Acle Parish Council

Annual Meeting Date: Monday, 11th December 2023  
Venue: Acle Methodist Church  
at 7.00p.m.

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

There were thirteen members of the public present. Matters raised included damage to the hedge along A1064.  
  
District and County Councillor Lana Hempsall gave a report including elections planned for May 2025 for an elected leader as part of devolution plans. She urged residents to use the re-opened Park & Ride at Postwick.

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| 1 | | **APOLOGIES** David Stephenson. | | |
| 2 | | **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** Jackie Clover, Barry Coveley 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 under employment costs. | | |
| 3 | | **MINUTES** The minutes of the meeting of 27th November 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:** The assistant clerk continues to meet with companies to get estimates to replace the current Fletcher Room. She will prepare a report for the January meeting.  On 29th November the Pre-School reported concerns that the ceiling was bowing. The deputy clerk took advice from a structural engineer and closed the building. The structural engineer came out to visit and reported that a number of small factors had caused the ceiling to bow and instructed Ovamill to put some supports in place. The building was then deemed safe and was re-opened.  The Parish Council can claim under insurance for the cost of the plumber and carpet from the flood reported at the November meeting. Our insurance does not cover any of the contents, as they are not property of the Parish Council. There is an excess of £250.  For the second event, the Parish Council could claim for the Pre-School's loss of income, as they had to pay back parents for the fees, totalling £207, along with the cost of the structural engineer and the remedial works by Ovamill. It was agreed to pay this cost.  The Pre-School’s costs from the flood currently stand at £500 contents insurance excess (they estimated a loss of approximately £4,500 to replace lost furniture and resources), £51.60 hire of a wet vac from Hugh Crane. It was agreed to pay this £500 excess.  The ruined furniture and carpet tiles are currently outside the Fletcher Room. It was agreed to pay for the hire of a skip.  The Pre-School had been encouraged to find an alternative venue, in case of any further issues, but they have reported that it is not possible to get a room vetted by OFSTED until it is actually required.  Following the discussions at the last meeting, the parish clerk has informed the Pre-School that the new daily rate will be £26.50, up from £16.50, payable to Acle Borderland Trust. The Parish Council will subsidise the Pre-School by £5 per day, reducing the cost to £21.50 per day. | | |
| 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 from the meeting. The next meeting is on 26th January. | | |
| 4.4 | | **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. The Council adopted the Model Policy. Richard Powell, Jess Royal and the deputy clerk will work on an Action Plan for the January meeting. | | |
| 4.5 | | Broadland District Council have reviewed the **storage container** and the bin store on the grassed area to the rear of Folly Tree House, have agreed that they fall under Permitted Development and will close the file on the complaint. It was agreed that Jamie Pizey and the deputy clerk would meet with the neighbours to address their concerns and see if anything can be done to improve the situation. | | |
| 5 | | **PLANNING** | | |
| 5.1 | | **3 - 4 Calthorpe Cottages, The Green** - Installation of a biomass heating system and PV panels - Listed Building (2023/3191). The councillors supported the application. | | |
| 6.1 | | | **FINANCE REPORT** The finance report had been shared with all councillors in advance of the meeting: |
|  | | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Receipts:** |  | £ | | 42 The Street | Rent | 1,030.00 | | Broadland DC | S106 monies | 1,395.00 | | Broadland DC | Grant for foodbank | 600.00 | | Various | Donation for foodbank | 400.00 | | Various | Cemetery fees | 1,410.00 | | Acle Borderland Trust | Reimbursement bin collection fee | 344.14 | | **Payments made:** |  |  | | SWALEC DD | Electricity for streetlighting | 685.15 | | P James | Foodbank Christmas purchases | 330.00 | | P James | Stock Exchange fee | 117.00 | | P James | Cash for foodbank purchases | 100.00 | | P James | Skip hire for ditch | 246.00 | | S Alldridge | Purchases for foodbank | 52.77 | | Moulton Nurseries | Tree stand | 26.99 | | Roar Electrical | Checking outside lights at Fletcher Room | 70.00 | | Factory Blinds | Blinds at BGC | 660.00 | | Employment costs | Overtime paid on account | 81.50 | | **Cheque for payment:** |  |  | | Mr Allen | Footpath fee | 50.00 | | **Online payments at meeting:** |  |  | | Employment costs | Employment, pension and exps | 8,264.89 | | Acle Methodist | Room hire | 55.00 | | TT Jones | Lighting repairs | 999.30 | | Copy IT Sharp | Copying | 18.66 | | Broadland DC | Emptying dog litter bins | 1,179.36 | | Hugh Crane Cleaning | Consumables | 115.48 | | ROAR | Electrical repairs in Fletcher Room | 70.00 | | Mills & Reeve | Legal fees Head Lease | 2,000.00 | | CPRE | Subs | 60.00 | | Luke Thacker | A1064 borders | 500.00 | | Acle Rec Centre | Room hire youth club | 115.00 | | Oddbods | Cleaning play areas surfacing | 600.00 | | 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 11.12.23** |  | 7,259.71 | | **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 |  | 389,376.51 | | Loan | Acle Recreation Centre | 7,500.00 | |  |  | 396,876.51 | |  |  |  | |
|  | Invoices for the proposed December payments had been shared with the councillors in advance of the meeting. All payments made between meetings, and the clerk’s bank reconciliation as at 24th November were checked to bank statements by Jackie Clover.  The parish clerk has applied to close the Nationwide Account and the proceeds will be received on 15th January.  The payments were approved. | | | | |
| 7 | **RECREATION CENTRE** | | | | |
| 7.1 | Trustee Barry Brooks gave a short report. | | | | |
| 8 | **CHOCOLATE BOX AND BRIAN GRINT CENTRE** | | | | |
| 8.1 | The deputy clerk has signed up for a new electricity supplier, EDF, with cheaper rates. | | | | |
| 9 | **FOLLY TREE HOUSE (FORMER BARCLAYS BUILDING)** | | | | |
| 9.1 | The lease for Unit 1 has been signed by Logatheepan Arulampalam, who will trade as Acle Stores. | | | | |
| 9.2 | The lining works in the car park were done on 30th November, but the contractors will be returning shortly to re-do a few errors. | | | | |
| 9.3 | The clerks’ report included an update on the various aspects, including changing the electricity supplier to EDF, electrical repairs and issues with the Christmas tree stand. | | | | |
| 10 | **BUDGET AND PRECEPT** | | | | |
|  | The estimates for the current year to 31st March 2024 suggest that total reserves will decrease by £118,451 to £283,378, due for the most part to the cost of refurbishment of Folly Tree House and the Brian Grint Centre/Chocolate Box.  The cost for 2024/25 is shared between 88 additional average Band D homes, compared with the previous year.  For the budget for the year ending 31st March 2025 the Finance Committee has suggested an increase in precept of between 6.75% and 9.75% per Band D house. An increase of 6.75% results in an increase in the precept of £20,000 (15.48%) which works out as an annual cost of £128.10 per average Band D home, up from £120. An increase of 9.75% results in an increase in the precept of £24,190 (18.72%) which works out as an annual cost of £131.70 per average Band D home.  In order to keep the precept as low as possible, the re-surfacing of the cemetery track would have to be delayed until 2025-26, with minimal works done during 2024-25 to make the track usable by a hearse for burials. Potential transfers to earmarked reserves were also reduced.  The Parish Council’s investments in Government Stocks are outside of the accounts, as required by the Government auditors, and one of the Stocks is due for repayment in April 2024, which increases income by £23,855.  The draft Budget includes money for new play equipment, roofing repairs at Folly Tree House and the refurbishment of the public toilets.  However, there is not enough money to pay for a replacement Fletcher Room community building, which is estimated to cost £250,000 for a two-room building, and associated works. There is only £58,000 in earmarked reserves. The clerk has investigated a Public Works Loan for £200,000. Public consultation would be necessary to show support for a loan.  The budget includes an estimated £20,100 for 2024-25 for the likely annual costs of repayment of a loan of £200,000.  After some discussion the Council agreed an increase in the total precept to £150,935, which is an increase of 16.5% on the current year. This works out as a total of £129.30 per average Band D house, for the year, which is an increase of 7.75% on the cost of £120.00 for the current year, because there are additional houses in the village this year and therefore the total precept is shared between more homes.  It was agreed to investigate the process for applying for a loan and to arrange for public consultation. It was noted, however, that the likely timescales for a consultation and the application process for a loan would make it unlikely that a new building could be installed over the Summer of 2024. It was agreed to investigate the faults with the current building and to look at low-cost repairs to keep the building functional until Summer 2025. | | | | |
| 11 | **HIGHWAYS** | | | | |
| 11.1 | It was agreed to apply for a **Clean Up and Bloom** grant from BDC for £300. The money will be used for floral displays around the village, probably for the beds on A1064. | | | | |
| 11.2 | The clerk reported that Upton Parish Council might be looking to sell a **bus shelter**. It was agreed to investigate if this would be suitable for the westbound sliproad onto A47. | | | | |
| 11.3 | The deputy clerk was asked to check how far in from the kerb the **bollards** in New Road should be installed, ie should they be placed into the verge so that cars can be parked two wheels on the grass, or so that no parking on the verge is possible. | | | | |
| 12 | **MARKETS** | | | | |
| 12.1 | Angela Bishop is planning to run summer markets for 2024 and has arranged provisional dates from 16th June – 1st August. In 2023 the markets made a small profit over the costs of the licences and the wages paid for the setting up and taking down of the stalls. This was noted. | | | | |
| 13 | **NEXT MEETING – The next Council meeting is Monday, 29th January 2024,** at 7.00pm in the Methodist Church. | | | | |
| 13.1 | **Items for the next agenda: -** resilience   * public toilets – the deputy clerk was asked to contact the BDC portfolio holder for the environment, Jan Davis, to get his support for the refurbishment   **Angela Bishop thanked everyone for their help over the year and wished everyone a Happy Christmas.** | | | | |

There being no further business, the meeting was closed.

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