Acle Parish Council

Meeting Date: Monday, 22nd February 2021  
Venue: Online Meeting  
Time: 7.00 p.m.

Following the introduction of new legislation, (The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020), which took effect on 4th April 2020, this Parish Council meeting was a virtual meeting, held online. This legislation may remain in place until 7th May 2021.  
  
**PRESENT:**   
Chair: Angela Bishop  
Vice-Chair: Jamie Pizey  
Councillors: Sally Aldridge, Sarah Carter, Jackie Clover, Barry Coveley, Jayne Greenacre, Tony Hemmingway, Anna Holt, Hannah Jackson, Wendy Kenny and Richard Powell

Also Parish Clerk, Pauline James.

There were nine members of the public present.

MP Jerome Mayhew was present at the meeting. He said that he had learnt a lot since he was elected. He is particularly interested in climate change and biodiversity. He talked about the consultation on the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP), flooding following recent heavy rainfall, the roadmap out of the lockdown, and he answered a question on the temporary permission to use Neonicotinoids on sugar beet crops. Councillors raised concerns about silt from building sites reaching local waterways and about the lack of capacity at the local sewage works to accommodate new housing planned for the village.   
  
Norfolk County Councillor Brian Iles gave a report: Brian still has some funding available from his councillor’s highways fund. The clerk will send details of the mobile speed monitoring device (SAM2) purchased by the Parish Council. Brian also talked about his concern about potential new housing in the village and the costs to construct the proposed new link road between South Walsham Road and Norwich Road. In response to a question from a member of public, Brian confirmed that the developer would be required to reinstate the land at the Library that is currently being used for accommodation for the adjacent site.

District Councillor Lana Hempsall gave a report: Lana offered to discuss with Broadland District Council officers the concerns about the work being done at the Acle Garden Machinery site. The concerns have been raised with the Internal Drainage Board as it is understood that the applicant might have needed a consent from the IDB for the works.

Matters raised by residents included noise from the building site at Herondale and plans to carry out maintenance at Jubilee Wood.

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| **1** | **APOLOGIES** None. |
| **2** | **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** Barry Coveley reminded the meeting that he is a trustee of Acle Recreation Centre.  Angela Bishop and Anna Holt each had an interest in a payment. |
| **3** | **MINUTES** The minutes of the meeting of 25th January 2021 were agreed to be correct, and will be signed by Angela Bishop, as Chair of the Parish Council, at a later date. |
| **4** | **CLERK’S REPORT** |
|  | The clerk had circulated a report to all the councillors in advance of the meeting and posted a public version on the website. The contents of the report were noted. |
| 4.1 | **Acle Foodbank:**  Work continues to support local families.  Freethorpe Parish Council have sent a donation of £250. Private donations of £60 have also been received. Sally Aldridge is sometimes handed cash donations when people drop off food on Thursdays, which are used to buy fresh fruit and vegetables, and the receipts for these purchases are then handed to the clerk.  Angela Bishop reported on a substantial donation of food collected at the Brundall Co-Op, together with a financial donation. |
| 4.2 | **Plastic-free Acle:**  Anna Holt gave a report: the campaign continues, to reduce single-use plastics. Anna has been in touch with Acle WI and Acle Pre-School about being involved with the scheme.  Chris Peacher is helping with regular litter picking around the village. Dispensers for dog poo bags are being used by residents. |
| 4.3 | The **Dr Bike Day** wassuccessfulwith all the slots being booked.A second event has been booked for 10th April. The Parish Council may need to pay for this second event. |
| 4.4 | **Parking Restrictions** The report by NCC’s officer on the proposals is about to go to the NCC Committee for them to sign it off. NCC has to show that they have considered the objections raised by residents and have either addressed those concerns or decided that safety concerns overrule those objections. Once the scheme is approved the restrictions will be implemented when a lining crew is in the area. |
| 4.5 | **Damgate Wood and Cadent** Cadent’s (ex-National Grid for gas) contractors have been in touch with Acle Lands Trust about closing the footpath through Damgate Wood while they carry out works, as they will be digging a pit at the entrance to the path. Acle Lands Trust are trying to get them to allow public access outside of work hours, but Cadent want to shut the access for the duration of the works. Cadent will pay Acle Parish Council’s legal fees for the agreement of an easement.  These works may now be delayed until Spring 2022. |
| 4.6 | **Dates for 2021** The MP, Jerome Mayhew, has confirmed that he supports the request for the legislation to be extended to permit online meetings, which currently expires on 7th May. Jerome said that this is under active consideration by the Cabinet Office and he will let them know of the views of many parish councils which have got in touch with him.  It was agreed to move the **Annual Parish Meeting** (ie the meeting of the parish) to the same date as the April Parish Council meeting, 26th April at 6.30pm, on Zoom, before starting the Parish Council meeting, at 7.00, or after, if the parish meeting is still going on.   The date for the **Annual Parish Council Meeting** (ie the meeting of the parish council where the Chair is elected) could be moved to before the 7th May, to ensure it can be held via Zoom. It has to be held in May. |
| 4.7 | Sarah Carter attended an online talk on the **Armed Forces Covenant**, under which local authorities have signed up to support veterans in whatever way necessary. Sarah has copied the recording of the session to the councillors for information. This will be considered at the next meeting. |
| 4.8 | The **Acle Primary School** headteacher invited the parish councillors to get involved in a review of the school’s aims. Angela Bishop is keen to be involved with this and is in contact with the headteacher.. |
| 4.9 | The **Norfolk Rural Strategy** has been received for consultation. The clerk will submit a response on behalf of the Council. |
| 4.10 | Following concerns about silt leaching from building sites into the watercourse, I contacted BDC about works being carried out at the **Acle Garden Machinery** site. The officer has reviewed the planning permissions for the site and has contacted the Internal Drainage Board who had advised during the planning application process that the applicant might need consent under the Land Drainage Act 1991.  BDC have said they will send an officer out to investigate. |
| 4.11 | Angela and Tony carried out the clerk’s **staff review**. It was agreed to monitor the amount of overtime worked, and that the clerk will take time off in lieu of overtime, where possible. It was also suggested that the Council consider the employment of a deputy clerk when setting the budget next December. |
| 4.12 | Clarion Housing have said that:   * They have some prices for flood defence doors and will hope to install these for the homes that are most at risk in their **Beighton Road** properties * They have requested a drain survey * Their contractors will shortly be carrying out maintenance works to existing ditches * They plan to meet with BDC/NCC and the landowner shortly. |
| 4.13 | Angela informed the meeting that she is following up the offer of funding from BDC for market stalls and will be arranging a meeting with their tourism officer. |
| **5** | **PLANNING** |
| 5.1.1 | **7 Peter Avenue 20210183 –** single storey side and rear extension**.** The councillors had no objections to the plans. |
| 5.1.2 | **Land at Norwich Road 20210261 -** surface water drainage basins. The councillors had no objection to the plans in principle, but wished to express their concern about the proximity to the former river valley and the risk of run-off from the site. |
| 5.2 | The **draft Greater Norwich Local Plan** has been published. The proposal shows an additional 140 homes on the fields west of the Norwich Road site and west of Acle Academy, over and above the 200 homes which were proposed in early 2020, but does state that plans should include land for a link road able to cope with HGVs and agricultural traffic, and should leave land available for any future extension to Acle Academy. The public right of way from the top of Mill Lane to The Windle would be protected.  The consultation is only on the soundness of the plan process, and whether it is legally compliant. The clerk will make representations on behalf of the Council, to object that no one was consulted on the proposal to increase the number of new homes by 140, and despite the Council’s objection to the previously proposed 200 homes.  Councillors were also encouraged to comment on the Plan, in their own name. Details will be published so that residents are also aware of the consultation. |
| 5.3 | **Neighbourhood Plan** Acle’s Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in 2015. It was discovered shortly afterwards that a NP becomes out-of-date fairly quickly as any Plan adopted by the local authority, or a Government decision, can overrule a NP and a NP becomes of less importance over time.  Councillors were interested in updating the 2015 Plan, rather than re-writing the whole plan. Another alternative would be to do a Parish Plan, which would have no legal basis, but could still be useful in finding out residents’ views on the village. |

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| 6 | | **FINANCE** The finance report had been circulated to all councillors in advance of the meeting, and posted on the website: |
|  | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Receipts:** |  | £ | | 44 The Street | Rent for one month | 600.00 | | 42 The Street | Rent | 447.50 | | Chocolate Box | Rent for one month | 650.00 | | Various | Funerals and memorials | 1,095.00 | | Various | Donations for foodbank | 110.00 | | Freethorpe PC | Donation for foodbank | 250.00 | | Anglian Water | Refund of costs re streetlight | 2,945.90 | | CAN | Grant to hold for Men’s Shed | 1,000.00 | | **Payments made:** |  |  | | Caroline Crane | Foodbank purchases | 66.75 | | T T Jones | Streetlight repair – see above | 2,945.90 | | Angela Bishop | Foodbank - petrol | 25.42 | | Flameskill | Fire alarm test and service- Barclays | 146.00 | |  | Fire extinguishers check – Barclays | 173.18 | |  | Fire extinguishers replace – Choc Box | 393.44 | | NPTS | Training course - finance | 55.00 | | SWALEC DD | Electricity for streetlights | 966.46 | | **Online payments:** |  |  | | Employment costs: |  | 4,668.23 | | T T Jones | Lighting repairs | 768.34 | | Norfolk ALC | Training course - GDPR | 48.00 | | SLCC | Training course - regeneration | 36.00 | | NALC | Training course – resilient communities | 38.93 | | Sharp | Copying | 70.99 | | Anna Holt | Dog poo bags | 24.00 | | D Starkings | Hedgecutting | 216.00 | | Mills & Reeve | Prof fees re leases at Barclays | 180.00 | | Hugh Crane Cleaning | Supplies | 164.14 | | **Balance c/f 22.02.21** |  | 207,587.31 | | **Balances in Savings:** |  |  | | Government Stocks | Gilts | 139,031.00 | | BDC | Parish investment scheme | 250,504.15 | | Cambridge B/Soc | Instant access, int £128.64 | 91,636.36 | | Lloyds Bank | 32-day notice, int £4.06 | 102,211.70 | | Nationwide B/Soc | 45-day saver | 91,219.69 | | Total monies |  | 882,190.21 | |  |  |  | | Loan | Strumpshaw Parish Council | 3,000.00 | | Loan | Acle Recreation Centre | 13,125.00 | |  |  | 898,315.21 | |
|  | | Outstanding commitments: Parking amendments and purchase of land for cemetery .  Wendy Kenny had checked the January online payments and payments made between meetings to the bank statements, and the clerk’s bank reconciliation, dated 1st February 2021.  Invoices for the proposed February online payments had been shared with the councillors.  The clerk presented the actual v budget report for the 11 months to February 2021.  It was agreed to give £50 each to five mental health charities; Anna Freud, Young Minds, Samaritans (Gt Yarmouth Branch), Norfolk & Waveney Mind and Menscraft. | |
| **7** | **RECREATION CENTRE** Barry Brooks, Chairman of the Trustees, gave a report; it is hoped that the NHS will begin vaccinations on 9th March. At that time, staff will come back off furlough. The lockdowns and restrictions resulted in a large decrease in income for the year to 31st December 2020.  The Trustees requested a grant of £10,250 towards the cost of **replacement lighting** in the Indoor Bowls building. Indoor Bowls Club to pay £1,500 towards cost. Three quotes had been provided and circulated.  After some discussion it was agreed by a majority to give a grant of £10,250, made up of the remainder of the budget for the Recreation Centre costs, 4,007, and the balance from CIL or S106 monies. *(Jayne Greenacre reminded the meeting that she is a member of the Bowls Club.)* | | |
| **8** | **CHOCOLATE BOX BUILDING** Since the last meeting, the fire extinguishers in the shop and in the office spaces have been replaced, or checked and refilled. A fire risk assessment has been done. An electrical contractor has visited the site and will provide a suggested specification for replacement wiring in the shop space, and for additional sockets and lighting in the upstairs offices. A measured survey has also been done, to provide the detailed drawings required for contractors.  There will be a working party meeting on zoom on Thursday, 25th February.  The clerk advised the councillors that there are some VAT issues to consider in renting out a building and that some legal advice may be required. This was noted. | | |
| **9** | **FORMER BARCLAYS BUILDING**  Broadland District Council has advised that use of the site as a café/bakery does not need planning permission as it is the same Use Class as a bank, but use of the site as a pre-school does require permission.  At the meeting on 18th January it was agreed to apply for the planning permission, as required. Brown & Co quoted of £6,050 + VAT, to prepare formal planning drawings for the application for planning permission, including a Design & Access Statement, and to deal with any questions from planning officer or planning committee. This was noted and accepted.  The formal feasibility study was completed, summarising the Parish Council’s discussions with the architect and the project manager, and showing the various drawings that were considered, and the preference for Plan 6.  It was agreed that a “strip out” of the building should be done, to prepare the building for refurbishment and for the temporary re-location of the newsagent’s business to the building.  Colours and fonts for “Corporate” signage for the Council’s buildings will be considered at the next meeting. | | |
| **10** | **FLETCHER ROOM SITE**  Norfolk Property Services have replied to say that Norfolk County Council will not sell the land at the Fletcher Room site to the Parish Council, but are prepared to extend the lease to 25 years, either by a variation to the existing lease, or by a new lease. The councillors agreed to extend the lease, so long as there were some means of terminating the lease.  NPS pointed out that a rent review is due this year. | | |
| **11** | **HIGHWAYS, FLOODING & PLANTERS** | | |
|  | Nothing further to report. | | |
| **12** | **VILLAGE ENVIRONMENT - Beeline project**  Richard Powell had circulated some notes on possible plans for the village. It was agreed to leave strips of grass uncut around the play areas and at the back of verges, where permitted.  A working party will be set up to discuss proposals further. | | |
| **13** | **COUNCILLORS’ TRAINING** Angela Bishop is attending a 2-session Chairmanship training in early March. Sarah Carter has attended the introductory training and training on GDPR (data protection), has booked onto an end of year finance course, and would like to do the CiLCA course (Certificate in Local Council Administration) which takes 6 months and costs £250. It was agreed to pay for this course so long as Sarah repays the cost if she leaves the Council withing 2 years of the start of the course. | | |
| **14** | **FINANCIAL POLICIES**   * **Review of Internal Controls** * **Review of Audit** * **Duties of the Responsible Financial Officer** * **Financial Regulations** * **Finance Risk Assessment** * **General Risk Assessments**   The above policies were all agreed and adopted. | | |
| **15** | **ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA – 29th March 2021**   * **Signage** * **Plans for the 2022 Jubilee** * **Benches** * **Mobile Speed Activated Monitoring report** | | |

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 10.01pm.

Signed:………………………………. Dated:……………………………………  
 Chair