

BIRCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Full Council on Wednesday 24th July 2024. The Meeting was held at 7.30 in Bircham Social Club.

Present: Cllrs H Rayner (Chairman), T Clark, G Daniels, M Durrant, R Hutchinson, C Morley, L Palmer, P Spake

Also present, Simon Bower (Clerk) and approximately six Members of the Public.

1. Declarations of Interest (24/075)

- a) There were declarations of interest regarding proximity to the Playing Field (Cllrs Clark, Daniels and Rayner) and from Cllr Rayner ref Cricket Club membership.

2. Apologies for Absence (24/076)

- a) There were apologies for absence from Cllr French.

3. Chairman's welcome and announcements (24/077)

- a) Cllr Rayner welcomed those present.

4. Minutes (24/078)

- a) *The minutes of the meeting held on 12th June 2024, having been previously circulated, were accepted as a true record and duly signed.*
- b) There were no matters arising from the above minutes.

5. Co-option of Members (24/079)

- a) Jane Kemsley and Mike Hardiman were invited to speak for a short time on why they sought co-option to Council. They did so, after which there was a brief discussion on the co-option process, touching on the Policy – Cllrs were reminded when and how Policies could be changed. *Cllr Morley proposed that both Cllrs be co-opted, and this was agreed by consensus.* Cllrs Hardiman and Kemsley signed their Declarations of Acceptance of Office and joined other Cllrs.

6. Public Participation (24/080)

- a) Members of the Public raised the subject of flooding on Church Lane – to be covered later in agenda.

7. Reports (24/081)

- a) County Councillor – an email report had been received along with apologies for absence – to be circulated to Cllrs. Any salient points to be added to Bircham Times.
- b) Borough Councillor – Cllr Morley noted that County had voted to reject the proposed devolution plan. Health Minister was looking at hospital programme

Signed:

(Chairman) Date: 4/9/24

– uncertainty over status of QEH replacement. He also referred to Borough Council finances, and uncertainty over funding to District-level Authorities and the £20M grant promised. 36 of 259 homes in Bircham would be subject to the second home premium, and around 5,000 homes in NW Norfolk would receive 100% reduction in Council Tax.

c) Clerk – none not elsewhere on agenda.

8. Planning (24/082)

a) No Planning Applications had been received, and no other matters to report.

9. Finance (24/083)

a) Financial Report – The Clerk apologised for delay in accounts (presented at meeting). Balances (at end of August) would be c.£32.5K, though some invoices would inevitably come in – delegated authority in place to allow for payment of these with no August meeting. He went through budget lines (none of which were of concern), noting: External Audit would be around £400 (Electors' Rights period had ended); defibrillator line was high as battery rather than pads required (cheque – cancelled - from June in error excluded VAT and he sought expenses claim to cover the full cost); In Bloom spending (cones – H&S) was from ring-fenced reserve funds, rather than a budget line; Kompan to be pursued over inspection reports; a request from the Community Car Scheme would be on next agenda. Dog Bin charges were questioned¹. Cllr Rayner confirmed bank balances matched figures presented.

b) Expenditure, as listed below was agreed.

10. Highways (24/084)

- a) Noted that reports of hedges etc. should be to Highways as they had authority and powers to recharge.
- b) A report prepared by Cllr Rayner on legal and flooding issues on the Playing Field was gone through in detail, with questions and comments. It was agreed that something must be done. Matters raised included, among others: timing of renewal of lease, inclusion or not of the lane to the Field, engagement of professional surveyor, loss of a drain in Church Lane (and capacity/state/cleaning schedule of current drains), surface water remaining. Clerk to write as appropriate, consulting Cllrs.
- c) Clerk noted that streetlights needed a survey every five years. This would enable a revised asset list which would enable a new maintenance contract to be agreed (though this would likely not cover current faults). It appeared that the energy bills had not been amended at the time of conversion to LED lamps. Council agreed a survey of Streetlights at a cost of £15per lamp, by TT Jones. Clerk then to advise current energy suppliers of new ratings, and only then to pursue possible overpaid amounts from the past.

¹ For info – 5 dog bins at £1.83 per weekly empty before VAT.

- d) Clerk reminded Cllrs of Parish Partnership funding; any projects using this needed to be agreed at/by October meeting, to enable deadline to be met.

11. Delegated decisions (24/085)

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

12. Other items for consideration (24/086)

- a) None.

13. Other items for discussion (24/087)

- a) Cllr Spake had emailed a document on car parking on the Playing Field. As not all had received, he went through some of his concerns. There was a long discussion involving most Cllrs. It was agreed that an informal meeting of interested Cllrs should be arranged to gather evidence and ideas. Meanwhile Clerk to investigate with NCC possibility of occasional use of School car park.

14. Correspondence (24/088)

- a) None mentioned.

15. Next Meeting (24/089)

- a) The next meeting was confirmed as 7.30pm on Wednesday, September 4th 2024 at the Social Club.

16. Private session (24/090)

- a) It was agreed to close the meeting to public and press, under relevant legislation and standing orders. [Public left.]
- b) Cllrs noted the resignation of the Clerk w.e.f. 12/9/24. He indicated that this could be extended on a "what was required" basis should a successor not be in place. Various requirements were agreed – post to be noted in Newsletter, new Job Description approved, deadline of 19th August for applications, short listing by Personnel Group (including Cllr Durrant), ideally appointment to be recommended at and made at September meeting, contract to be agreed at that meeting.

The Meeting ended at c.9.50pm

Expenditure:

Inv Date	To	For	Gross	VAT	Budget
	Defib - CANCELLED	Defibrillator	£0.00		n/a
1/7/24	ECS	Computer - jul	£24.60	£4.10	EXP
25/6/24	Npower	Streelights power - final	£88.38	£4.21	SLP
23/6/24	Richard Ellis	Expenses - Amazon - cones	£49.99	£0.00	BiB
18/7/24	Simon Bower	Expenses - Defibrillator	£346.80	£57.80	DEF
18/6/24	Kompan	Inspection	£120.00	£20.00	PLS
31/7/24	Salaries incl tax	Salary – jul	£495.30	£0.00	CKS
30/8/24	Salaries incl tax - approx	Salary - aug	£495.30	£0.00	CKS

Signed:

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