Acle Parish Council

Annual Meeting Date: Monday, 27th November 2023  
Venue: Acle Methodist Church  
at 7.00p.m.

**PRESENT:**   
Angela Bishop – Chair  
Councillors: Sally Aldridge, Sarah Carter, Jackie Clover, Indra Goodson, Tony Hemmingway,   
Wendy Kenny, Jamie Pizey, Richard Powell, Jess Royal and David Stephenson.  
Also, Parish Clerk Pauline James and Deputy Clerk Fiona Richardson.

There were nine members of the public present. Matters raised included a feasibility study into improving access to St Edmund’s Church.  
  
District and County Councillor Lana Hempsall sent her apologies.

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| 1 | **APOLOGIES** Barry Coveley |
| 2 | **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** Jackie Clover and Jamie Pizey reminded the meeting that they are Trustees of Acle Recreation Centre. Angela Bishop had an interest in a payment to her daughter. David Stephenson reminded the meeting that his wife works for Acle Pre-School. Angela also reported that she had attended the meeting of the Diabetes Group. |
| 3 | **MINUTES** The minutes of the meeting of 30th October 2023 were agreed to be correct, and were signed by Angela Bishop, on behalf of the Parish Council. |
| 4 | **CLERKS’ REPORT** |
|  | The parish 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 and adopted. A public copy is appended to these minutes. |
| 4.1 | **New cemetery:** The assistant clerk continues to investigate options for the water supply. |
| 4.2 | **Pre-School and Fletcher Room:** Sadly, a water leak in the building caused significant damage to the building and the Pre-School’s supplies. A new carpet was fitted very promptly to enable the Pre-School to re-open as soon as possible. The councillors thanked the clerks who got the building open again very quickly. The assistant clerk is speaking to the Council’s insurers about which costs will be covered.  The assistant clerk continues to meet with companies to get estimates to replace, or add to, the current Fletcher Room. Several contractors have warned that the building is reaching the end of its life. The Pre-School have paid for new paving outside the front of the building.  The parish clerk has asked the Pre-School to increase their daily rent from 1st January 2024, from £16.50 to £18 per day, as an on account increase to continue to bring the rate up to the amount needed to cover the costs . This increase was delayed by twelve months to help the Pre-School prepare for the increase.  Assistance with rental costs was discussed under agenda item 10. |
| 4.3 | **Flooding:** There was another meeting of Norfolk County Council, Broadland District Council, the landowner and Clarion Housing Association on 17th November. No report has been received yet. The next meeting is on 26th January. |
| 4.4 | **Plastic-free Communities:** Nothing further to report. |
| 4.5 | **Public Toilets:** The deputy clerk has been sorting out quotes for repairs and refurbishment. There is the possibility of a grant from First Buses.  Tony Hemmingway met with NCC about installing the electronic sign in the bus shelter by the toilets. This sign should be installed soon, whereas the new shelter on the other side of the road is unlikely to be done until Spring 2024. |
| 4.6 | **Renewal of Assets of Community Value:** The deputy clerk applied to BDC to list Acle Library, the Railway Signal Box and Acle Public Toilets as Assets of Community Value. The current listings expire in January. BDC have refused to consider the Signal Box, saying that there has been no public access so it does not meet the requirements. Given that it had been accepted previously, the deputy clerk will ask why it no longer meets the requirements.  A building can be listed if a principal use of the asset furthers the community’s social well-being or social interests and is likely to do so in the future.  It was agreed to nominate the Methodist building, the Medical Centre, the Post Office and the former Pedro’s restaurant at Acle Bridge. It was noted that the latter is in Upton with Fishley parish council area so that Parish Council will be informed. |
| 4.7 | **Policies:**  The following revised policies were adopted:  Code of Conduct  Data Protection Policy Disciplinary Policy Equality and Diversity Policy Filming at Parish Council Meetings Grant Awarding Policy Whistleblowing Policy |
| 4.8 | The new **Acle and Norfolk Broads Diabetes Support Group** asked for a grant towards the room hire costs of £20 per month. It was felt that this met the requirements of the BDC Starting Up grant so suggested that this group should apply for the BDC grant first. |
| 4.9 | **Drainage at Boat Dyke Lane:** The Bure Valley Conservation Group and some members of the Allotment Association worked very hard to clear the ditch along the front of the allotments, which takes surface water from Boat Dyke Lane and from A1064.  It had been suggested that a larger holding area for the water could be created, next to the ditch. It was agreed that the deputy clerk should contact NCC to ask if they had any plans to contain the surface water before doing this work. |
| 4.10 | **Biodiversity Policy:** From 1st January 2024 it is a requirement under the 2021 Environment Act for public authorities, including parish councils to:● consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.  ● agree policies and specific objectives based on their consideration.  ● act to deliver their policies and achieve their objectives. Richard Powell and Jess Royal will work with the deputy clerk on this. |
| 4.11 | The deputy clerk has written a **newsletter** which will be available shortly. |
| 4.12 | The national **pay increase** of £1 per hour for all council employees, from 1st April 2023, was noted. |
| 5 | **PLANNING** |
| 5.1.1 | There is an amendment to the planning permission for the proposed changes **at Acle Garden Machinery –** a change to the size of a storage building. The Council had no further comments to make. |
| 5.1.2 | Notification of a Proposed Upgrade To Existing Radio Base Station Installation at **Hugh Crane (Cleaning)** was consideredat the last meeting. The planning application has now been submitted. The Council had no comments on the plans. |
| 5.1.3 | The developer of the four new houses off Damgate Lane have asked to name the access road as **Cecils Meadow**. It was noted that, as a policy, BDC do not include apostrophes in street names. The councillors had no objection to the name but put forward the suggestion of Cecil Meadow, to avoid the issue of the apostrophe. |
| 5.2 | Decisions by **Broadland District Council**: |
| 5.2.1 | **Lahore, 12 Damgate Lane** - [Division of plot and erection of new bungalow with new vehicular access](https://info.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=S16I8DOQ0PY00&activeTab=summary) (2023/0815) – refused. |
| 5.2.2 | Four houses off **Damgate Lane** – drainage scheme – agreed. |

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| 6.1 | | **FINANCE REPORT** The finance report had been shared with all councillors in advance of the meeting: |
|  | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Receipts:** |  | £ | | 42 The Street | Rent | 895.00 | | 44 The Street | Rent | 600.00 | | Broadland DC | Lottery income for foodbank | 17.50 | | Various | Donation for foodbank | 100.00 | | Lloyds | Interest | 64.13 | | Rec Centre | Loan repayment | 1,875.00 | | ABT | Donation for village facilities | 20,000.00 | | **Payments made:** |  |  | | SWALEC DD | Electricity for streetlighting | 743.40 | | Telecoms World DD | Phone line for foodbank | 16.21 | | Total DD | Electricity at public toilets | 40.14 | | Comm-Tech DD | Phone and internet at Brian Grint Centre | 41.98 | | Geoxphere | Mapping subscription | 183.60 | | D Starkings | Hedgecutting | 216.00 | | RBL | Donation | 100.00 | | Acle Methodist | Room hire | 55.00 | | TT Jones | Lighting repairs | 950.84 | | Acle Rec Centre | Youth club room hire | 57.50 | | P James | Foodbank purchases | 40.48 | | Kompan | Play equipment repairs | 1,105.24 | | Norfolk Home Serv | Plumbing at FTH | 1,803.44 | | Norfolk Home Serv | Plumbing at flats | 731.06 | | BDC | 5 x dog litter bins | 1,326.00 | | Anglia Boiler | Boiler replacement at Rec Centre | 9,000.00 | | Jen Taylor | Various works at FTH, cemetery, play | 1,053.00 | | British Gas | Electricity at BGC | 192.80 | | Hugh Crane Cleaning | Consumables | 80.58 | | Replay Maintenance | S106 re Rec Centre | 1,674.00 | | Luke Thacker | Hedgecutting | 450.00 | | Cowills | Carpet at Fletcher Room | 1,680.00 | | Gallagher | Extra insurance for buildings | 3,683.35 | | Fiona Richardson | Craft materials for Pre-School | 30.90 | | Rob Chapman | Work at FTH | 771.55 | | **Online payments at meeting:** |  |  | | Employment costs | Employment, pension and exps | 7,796.91 | | Hugh Crane Ltd | Consumables | 6.32 | | TT Jones | Christmas lighting | 5,364.00 | | Copy IT Sharp | Copying | 16.12 | | Garden Guardian | Grasscutting | 1,842.91 | | SLCC | Membership | 229.00 | | SLCC | CiLCA fee | 450.00 | | Mills & Reeve | Legal fees Unit 1 | 2,231.52 | | Mills & Reeve | Legal fees Unit 2 | 4,550.88 | | Mills & Reeve | Legal fees Unit 3 | 237.84 | | Mills & Reeve | Legal fees Unit 4 | 5,334.54 | | Moulton Nurseries | Plants | 69.96 | | Broadland DC | Rates at Folly Tree House | 1,154.00 | | Broadland DC | Rates upstairs at BGC | 299.00 | | Broadland DC | Rates downstairs at BGC | 92.00 | | **Balance c/f 27.11.23** |  | 20,022.67 | | **Balances in Savings:** |  |  | | Government Stocks | Gilts (at latest valuation) | 72,998.00 | | BDC | Parish investment scheme | 216,097.64 | | Nationwide B/Soc | 45-day saver | 93,021.16 | | Total monies |  | 402,139.47 | | Loan | Acle Recreation Centre | 7,500.00 | |  |  | 409,639.47 | |  |  |  | |
|  | Invoices for the proposed November payments had been shared with the councillors in advance of the meeting. All payments made between meetings were checked to bank statements by Jackie Clover and Wendy Kenny.  The clerk presented an Actual v Budget report for the 8 months to November. The payments were approved. | | |
| 7 | **RECREATION CENTRE** | | |
| 7.1 | Trustee Barry Brooks gave a report: he thanked the Parish Council for paying for the repairs to the repairs to the play equipment. There is a small income from the car charging points. The Indoor Bowls are having a successful season. The surface water from Pyebush Lane continues to be an issue, as it floods the football pitches. There will be an application for s106 monies to be used for a new fence for the outdoor bowls. | | |
| 7.2 | The BDC s106 officer agreed the use of s106 monies to pay for improvement works to grassed surfaces. The parish clerk has paid the invoice and sent it to BDC for reimbursement. | | |
| 8 | **CHOCOLATE BOX AND BRIAN GRINT CENTRE** | | |
| 8.1 | The new blinds have been fitted. | | |
| 9 | **FOLLY TREE HOUSE (FORMER BARCLAYS BUILDING)** | | |
| 9.1 | The lease for Unit 1 has not yet been signed by the tenant. | | |
| 9.2 | The lead flashing on the flat roof has been repaired.  Lining works in the car park are booked for 30th November, weather permitting.  The Christmas tree was put up on 26th November and looks lovely. | | |
| 9.3 | The clerks’ report included an update on the various aspects, including concerns about the roof, and insulation. | | |
| 9.4 | A complaint was received about the storage container and the commercial bin store to the rear of the building. The meeting was reminded that the container is to store the market stalls and was located adjacent to the double garage on the neighbouring plot so as to minimise the visual impact on the residents. Climbing plants are to be added shortly. It was agreed to buy some plastic screening for the short-term.  The commercial bin store is alongside the neighbour’s driveway and the site was chosen so as to be accessible for the bin collection lorry, and away from the front door to unit 4.  BDC’s enforcement officer had also asked some questions. The deputy clerk has replied to the neighbours and to BDC, setting out that the Parish Council can erect ancillary structures under Permitted Development rules. | | |
| 10 | **ACLE PRE-SCHOOL** The Fletcher Room is let out by Acle Borderland Trust, which is a Charity. The Charity has to act in the best interests of the Charity and therefore has to charge a reasonable rent so as to break even. The current rent is £16.50 per day, (term times only), and it is estimated that it would have to rise to £28-£29 per day.  It was agreed that Acle Parish Council would pay a subsidise the Pre-School by £5 per day, (term times only).  The Chairman of Acle Pre-School was present at the meeting and expressed his concerns about the safety of the floor of the building. It was agreed that the clerks should get a surveyor to check the floor as soon as possible and if, found to be unsafe, the building would be closed. | | |
| 11 | **ACCESS TO ST EDMUND’S CHURCH** Acle Parochial Church Council had requested assistance with the cost of a feasibility study into improving **access to the church.** It was agreed that the church is visited by residents and tourists and for non-religious events so it is appropriate for the Parish Council to assist with this. After some discussion it was agreed to pay up to £1,000. | | |
| 12 | **LAND FOR SALE off A47** It was noted that there is a parcel of land for sale south of A47, adjacent to land managed by Acle Lands Trust. It was agreed that the land would only be considered for purchase if it was really cheap, as the land is marshy and scrubby. | | |
| 13 | **HIGHWAYS** | | |
| 13.1 | **Bollards in New Road:** it was agreed to purchase ten bollards to prevent parking on the grass verges. | | |
| 14 | **EVENTS** | | |
| 11.1 | The councillors sent their thanks to all those involved with the lovely Christmas tree on The Green. | | |
| 11.2 | The parish clerk explained that the new string of Christmas lights on the Brian Grint Centre had been expected to extend along the frontage of the Chinese Takeaway. It is unlikely that additional lights could be fitted before Christmas, but it was agreed to pay for new lights in 2024. | | |
| 12 | **NEXT MEETING – The next Council meeting is Monday, 11th December 2023,** at 7.00pm in the Methodist Church. | | |

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9.10 pm.

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