreed to sign cheques to the value of £3,642.54.

10.7 FUN DAY HELD ON SUNDAY 23RD JUNE 2013

The Chairman reported that the weather on the day had hampered some of the events, with high winds and rain, but felt it had been a good turnout despite this. She also raised concern that there was not enough support on the day to help run some of the activities and this put strain on those who had offered to assist.

The Clerk reported that £351.36 had been raised for the Council's two named charities. It was agreed that this be made up to £400 total and £200 be sent to Help for Heroes and East Anglia Air Ambulance.

A decision on whether to hold a Fun Day next year was not decided.

11.7 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

a. Village Hall Management Committee – The Chairman reported that she was concerned with how the Hall was being managed by Mr Lockwood and the Committee and had therefore resigned as Vice Chairman. The Parish Council are the Custodial Trustees of the Village Hall and this means the Parish Council is responsible for making sure the Hall is run within the laws of the Charity Commission for the benefits of the residents of Great Blakenham.

The Chairman highlighted a number of areas of concern where the running of the Hall falls short of good practice and is potentially illegal or unlawful, that the Parish Council has not received copies of minutes or approved accounts as they should as Custodial Trustees, the Parish Council holds no documents i.e. insurance, in case of a fire or other incident, Hall bookings are not available to Committee members and a booking form is not always completed and therefore no audit trail for bookings and resulting monies particularly as some bookings are paid in cash also blank cheques are being signed by the Chairman for completion by the Treasurer and this leaves the Hall vulnerable to fraud. There is concern over bookings that take place on a Saturday evening, in particular the Country and Western where no bookings are taken for a Friday or Saturday morning as the Hall is set up on a Friday afternoon, the allocation of keys for the building and obtaining these by Committee members if needed, the running of the Hall when Mr Lockwood is away, the membership of the Committee and voting rights.

Members of the Parish Council were extremely concerned that the Hall was being run this way and it was agreed that the Chairman seek legal advice on how to proceed and approach the Charity Commission with these concerns.

b. Viridor Liaison Meeting – The Chairman updated Councillors regarding the recent fire at the site and that the fire had been contained and remedial works were taking place. Viridor had received a number of complaints regarding the increase in seagulls. A new Manager for the site had been appointed.

Chairman

Date