

BIRCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Full Council on Wednesday 13th October 2021. The Meeting was held at 7.30 in Bircham Social Club.

Present: Cllrs G Daniels (Chairman), T Clark, D French, D Howell, S Langfield, B Mele, C Morley, M Sargent, J Royall.

Also present: Simon Bower (Clerk) and five Members of the Public.

1. Declarations of Interest (21/085)

- a) There were no declarations of interest from Cllrs. The Clerk noted he would leave for item 15.

2. Apologies for Absence (21/086)

- a) There were apologies for absence from Cllrs Carter and Hutchinson

3. Chairman's welcome and announcements (21/087)

- a) As Chairman, Cllr Daniels welcomed Simon Bower, and suggested he and Cllrs may like to introduce themselves. Each said a few words.

4. Minutes (21/088)

- a) The minutes of the meeting held on 8th September 2021, having been previously circulated, were accepted as a true record and duly signed.
- b) There were no matters arising from the above minutes.

5. Public Participation (21/089)

- a) Members of the Public spoke at length regarding the footpath booklet that had been proposed. They felt that the booklet might encourage more visitors, and objected to living in a "playground". They felt there would be no benefit to residents, and it would cause more parking problems. They requested to know exactly what was being proposed – a leaflet for residents as well as visitors, showing three circular routes of varying lengths. It was also noted that Docking had a very active walking group, of which one was a member, and there was no need to "spell out" details as there was already enough information available. Cllrs and public engaged in a dialogue – Cllr Clark noting that this was a chance to present positive aspects of the Parish, demonstrating collective pride. Comparisons were made to issues at Brancaster – Cllr Royall noted Bircham was not on the Coast, and the leaflets would be useful to newcomers, while noting she did not want crowds. Speeding was raised, and Cllr Daniels noted a meeting on 1st November; Council would take note of all comments. Councillors' attention was drawn to comments on the Village Facebook page, mentioning expense – Clerk noted it was unlikely to cost more than £500. Cllr Morley noted that visitors supported

Signed:

(Chairman) Date: 10/11/2021

commercial activity, allowing it to continue throughout the year; speeding was mainly due to through traffic; though "Norfolk is too popular" was an argument, increased income was a good thing, enhancing the Parish's "clout" with County and Borough; some things (e.g. the working Windmill) already attracted visitors. A resident commented on the deterioration of quality of life in 44 years in the Parish. Cllr French noted that one could not please everybody; the TROD was not being used safely; it was Council's job to promote the Village and that times had changed, many villages were being denuded of services. On cost, Cllr Daniels noted that this would be negligible as sponsorship was already on offer; she noted that it would be useful to have the views of other parishioners, and it was important to inform Council of views via the Clerk or at meetings; things were all on the agenda.

6. Reports (21/090)

- a) Bircham in Bloom – Cllr Daniels reported that a meeting the previous week had been well-attended including several new people. There had been discussion of raised beds, using railway sleepers. Having done work on the Pond and by the Shop, work was now suggested on the Docking and Snettisham roads. Questions were asked about durability, and there were suggestions that fewer might be better, and that beds were preferable. It was noted that Highways would need to approve works on the edges of roads – Clerk to approach. As the conversation was now moving into the territory of the In Bloom Group, Clerk suggested that an informal agreement that Council would consider funding – around £800 - could help the Group form a plan to be put to Council, at a later date, at which formal approval could be given. Such informal consensus was evident.
- b) County Councillor – No report.
- c) Borough Councillor – Cllr Morley reminded Cllrs of his attempts to meet with the CITB; the new CEO was in place, but he had heard nothing so far which was unsatisfactory; it might not be at the top of the BC agenda. The QEH bid was in, but there was no more news – a new hospital on the same site seemed the preferred option. The new leadership team at the Borough seemed less focused on King's Lynn, e.g. with assistance to the Princess Theatre in Hunstanton, and help with issues at Downham Market Town Council, where security had been need at a recent meeting. On climate change the Borough had received £3.8m to decarbonise – a video on what was being done had been sent to the COP26 meeting. Air source and solar heating was being encouraged, e.g. at the Oasis. The cost nationwide would be "a fortune". He expressed concern at grants for disabled facilities being triaged, and that some projects would miss out. Lord Dannatt had been appointed head of the Norfolk Flood Alliance, which was proposing changes to management of the River Burn. Track and Trace was still in place [to the surprise of many present]. On funding he now had a Borough Cllr spending

pot which could provide £150 to the Village – there was discussion of using Borough CIL money for Village works.

- d) Clerk – The Clerk thanked Cllrs for their confidence in him. He noted that he was catching up with things, but that full financial reports were not yet available.

7. Planning (21/091)

- a) There were no planning applications to consider.
b) There was concern expressed at a new access on the Docking Road, in case this encouraged further such access at other sites. Clerk to contact Docking Clerk for information. Information about a Borough Council planning update had been circulated.

8. Finance (21/092)

- a) Financial Report – as above, no report.
b) Expenditure was agreed as follows: £700 to Malcolm Paige (two years' invoices) and £100 to Clerk (while awaiting full PAYE set-up).
The Clerk outlined the advantages of online banking, for which, with Barclays, he would be required to be a signatory. Some adjustments would be required to Standing Orders &/or Financial Regulations to allow this. It was noted that using cheques could continue, but it would give access to up to date information to all signatories, being a powerful tool for Cllrs to monitor the accounts.
c) Council agreed to the Clerk being a signatory on Parish accounts.
d) Council agreed to pursue online banking.

9. Highways (21/093)

- a) A question was asked about the visit of the Rangers. Clerk to pursue.

10. Delegated decisions (21/094)

- a) No decisions had been taken under relevant schemes of delegation.

11. Other items for consideration (21/095)

- a) Council agreed a £25 donation, under s.137, to the Poppy Appeal, allowing the purchase of a wreath.
b) Council dates for the remainder of this Council Year were agreed as: Jan 12th, Feb 9th, Mar 23rd, May 11th (annual Meeting of Council). It was noted a brief financial EGM might be needed to discuss budget and precept in December.
c) Other meetings were confirmed/announced as follows:
a. November 1st, 10.30am – Public meeting on speeding with Police and Highways (Social Club).
b. November 4th, 9.30am – Bircham in Bloom meeting (Café)
c. November 5th, 10am – Village Walk around/asset review (meet at South sign)
d. November 10th, 7.30pm – Full Council (Social Club)

- d) Council agreed a subscription to Parish Online (digital mapping).
- e) Having received the requested documentation, Council agreed to the donation of £250, under s.137, to the Great Massingham Car Scheme being made.

12. Other items for discussion (21/096)

- a) Cllr Royall referred to parking, and maintenance thereof, at the Social Club. There was a discussion around this. The Social Club had to rewire the building at a cost of £9,800, and it was unclear whether the Club or Sandringham were responsible for the Car Park – Cllr Daniels would write to establish the position. Once that was clear, whether the PC should/could be involved could be a future agenda item – if it were to be, this might an appropriate proposal for Borough general CIL funding. Also arising from this discussion was the problem with vehicles using Church Lane and not being able to turn – Clerk to see if “Great Bircham” might be added to the street nameplate. It was noted that the blue bin on the sports field had gone – Clerk to see if this was contractual.

13. Correspondence (21/097)

- a) There was no correspondence to report that had not already been forwarded to Cllrs. Clerk asked Cllrs to advise on how much correspondence they wished to receive, and how.

14. Private session (21/098)

- a) It was agreed to close the meeting to public and press, under relevant legislation and standing orders. The Public and Clerk left the room.
- b) Council considered the Clerk’s terms and conditions. The NALC/SLCC model contract was agreed, with pay at scale point 26, and LGPS Pension (commencing on 20/12/21).

The meeting ended at 9.12pm.