

SKILLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Grantham, Lincolnshire

Chairman: Graham Page Vice-Chairman: Richard Wrigley

Councillors: Neville Clark, Francis Disney, Rory Grindey, Stuart Millington.

Parish Clerk: Sue Mortimer (Mrs), 16 Stephenson Close, Colsterworth, Lincs. NG33 5GP

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Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at Skillington Village Hall on Monday 9th April 2018 at 7.00pm:

Present: Cllrs G. Page, N. Clark (after 7.30pm), F. Disney, R. Grindey, and R. Wrigley; S. Mortimer (Parish Clerk); Cllr Bob Adams (LCC & SKDC); Parishioners: D. Billington, D. Featherstone and V. Page.

The Meeting was chaired by Graham Page, Chairman of Skillington Parish Council.

1. **Apologies for absence:** received from Cllr S. Millington and Cllr Andrea Webster (SKDC).
2. **Notes of the Annual Parish Meeting on 3rd April 2017:** were previously agreed and signed at the May 2017 Parish Council meeting by Cllr Page who had chaired the meeting. The Chairman asked for any comments: there were none.
3. **Report on the Parish Council:** The Chairman addressed the meeting and reported on activities for the previous year:
 - 3.1 **What is the Parish Council?** the lowest tier of local government with various Duties and Powers including litter collection, Cemetery management, mowing verges and common grassed areas. What the PC cannot do is: refuse or grant planning applications, but it is informed of all applications and can make comments; it cannot mend holes in the road merely chase Highways; and cannot stop pubs closing.
 - 3.2 **Councillors:** The Council has six councillors: The Chairman; Richard Wrigley, Vice-Chairman; and Cllrs Neville Clark, Francis Disney, Rory Grindey and Stuart Millington. There is currently a vacancy for a councillor unfilled for several months following the resignation of Anita Sheehan in November and the Chairman asked any interested parties to speak to him. The Chairman thanked the councillors who have served in the past year and advised that the next Election is due in 2019 and that councillors' serve a 4-year term.

The Chairman reported on matters of interest in the past year:

- 3.3 **Neighbourhood Plan:** The Neighbourhood Plan passed the referendum in August and is now adopted by SKDC. This means that all planning applications must take account of the Plan which sets conditions for development. Copies are available online on the Skillington Life website (www.skillingtonlife.co.uk).
- 3.4 **The Cemetery:** Over the last 2 years extensive work has been carried out in the Cemetery. The whole area has been levelled and re-seeded or levelled and re-turfed. The ground repair is now complete and has been a successful project looking much improved. The shed had a new roof fitted and the wobbly gravestones have either been made safe by the families or are in the process of being made safe.
- 3.5 **Closure of the Blue Horse:** Planning permission was granted by SKDC for conversion from a public house to a private dwelling (see Planning Committee report).
- 3.6 **Roads:** The state of the roads continue to deteriorate; the Parish Council only have the power to report and chase a problem. Two meetings have been held with Highways: a general meeting for Councillors and Clerks advising on the way Highways is organised and resource restraints due to budget cuts; and a second meeting in Skillington where the Highways Manager took photographs and made note of the many holes and poor surfaces. The other area the Parish Council have been active with Highways was due to the drainage on Sproxton Road, this had been passed to the Witham Internal Drainage Board inspector who has cut grips on the south side of the road on behalf of Highways and in the short term, both landowners had been contacted by the Chairman and the ditches cleared. The effect of this being that the ditches are full and overflowing but there is less water on the road. The culvert by the houses under the verge is blocked and may need clearing.
- 3.7 **Crabtree Road Quarry:** There had been a number of complaints about the road outside the quarry. CESL were contacted by the Parish Council and attended a public meeting in January where they responded to residents' comments. Even though concerns remain, it was felt that the meeting had been useful.
- 3.8 **Mowing:** The Parish Council manage the mowing for the village (excluding the small area in Stonepit Lane still cut by SKDC) using local contractor BDG Mowing with good results. The Council took over the areas that used to be cut by LCC in 2016 although LCC have cut reimbursements in 2017 by £460 which has been absorbed.

Signed: Chairman

Date

3.9 Speeding Traffic: Following a letter of complaint, a traffic survey was carried out by Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership which did not conclude that traffic was speeding illegally (over 30mph) but the Council are still endeavouring to have the signs in Grantham Road and Colsterworth Road moved further out.

- 4. Planning Committee:** The Chairman read through the Report of the Planning Committee – 9th April 2018: The Planning Committee usually consists of the Chairman and three Councillors, currently the Chairman Cllr Page, Vice-Chairman Cllr Wrigley, and Cllr Disney. An additional member to replace Cllr Sheehan who resigned in November will be appointed at next month's AGM. The Parish Council tries to monitor any applications from within the Parish or, in the case of large developments, in the vicinity of the Parish. (SKDC and LCC no longer inform the PC automatically). The Committee confer and prepare comments they think appropriate on all planning applications relating to buildings and trees in Skillington, bearing in mind the local plans that are in place, in particular the Skillington Neighbourhood Plan. Any comments must, however, have regard to 'material planning considerations'. Comments are collated and returned by the Parish Clerk. Any significant development is referred to full Council for consideration. The following aspects are of particular concern to the Committee: size and nature of the proposal; feasibility; impact on the environment; and integration into village structure. During the period 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018 the following applications were received: change of use for The Blue Horse which was granted (despite PC objections); an agricultural storage lagoon for liquid organic waste which was granted with conditions; alterations to a listed house, which was granted; three applications for tree surgery or felling, all of which were granted.
- 5. Parish Council Finances:** The unaudited accounts of Skillington Parish Council for the year to 31st March 2018 were available for inspection, and the Chairman referred to the Income & Expenditure schedule comparing the year to 31st March 2018 with the previous year.
- 5.1.** Income from the Precept charged of £4,700 was an increase of £100 on the prior year (Annual charge of £36.45 per Band D household). The Parish Council budgets to break even.
 - 5.2.** Total income of approximately £7,700 includes the 'real' income mostly from the Precept, paddock rent and Cemetery income, all other income is reimbursement of work carried out on behalf of County or District Council. Income from the Cemetery was lower than usual and previous year.
 - 5.3.** The deficits for the last 2 years are unusual as the Council set out to have the Cemetery levelled and dipped into reserves in order to do this. Renovation work on the Cemetery cost c.£6,000, reducing reserves by c.£5,000 over the 2 years so saving c.£1,000 out of income.
 - 5.4.** Expenditure during the year, c £10,800, includes employment of the Clerk, carrying out mowing, street cleaning and care of the churchyard and cemetery, in addition to the one-off costs.
 - 5.5.** The excess expenditure of £3,100 for the year was covered by reserves which now stand at around £11,000.
 - 5.6. Outlook for 2018/19:** A small increase in the Precept of £100 to £4,800, which will help to absorb general cost increases. The Cemetery refurbishment is now complete so next year it should break even with a small increase to cover extra costs including LCC mowing costs as the Council feels it needs to maintain services while other tiers are cut. Budgeted to, and expected to, break even in 2018/19.

Thanks: The Chairman expressed his thanks to all the Parish Councillors; to Cllr Adams (LCC & SKDC) for his continued support throughout the year, attending almost all the Councils' meetings; to Cllr Webster (SKDC), the Parish Clerk, Mrs Mortimer, and occasional helpers; and Mrs Page for her help with transition and continued help with the Cemetery.

- 6. Vacancies on the Parish Council:** There are currently two vacancies: a Casual Vacancy for a councillor to sit on the Parish Council; and a replacement for the Parish Clerk who is standing down due to other commitments (a paid, part-time position £4.5 hours/week). The Chairman asked the floor to ask around for anyone interested, ideally from the village.
- 7. Matters Raised from the Floor:**
- 7.1.** What is the issue with moving the speed limit signs?: Cllr Adams advised that it is due to costs involved, the Traffic Commissioner has to consider the value of the benefit against cost. There are no records of accidents in the village.
 - 7.2.** The frequency of commercial vehicles travelling through the village especially in the early hours of the morning was discussed; any weight restrictions in the village or acceptability of night time noise to be investigated.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

The meeting closed at 7.35 pm.

The next Annual Parish Meeting will be held on Monday, 1st April 2019 at 7.00pm at Skillington Village Hall

Signed: Chairman

Date