

NOCTON PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Parish: Mr S R Baxter JPMIFA ADPS ADIP Email: clerk@noctonparishcouncil.gov.uk Tel: 0781 444 3058

FULL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Nocton Hub, Nocton

07 September 2021

MINUTES

Present:

Councillors: Cllr. M. Clarke (Acting Council Chair), Cllr. G. McDonnell, Cllr. N. Faulkner

Subsequently Cllr. G. Kempster

Clerk and RFO: Mr S Baxter

Members of the public: 35 plus District Cllrs Laura Pearson and Peter Lundgren (NKDC)

Meeting commenced at 6pm

AGENDA ITEMS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. The Chair's welcome to all Councillors and any members of the public sitting in observation and opening remarks.

The Chair welcomed all persons present, including the District Councillors from the NKDC. He reminded all the attendees the meeting is being recorded (with the recording kept for 12 months) and also the social distancing requirements for the Nocton Hub.

The Chair stated that upon review of the Standing Orders which stated that the questions from the public should be before the start of the meeting. Thus the agenda point would be moved to the start of the meeting.

Upon a request from the District Councillors present, the Chair decided that the agenda point in regard to the District Council report would be moved to after the questions from the public.

2. Questions or statements from the community

There were the following questions and statements:

- a) A statement was made that the person had lost faith in the Council and felt the Councillors were out of their depth. The Councillors should consider their position.

Council reply: The Chair stated that there were still vacancies on the Council and that if the person or the community thought they could do better they should put their names forward. Alternatively, if the Community wishes to hold an informal petition, they are entitled to do so and the Council will review.

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- b) A statement was made on Risk Management: The person stated that the Council had a large deficit and there was some budget issues which is coming from an overspend. This may result in the Council asking for a higher precept next year which the Council needed to be aware.

Council reply: The Clerk stated that the Council was aware of the financial situation and the Council was reviewing the budget made by the previous administration.

- c) A question and statement were made on the Council capability: The statement was that the Council had lost three members of the Council which included most of the members of the Finance Committee. How does the Council fill the vacancies and new capabilities?

Council reply: The Chair stated that there had been two elections which had been held without any persons putting their name forward. He reiterated that there were still vacancies on the Council and that if the person or the community thought they could do better they should put their names forward

- d) A question was raised about the Council's environmental approach: The question was stated that if the Council wanted to join in reducing the environmental issue, why did they hire a Clerk who lives over 60 miles away and thus causing pollution in the driving?

Council reply: The Chair stated that best candidate was hired and that when they hired the current clerk they did consider the cost of travel but felt it was the best for the council.

Note: This member of the community made an inaccurate, inflammatory and abhorrent statement about the clerk which was false. The member of the community did not withdraw the statement although subsequently did apologise and withdraw the comment admitting they got it wrong.

- e) A question was raised about what the Council was doing currently and the beck issues: The member of the community stated that she felt the Council needed to do better – especially in regard to ensuring more articles in the Limespring and that the Council needed to manage the beck clearing.

Council reply: The Chair stated that all Council information was on the Council website and that agendas were also published on the Council noticeboard. In regard to the Limespring, he acknowledged that the article may have been needed to be clearer and that he would ensure the following month's article would be more detailed. The Chair stated that the beck managing responsibility lay with the District Council.

- f) A statement was made about the probation of the Clerk – should the Council consider the position of the Clerk.

Council reply: The Chair stated that the Council have confidence in their Clerk.

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- g) A question was asked about the Clerk's use of the laptop and if it was a Council laptop why was it not on the asset register?

Council reply: The Clerk confirmed that it was his own personal laptop and thus was not needed to be added to the asset register.

- h) A statement was made about the Council's duty of care towards its employees. The person stated that it was felt that the Council did not undertake its role in regard to duty of care to a previous employee who was ill.

3. Apologies for absence from Councillors – to agree the reasons for absence (if any)

There were no apologies as all Councillors were in attendance.

4. Declarations of interest – for the Council to note including dispensations presented to the Clerk

The Clerk confirmed that no declarations had been received from the Councillors.

5. Co-option application of Mr Graham Kempster – discussion and decision of Council

The Clerk stated that the council had received an application from a member of the local community who wished to be considered for co-option onto the Parish Council.

- *Motion to formally co-opt MR GRAHAM KEMPSTER onto the Parish Council to fill the vacancy left by Mr Duff was proposed by Cllr. McDonnell, seconded by the Cllr. Faulkner and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.*

MR GRAHAM KEMPSTER WAS AT THAT POINT FORMALLY INVITED TO JOIN THE PARISH COUNCILLORS AND THE CLERK CONFIRMED THAT HE WOULD FROM THAT POINT BE ELIGIBLE TO DISCUSS AND VOTE ON COUNCIL MOTIONS.

He subsequently signed the Declaration of Acceptance.

6. Motion to exclude members of press and public from participation but able to view the meeting

The Chair stated would under his discretion still allow comments from attendees when it was felt it would be helpful to the meeting.

- *Motion to exclude the members of the public and press from participation but allow them to view the meeting was proposed by Cllr. McDonnell, seconded by the Chair and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.*

For the following agenda points members of the public will be asked to remain silent but will be able to remain to watch.

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7. District & County Councillor Council report

The District Councillors for the area, Cllr L Pearson and Cllr P Lundgren were present. They have previously sent a report which was published on the website. The main points stated were:

- The District Councillors are there to help the community and Nocton is an important part of their constituency. They will contact the Council to offer help.
- They confirmed Mr Nick Byatt had resigned from his role of District Councillor with immediate effect
- The Community Plan Consultation had closed but the community was encouraged to see any comments which would be reviewed
- They admitted the Plan was confusing and a lot of areas had been rejected
- Huge pressure to deliver houses in Lincolnshire
- Communities in general are losing the right to community consultation
- There are some areas marked for windfarms in the area – the issue is the size of the turbines that are ever increasing in size

8. Discussion and adoption of Scheme of Delegation to Proper Officer under Section 101 (1) (a) LGA 1972

The Clerk had previously sent the Scheme of Delegation details that was being recommended to the Council. As there was no questions or discussions points raised by the Councillors the Clerk asked if there was a proposer and seconder and if the Councillors wished to vote on the agenda point.

- ***Motion to agree to the proposed Scheme of Delegation for the Proper Officer was proposed by Cllr. McDonnell, seconded by the Cllr. Faulkner and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

9. Ratification of decisions made at the Clerk Advisory Meeting on the 04 August 2021

The Chair stated that due to an issue that the Council had been made aware, it was felt that the decisions recommended to the Clerk by the Councillors in the Clerk Advisory Meeting on the 04 August 2021 should be re-ratified to ensure clarity on the legal standing of the decisions.

- ***Motion to re-ratify all the recommendations made by the Council to the Clerk on the Clerk Advisory Meeting on the 04 August 2021 was proposed by Cllr. Faulkner, seconded by the Chair and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

10. Minutes of Clerk Advisory Council Meeting (04 August 2021) – to agree and vote as accurate record

The Clerk had previously circulated the DRAFT minutes of the Clerk Advisory Meeting on the 04 August 2021.

The Chair stated that he was not aware of any inaccuracy of the minutes – no Councillor made any observation or raised any points of note.

- ***Motion to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the Clerk on the Clerk Advisory Meeting on the 04 August 2021 was proposed by Cllr. Faulkner, seconded by the Chair and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

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11. Councillor vacancies update – detail and update from the Clerk

The Clerk stated that the election process for the filing of the three vacancies will continue as no eligible person from the community had put their name forward to the Monitoring Officer at NKDC. The Clerk confirmed that once the letter signed by 10 electors had been submitted to the MO, continual elections had to be called until the vacancies were filled. There was no way to stop the process unfortunately.

The issue had been discussed with the Election Team in detail and conversations were had about the day and date when the election would be held.

The Clerk confirmed the next election date would be in mid-October – the notice would be advertised when the Election Team at NKDC sent the Council the details.

The Chair encouraged anyone in the community that was eligible to put themselves forward if they wanted to help or if they thought they could better than the current members.

12. Streetlights of the Village – recommendation from the Chair

The Chair stated that the Council had received detail from EON (who provide the maintenance service for the streetlights of Nocton) who stated that have identified alleged issues in the streetlights which if followed would cost in excess of £14,000. The Chair stated that he had undertaken an inspection of the street lights and felt that the issues identified by EON were not as bad as they stated and thus while the streetlights will be monitored the Council would look to review the issue and the works in the next financial year.

No points were raised by the other Councillors.

13. Limespring publication – update from the Chair

The Chair confirmed that he had written an article for the recent publication of the newsletter. He confirmed that he had received various emails on types of details to include in the next newsletter and he would take these on board.

14. Hub Management Group – update from Cllr McDonnell and agreement for the Terms of Reference

The Chair of the HMG (Cllr. McDonnell) stated that the group had met on the 23 August 2021 and gone through the proposed Terms of Reference that the Clerk had recommend. The HMG Chair stated the group had made various suggestions on the ToR which they felt were appropriate.

The Clerk stated that unfortunately the ToR amendments had not been sent to him as requested to allow him review the amendments and make a recommendation to the Council.

The Secretary of the HMG, upon permission from the Council Chair to make a statement, stated that she had sent the amendments to the HMG Chair for his review and thought he would send these to the Clerk for his

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review. The HMG Chair stated that he was not aware these had been sent but that he had been having some IT issues and would ensure that the amended ToRs sent by the Secretary of the HMG would be forwarded to the Clerk.

The Chair confirmed that upon the recommendation of the Clerk after his review of the amendments to the ToR the Council would agree the HMG ToRs at a later meeting.

15. Recycling textiles fundraising – discussion and decision

The Clerk stated that he had been approached by a business which specialises in fund raising for local communications by offering opportunities for the community to recycle old textiles in large clothing depositories. The textiles would then be weighed and a certain amount of funds would then given to the Council.

The Clerk stated that he had asked for more information to ensure that the process described was correct and to undertake the due diligence.

Once he had received the detail and was able to undertake the due diligence, the Clerk asked that this agenda point could be discussed and decided at the next Meeting.

The Chair agreed.

Action: upon the completion of the due diligence, the agenda point would be moved to the next meeting.

16. Clerk's report including RFO Financial update: Discussion and agreement

Clerk's report:

The Clerk's report had been circulated to the Councillors prior to the meeting. The main points stated in the report by the Clerk were:

- **Councillor vacancies**

I have had many conversations with the Election Team at NKDC about the continual election required. They have confirmed that once a letter (signed by 10 electors) is sent, the process cannot be stopped until the vacancies are filled by a process of nominations and elections (whether opposed or not).

The issue that the Council faced is that the Hub could not block out a full day on the bookings schedule without a guarantee of income. If there is not nomination the election would not proceed and thus the Hub would be left unused and no income. I spoke to the Election Manager to ascertain if the election days have to be on a Thursday; so confirmed that it was only tradition and not legally necessary. We have thus agreed that elections will be held on Mondays when the Hub is quietest.

The next election is mid-October 2021.

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- **Paying of overtime for staff process and payslips**

The process of the payment of staff through the Unity Bank is now in ben in operation for a few months and the process of standing orders for contractual pay and separate payment for any authorised overtime. This allows that contractual payment to staff is not delayed.

- **Notice of Inspection of Public Documents**

The period of the timeframe of the opportunity for the community to inspect the various documents and financial records of the council has now closed. There were no requests for inspection of any records.

- **Noticeboard**

I have asked the Team at Dyson Farming if there is an update on the Noticeboard they very kindly agreed to sponsor. I am aware from previous communication that the joinery team is very busy and thus we are not aware of the timeframe as yet.

- **Freedom of Information request**

The Council received a FoI request from Mr Ralph Timms who requested details of my contract and pay and copies of minutes from the confidential Council Meeting on the 27 April 2021. Unfortunately, this request caused overtime and thus cost for the community to be incurred as I did not have resource in my normal contract time.

Both requests were covered under exemptions as detailed in the FoI Act 2000.

Financial update:

The Clerk had circulated the full financial report including the financial budgeting detail and the breakdown of the expenditure to the Councillors previously. The summaries of the report would be published on the website.

The main points that were detailed were:

- *The current bank balance across all the bank accounts was £41,925 which compromised of £37,043 in the main Parish Council account, £2,659 in the Hub Account and £2,223 in the reserve account which was the Nocton 200 funds.*
- *It was stated that at the time there was an anticipated deficit in the forecasted end of year position in regard to the budget agreed in January 2021. The Clerk was reviewing the shortfall and the budget issues.*
- *The current financial position of the Hub Accounts was that there was deficit of £570.45 but that there were some funds due from the Ripon Arms in regard to the electricity consumed and various electricity work. There was also a refund of funds from the Old Village Hall which was £226 which would be going to the Hub Accounts. It was felt that the Hub was near to breaking even.*
- *The Clerk stated that the Council recognised that the financial position of the Council was not as preferred and that a closer review was needed*

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17. Parish Council website issues – update from the Clerk

The Clerk confirmed that the website of the Parish Council had been down for six days unfortunately during August. This was due to a security certificate and the permissions allowed by the Internet Service Provider. The Clerk stated he had spent a considerable amount of time with the website providers to initially establish the problem and ascertain how they could get the website back up on line. Initially they feared that the website had been hacked but that was ruled out. Overall the ISP ascertained the security issue and upon various bits of work they got the website back on line. The added issue was the time it took for the Clerk and the subsequent cost.

The Clerk stated that he appreciated that it was frustrating for the community as the website is a good source of information for the community and that the website being down caused consternation.

18. Nocton Sign damage – update from Cllr Faulkner

Cllr Faulkner stated that the old sign was removed through a motion agreed by the Council last year. It was noted the old sign was of disrepair and that Cllr Faulkner had been asked to remove the sign and take the disintegrated wood to the refuse. Cllr Faulkner stated that he had actually kept the old wood and the main sign element. He stated that it was an intention to consider replacing the sign in due course depending on Council finances.

There was a question from the community: *would the Council consider moving the remaining sign from the other side of the village. In addition, would the Council consider displaying the original sign in the Hub?*

The Chair confirmed that this would be taken into consideration in due course- as well as reviewing the cost of a replacement.

19. AGAR and Audit Publication – Update by the Clerk

The Clerk stated that the period of time for the community to inspect the records of the Council had now expired – there was no request for any records to be inspected.

The Council would now await the External Auditors review of the submitted documents and the final report.

20. Asset Register

The Chair stated that the Council had been reviewing the Asset Register and working on a newer, more appropriate format. He stated that the Council had received the new format and the possible policy which had been recommended.

The Chair stated that the Council had been revising to see if the assets on the register are still held by the Council. The Clerk stated that the Hub Manager had been very helpful in providing detail in what was held in the store and garage area.

The Chair did state that if any members of the community are aware of any assets or knowledge of any assets have been removed. He continued by stating that the Asset Register would be uploaded on to the website in due course to ensure that all are aware.

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21. Nocton 200 update - Update from the clerk on the Nocton 200 funds

The Clerk stated that he had received an application from the Nocton Primary that afternoon in request for a grant application – the application was to buy new books for the students and it was hoped that £10 per student (the school has 35 students) could be awarded.

The Chair confirmed that the application could be considered at the next meeting after the normal Nocton 200 application form had been completed and submitted.

Action: The Clerk confirmed he would respond to the Nocton School and update them on the process and application needed. Once the documents were received it would be moved to the next meeting.

22. Schedule of payments: Guidance to the Clerk on what payments are acceptable for payment

Payee	Amount	Reason for payment
Staff pay and overtime		Amount withheld due to confidentiality
Clerk's expenses	£ 26.00	Office & Printing monthly allowance
Clerk's expenses	£ 10.00	Credit paid for Hub Manager phone
Clerk's expenses	£ 54.90	Travel cost for Full Council Meeting on 07 September
Society Local Council Clerk	£ 55.00	Membership of Society for Clerk (third of full cost)
PlusNet	£ 27.40	Wi-fi for the Hub
TJ Book Keeping Ltd	£ 70.00	Payroll cost for staff
Firestop Services Ltd	£ 78.22	Service and maintenance of fire extinguishers
EON	£321.32	Electricity for the Hub
NKDC	£ 25.00	Fee for running a gambling activity (Nocton 200)
Paul Waters Window Cleaning	£ 40.00	Window cleaning for the Hub

The Clerk stated that he had previously circulated the details of the payments needed and had provided details of the staff payments. He confirmed that the payment to NKDC of £25 was not needed as it found that the payment was made by the promotor of the Nocton 200.

- **Motion to agree the payments as detailed in the schedule of payments was proposed by Cllr. Faulkner, seconded by the Chair and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.**

Action: The Clerk to ensure that a notification was sent to the District Council in regard to the payment for the gambling activity.

23. Planning Permission applications / Application for Tree works - Discussion and decision

The Clerk confirmed that there was no planning or tree works applications.

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24. Housing Plan for Nocton and the surrounding area – update from Cllr Clarke

The Chair stated that the Council had made a submission to the District Council in regard to the Community Plan. The submission included the support for the rejection of the houses in Nocton.

25. Village bench removal and plant a tree – update from Cllr Clarke

The Chair stated that the old village bench had to be removed by the Village Keeper as the bench was of disrepair, could not be fixed and was a safety hazard. He continued by stating that the Council would want to replace the village bench but would need to review the costs and the type of bench that the Council purchased – either wood or plastic.

The Chair stated that the Council may also decide if a tree could be planted near the bench but that decision would be made a later time.

26. Nocton Hub update

i) Hub Noticeboard:

The Clerk went through the point in the Clerk's Report

ii) Charitable Status of the Hub

The Clerk stated that it was felt appropriate by the Council and persons advising the Council, that it would be better to wait for the financial investigations to be completed first before any work was done on researching and working on the possible charity application.

iii) Update on the snagging list and funds owed by Builder

Cllr Faulkner confirmed that most of the work on the snagging list had been completed – which included the new sign of the Nocton Hub above the door. There had been investigations into the disabled toilet odour but unfortunately, they had not found the cause. The next area they would look at is if the pipes in the lofted area were broken or apart.

iv) PRS Music licence

The Clerk confirmed that he had numerous communications with the PRS customer service team who confirmed that they would be sending the detail on the licence cost. But they had confirmed that the Hub was covered to play music.

v) Alcohol licence

The Clerk stated that he had been in contact with the Licence Team Manager who had provided advice on the details needed for the minor variance needed to ensure that the Hub could have alcohol consumed on the external area and off-site sales. The Clerk stated the minor variance application would be submitted in the next week.

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vi) Bar keys and security

The Clerk stated that the Hub Manager had confirmed that the issue with the Lounge Bar keys had now been completed – it would emergency access if needed. The Clerk stated he wished to thank the Chair of the RA and the RA personnel for their agreement on the issue.

vii) Phone line for the Hub

The Chair of the HMG stated that the HMG had recommended that the land line in the Hub could be cancelled as the need had been superseded by the use of the Hub Manager's mobile. This would be reviewed in due course.

27. Nocton Hub redecoration and funding

The Chair of the HMG stated that due to the condition of some of the decorating in the main hall of the Hub, the HMG and then Council would need to review the need for redecoration. The issue was that due to the type of paint used, marks that were made on the wall could not be wiped off as it damaged the paint. This was probably due to the fact the quality of the paint used by the contractor was inferior and not waterproof.

It was appreciated that due to the financial strains of the Council, it was considered that the work may have to wait until the next financial year.

A question was asked from the community: if the quality of the paint used by the contractor was inferior, why couldn't the Council go back to them and demand the decorating be redone. The Chair of the HMG confirmed that the quality of the paint was not stated in the building specification which was agreed the Council at the time and thus there was no way the Council could hold them accountable.

There was an offer from the member of the community to help in the redecoration – the Chair of the HMG stated that this offer was appreciated and would be considered in due course.

28. Next Council meeting – to consider recommendation for next meeting

The Chair stated that due to the need for him to self-isolate during a period in October, the Councillors would need to discuss the date for the next meeting – either a Clerk Advisory or Full Council Meeting. Once the date and format had been decided, this would be published in the normal process.

29. Motion to exclude members of press and public

The Clerk explained to the Councillors that for the following agenda point, a motion would be required to exclude members of the public.

- ***Motion to exclude the members of the public and press from participation due to the confidentiality of the agenda point was proposed by Cllr. McDonnell, seconded by the Chair and agreed unanimously. Motion carried.***

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30. Staffing matter

Due to the nature of the agenda point, the discussion was confidential. A separate report on the agenda point would be sent to the Councillors and saved in the Council records.

MEETING WAS CLOSED BY THE CHAIR AT 8.25PM
