

# RYBURGH

Parish Council

## *DRAFT MINUTES*

2<sup>nd</sup> October 2024

# RYBURGH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes for the meeting held on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2024 at 7pm at the Memorial Hall, Great Ryburgh.

**Present:-** Cllr Chris Weston (Chairman), Cllr Christopher Buxton (Vice-Chair), Cllr Glenn McCarthy and Cllr Henry Palmer.

**Clerk/RFO:-** Phil Chapman

**Members of the Public:-** 1 member of the public was present

## MINUTES

### 1. To consider apologies for absence.

Apologies were noted from Cllr. Rebecca Kelly and Cllr. Luke Merchant due to work and family commitments. Apologies were also received from Cllr. S.Aquerone and from Cllr.M.Hankins.

### 2. Declarations of interest. None.

### 3. Minutes.

It was noted that although the minutes are an accurate record of the business conducted, *Appendix 1* contains a written report from District Councillor Mike Hankins which differs from those supplied to neighbouring councils and the “*Conflict of Interest*” section was not mentioned when the report was summarised verbally. The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2024 were **agreed** as a true record of proceedings (pages 1-6). The Chairman signed the minutes.

### 4. Matters arising from previous minutes.

#### 4.1. Update on Online Banking.

No authorisation for Clerk yet. Cllr Kelly’s authorisation has had to be resubmitted.

#### 4.2. Update on copies of Map of the Parish and approve any expenditure.

Ryburgh Parish Council is a member of the Public Sector Geospatial Agreement (PSGA) which allows use and copying of the maps. Chairman has downloaded further resources. **ACTION POINT:- Chairman will continue working on the project as time allows, and report back to the Council.**

#### 4.3. Update on door modifications on Great Ryburgh Playing Field Shed being managed by Cllr. Buxton.

Due to time and work issues the volunteer has been unable to undertake the work promised, but Councillors would continue to work with the volunteer to see if it can still be accomplished with volunteer labour.

#### 4.4. Update on Parish Council Facebook page set up.

Cllr Kelly and Cllr Buxton have been working on setting this up, and will continue to do so. **ACTION POINT:- Cllrs to continue and report at next meeting.**

#### 4.5. Update on any other matters from minutes not on agenda.

### 5. Public Participation.

One member of the public spoke:-.

- 5.1. One member of the public questioned if the council could put more detailed information regarding its finances on the website. The chair mentioned that the AGAR contains all the statutory information and is published on the website.
- 5.2. The Playing Field is parts of the Tesco Blue tokens for the next three months, so can members of the public please support this.
- 5.3. The Memorial Hall has received a grant from the ASDA foundation including funding for the front door, which is welcome news. The floor needs work.
6. **To receive Councillors Reports.**
- 6.1. **Norfolk County Councillor (NCC). S.Aquerone.**  
Report received at *Appendix 1*.
- 6.2. **North Norfolk District Council (NNDC). M.Hankins.**  
Report received at *Appendix 2*.
7. **Planning.**
- 7.1. **To consider and respond to planning applications received.**  
*Hollybush Lodge.* (Application Number PF/24/1980 - Station Road, Great Ryburgh). The Council considered the application, and **resolved** to record that it had no objections.
- 7.2. **Update on planning matters refused or approved by NNDC.**  
None.
- 7.3. **Update and consider any necessary action with regards to planning enforcement issues or planning appeals.**  
None
8. **Highways.**
- 8.1. **Update regarding implementation of Restricted Traffic Order.**  
Signs had been erected the previous Saturday and restrictions are therefore now in force.
- 8.2. **To consider issues with: potholes, hedge cutting, verge cutting, Damaged, dirty signs, and similar.**  
Councillors discussed road flooding and incorrect signage regarding weak bridge, which had been put in the wrong place.  
**ACTION POINT:- Chair to contact Farm Manager at Sennowe Estates regarding flooding.**  
**ACTION POINT:- Cllr. Buxton to photograph the suspected incorrectly placed signage.**
- 8.3. **To consider suitable projects for the Parish Partnership Scheme including but not limited to:-**
- 8.3.1. Village Gate.
- 8.3.2. Zebra Crossing.
- 8.3.3. 20 mph speed limit.
- 8.3.4. Bridge Farm footpath safety improvements.
- Councillors debated the potential schemes and **resolved** to pursue item 8.3.4 at the next meeting.

## 9. General.

### 9.1. ***Discuss and agree actions regarding Parish Councillor vacancies.***

The Council has three vacancies. Councillors had asked around, but no-one had contacted the Chair or Clerk to express interest. It was **resolved** to post on Facebook and for the Clerk to create a poster to raise awareness.

### 9.2. ***Discuss and agree actions regarding W.I. Bench [w3w: referral.roost.rail] and any other benches in need of replacement or refurbishment, including approval of expenditure.***

The Clerk and Cllr. Buxton had removed and made safe the W.I. bench earlier in the day. They also inspected the adjacent Jubilee bench and considered it safe. Councillors discussed options and **resolved** to replace the W.I. bench with something in keeping with the area and the other bench – ideally metal ends.

**ACTION POINT:- Cllr. Buxton to measure the pad and the remains of the bench to ensure that the replacement will fit.**

**ACTION POINT:- Seek quotes for metal ended slightly larger benches.**

### 9.3. ***Update, discuss and consider additional Dog bin provisions including approval of expenditure.***

There had still been no response from NNDC about the multiple queries regarding the contract raised months earlier.

It has been reported that since dogs have been allowed on the playing field, dog waste is being placed in the general bin in close proximity to children, which is a concern. It has been requested that an additional bin be provided near the entrance. One member of the public has written to the Council to request that we do not spend on additional bins. Cllr. Buxton volunteered to count, number and record the locations all dog bins in the parish in order to establish if there are two in close proximity such that an existing bin could be moved, or if an additional bin is needed.

**ACTION POINT:- Cllr. Buxton to report his findings at the next meeting so it can be debated and decided.**

**ACTION POINT:- Clerk to investigate costs of replacement bins so the Council can consider and approve expenditure if needed.**

### 9.4. ***Update regarding Fuel Allotment.***

No discussion has taken place. The Council is seeking clarification regarding its responsibilities, and is seeking to understand arrangements, the lease and how it can best support the trustees. The Council is increasingly concerned that the Council records in respect to the Fuel Allotment are not up to date. It was **resolved** to ask the Clerk to write to the chair of the trustees to request copies of the lease, trust document, and anything else relevant to assist the Parish Council in its record keeping and in the understanding of its position.

**ACTION POINT:- Clerk to write to trustees.**

### 9.5. ***To consider and agree transfer of Bottle Bank operation to appropriate village organisation.***

The Clerk had prepared a report for the September 2024 meeting. It was **resolved** to transfer operation of the bottle bank to the Memorial Hall/Playing Field. The

Clerk is to make the final claim and advise the Memorial Hall/Playing Field of contact details for emptying and making claims.

**9.6. To discuss and consider progress on forming a steering group for the Memorial Hall and 2025 VE Day Commemorations.**

The Chair has drafted a letter, which was circulated during the meeting. Edits and suggestions for amendments were sought from Councillors for other groups who might be included. **ACTION POINT:- Chair will distribute the revised letter.**

**9.7. Update and agree expenditure for Council Training arrangements.**

It was **resolved** to allocate £45 from the training budget for each councillor to **book their own course** from NALC or from NPTS (links distributed to councillors previously). It was noted that the Clerks ongoing training would need to be built into the new budget, and the Council confirmed that it is happy to financially support this important training.

**9.8. Consider and approve amendment to Standing Orders.**

Both the Standing Orders and Financial regulations are out of date, and need updating. This is quite a large job and it is anticipated to have these ready for consideration and potential approval at the next meeting.

**10. Finance**

**10.1. Report regarding reconciliation.**

The person responsible for bank account reconciliation was absent from the meeting. All three Cllrs with bank access were able to confirm for the meeting that the bank balance was as expected, and that only payments approved at the previous meeting had been paid out of the account. The second half of the precept had been paid the day before. For the purposes of the minutes Cllr. Buxton confirmed he had personally checked every payment himself.

**10.2. To consider historic 2023 invoice for grass cutting just received.**

An invoice from 2022/23 had been received. Councillors confirmed that the work had indeed been undertaken. Cllr. Buxton further confirmed that having checked the bank statements it had **not** been previously paid for. It was **resolved** to pay the invoice. Clerks Report at Appendix 3.

**10.3. To consider and agree adoption of the grant application form, and authorise chair to sign the grant awarding policy, with amendments.**

It was **resolved** to amended by removing the restrictions on when applications can be submitted contained within the Grant Awarding Policy. It was also **resolved** to adopt the new associated application form. Both documents were circulated in advance and will be published on the website. Appendix 4 contains the Clerks Report.

**10.4. To consider and approve the following payments.**

|                                                          |         |        |
|----------------------------------------------------------|---------|--------|
| Country Style Recycling (glass collection)               | 1203152 | 21.00  |
| John Bailey – 2023 Grass Cutting (approved at item 10.2) | ---     | 320.00 |

It was unanimously **agreed** to approve the payments above

**10.5. To note the following regular pre-approved payments.**

10.5.1.N Power – not received when agenda prepared.

10.5.2.Clerks wages – The Clerks wages were noted.

**10.6. To consider and approve any payment request received since preparation of the agenda.**

|                      |         |
|----------------------|---------|
| Memorial Hall Hire   | £132.00 |
| NALC Payroll service | £ 76.80 |

It was unanimously **agreed** to approve the payments above

**11. To note any correspondence received.**

11.1. Stibbard Parish Council has agreed to pay half the cleaning bill for the bus shelter.

11.2. Playing Field funding request. Following the adoption of the grant form, the Council requests that a formal grant application be submitted.

**12. To note items for the next agenda.**

This will include budget matters, and particularly consideration of the precept.

**13. To consider and confirm the date of the next meeting.**

The next meeting will be held on **November 27th 2024**, and the anticipated following meeting **8<sup>th</sup> January 2025**.

The meeting was closed at **20:53**.

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## ***DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN THESE MINUTES***

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1. *Appendix 1:-* Cllr Steff Aquarone Report (Norfolk County Council).
2. *Appendix 2:-* Cllr Hankins Report (North Norfolk District Council).
3. *Appendix 3:-* Clerks Report: Historic Invoice.
4. *Appendix 4:-* Clerks Report: Grant Awarding Policy and Form.
5. *Appendix 5:-* Clerks Report: Standing Orders & Financial.

**The Grant Form and Policy will be added to the website.**

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## **APPENDIX 1:- CLLR STEFF AQUARONE REPORT (NCC)**

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### **Report from your County Councillor, Cllr Steffan**

**Aquarone** [steffanaquarone@gmail.com](mailto:steffanaquarone@gmail.com) | 07879 451608



**September 2024**

I am delighted to have been elected as the MP for North Norfolk, and want to take this opportunity to thank every resident - whether you voted for me or not - and assure you that I am committed to working for everyone in our community.

In light of my continued service as your County councillor, I would like to update you on two key reasons for my intention to remain in this post until after Christmas:

**Benjamin Court Campaign:** the campaign regarding the reablement facilities at Benjamin Court continues in earnest. As many will know, I am utilising an unique mechanism available to me as a county councillor, known as a "Member's Call for Action". I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who provided anecdotal or experiential evidence to support this case.

The focus of this effort is on the decision to cease reablement services without public consultation. If the Member's Call for Action is successful, the decision to will effectively be nullified.

**Footpaths Toolkit:** Another ongoing project, which I've written about previously, is the Footpath Toolkit to help local communities establish more circular walks in their areas. It was voted through at Full Council a few months ago, and since then, I have been working with officers to develop the next iteration of the Parish Paths Information Pack. My goal is to ensure that the new version is as user-friendly, practical, and operational as possible.

Having worked on these two projects and continued to fulfill my duties as Member Chair of the Care Leavers' Subgroup of the Corporate Parenting Board, I will then tender my resignation from the County Council. I remain committed to all constituents throughout this period. As ever, please don't hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance: [steffanaquarone@gmail.com](mailto:steffanaquarone@gmail.com) or 07879 451608.

**Email:** [steffanaquarone@gmail.com](mailto:steffanaquarone@gmail.com) **Tel:** 07879 451608

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## ***APPENDIX 2:- CLLR HANKINS REPORT (NNDC)***

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### **Housing Development.**

The planning Policy and Built Heritage working party, which I chair, are in the process of examining the proposed recommendations to the planned increase in housing development, put forward by the independent planning inspector.

This plan identifies Ryburgh as a potential small growth village, I will be interested in your comments.

The clerk kindly provided me with a copy of the village plan, and the Neighbourhood plan, which was prepared in 2017, given the passage of time and some of the developments that have occurred since, it may be time to revisit the plan.

### **Planning Approval.**

The system has been overhauled leading to improvements in both the validation standards for pre application advice and a standardised call in procedure, that facilitates members to scrutinise officers' decisions, through the development committee.

### **106 Agreement.**

A question was raised at the September meeting regarding the application of this agreement to the recent planning application submitted by Crisp Matings.

NNDC do not have a Community Infrastructure Levy or the new intended levy, preferring s 106 because spending is more local to the site creating the funding in the first place, CIL funds can be deployed anywhere in the district which creates more complaints.

The Director of Planning has advised that there is no provision for planning authorities to give Parish and Districts a part of any fees received to support them in resourcing up to reply to planning applications.

This is in a similar manner to the fact that we don't give Norfolk County or other consultees payment for them replying on highways or other matters.

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### **APPENDIX 3:- CLERKS REPORT - HISTORIC INVOICE**

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**Date:-** 1/10/24

**Subject:-** Historic Invoice

On the 18<sup>th</sup> September 2024 we received an invoice from John Bailey for grass cutting and maintenance for 2023. Mr.Bailey admits this is very late and unhelpfully for the council it is for the previous financial year.

Since this relates to a time before the current council you must all be totally satisfied that:-

- it is genuine,
- is for work that was contracted
- is for work that was completed
- has not already been paid

In attempting to answer these questions I reached out to a previous Councillor who was mentioned in the contractor's email as his usual contact. The email response I have is as follows:-

*"This 2023 service invoice is in accordance with Mr Bailey's quotation dated 18.01.23, approved by RPC and order placed 27.02.23. The work was completed as required."*

Although we are very grateful to receive confirmation from a previous councillor, it is for the current council to decide. The quote and the approval for the work is **not** minuted as far as I can see in 2023. Equally unhelpfully at that time the council did not minute payments much of the time. Searching the laptop I can find payments to Mr.Bailey for bridge and path cutting £75, dated 30/8/23, which appears to have been paid on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2023, and was an agenda and minuted item (Item 8f September 2023). The asset register dated November 2023 does reference a contract with Mr.Bailey for care and maintenance (specifically mentioning the war memorial), but I have not found that contract, and have not been able to verify from our laptop or paper files the quotation, approval or order.

#### **OPTIONS**

1. Pay the invoice
2. Pay the invoice subject to verification it has not already been paid
3. Do not pay the invoice
4. Ask for more supporting information if you are not satisfied and defer to next meeting

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Provided the Councillors are all happy that the work was completed, and provided that the banking shows it has not already been paid then this should be authorised. The Council could choose to make this conditional upon double checking that a payment has not already been made from the bank if this cannot be done before the meeting. It could also be conditional upon obtaining supporting information or it could be deferred to the next meeting pending further investigation or confirmation, if the councillors are not sufficiently and totally satisfied about this transaction/contract.

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## **APPENDIX 4:- CLERKS REPORT – GRANT AWARDING**

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**Date:-** 29/9/24

**Subject:-** Grant Application Form & Policy

### **FORM.**

The Council recently adopted a grant application policy, but I was not supplied with a copy. The document that I have found states that a form must be completed, but none was with the Policy. I have therefore adapted one and it is attached. I also seek confirmation that the document attached is the correct policy which was adopted so it can be published on the website. It should be signed by chair and clerk.

The form supplied contains most of the information which is usually requested for the awarding of grants. Having a form allows any applications to be treated equally, and simplifies consideration by Councillors.

### **OPTIONS.**

1. Adopt the form as is.
2. Adopt the form with alterations/amendments .
3. Reject the Form and seek alternative form.
4. Reject the form and remove requirement from the policy, asking for submissions in writing.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

A form is listed as required in the policy, and therefore one should be adopted. This seems to be thorough and fair but not excessively burdensome.

### **POLICY.**

The Policy calls for submission within two time windows – i.e. grant applications can only be considered twice per year. It would seem to me that this is unnecessarily restrictive. For a body receiving large numbers of requests, this would appear a proportionate policy but for a small parish council it seems restrictive and could delay the awarding of grants by a considerable period.

### **OPTIONS.**

1. Leave the Policy as is.
2. Remove the limitations entirely.
3. Tie applications to the budget/precept setting time of year.
4. Something else.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Remove the restrictions entirely and deal with applications as they are submitted.

***Note:- Policy and Form will be added to the website.***

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## APPENDIX 5:- CLERKS REPORT: STANDING ORDERS & FINANCIAL REGS

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**Date:-** 30/9/24

**Subject:-** Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

The Council meetings are undertaken subject to rules which are in the 21 page document on the council website entitled: **Councils Standing Orders**. The current standing orders were adopted in 2019, and are scheduled for review in October 2024. There are some issues with the standing orders which do not make sense in places because they have been adopted from standard template orders where some of the options have not been selected (section 2c as an example), and some have empty brackets, which should have numbers inserted. They are also derived from an older version.

The Standing Orders were also titled as Scottow Parish Council until I changed it recently.

All Councillors should take the time to read and be familiar with standing orders and with the financial regulations.

The financial regulations also need updating as they state at section 6.3 *"The Clerk is the sole signatory for online payments and may also make payments by cheque, if approved by the Council."* And were also adopted in 2019 with a scheduled review for 2023, which does not appear to have been conducted. They are also an older version.

**The last meeting at the start of September had a heavy agenda and the meeting lasted around two and three quarter hours. Standing Orders state at section 2x, that the meeting should last no longer than 2 hours. This does not invalidate any decisions made.**

I intend to carry out a full review of the Standing Orders and of Financial Regulations to correct and update. I have not been able to do that in time for the October meeting, although I have blank template versions of both. **I intend to present the current up to date versions of both at the next meeting for consideration.**

In respect to section 2x S.O.'s the Council can decide what time period it wants for meetings and has several options:-

### **OPTIONS**

1. Leave it as it is. The chair or any councillor can propose a motion at 2 hours to suspend standing order 2x.
2. Remove it entirely and remain silent on the subject.
3. Alter it so that it reads something along the lines of *"A meeting shall not exceed a period of 2 hours, but may at the discretion of the chairman be extended by an additional half hour"* OR ELSE *"A meeting shall not exceed a period of 2 hours unless the members resolve to extend the meeting by no more than 30 minutes"*
4. Something else.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Having discussed it with other Clerks, option 3 seems to be a good solution, as it focuses attention on the time. If absolutely necessary for a longer meeting the S.O.'s can still be suspended by motion.

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