Acle Parish Council

Annual Meeting Date: Monday, 29th January 2024  
Venue: Acle Methodist Church  
at 7.00p.m.

**PRESENT:**   
Angela Bishop – Chair  
Councillors: Sally Aldridge, Jackie Clover, Barry Coveley, Indra Goodson, Tony Hemmingway, Wendy Kenny, Jamie Pizey, Jess Royal and David Stephenson.  
Also, Parish Clerk Pauline James, Deputy Clerk Fiona Richardson and Assistant Clerk Kristina Smyth.

There were sixteen members of the public present. Matters raised included the replacement of the Fletcher Room Community Building.  
  
District and County Councillor Lana Hempsall sent her apologies.

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| 1 | **APOLOGIES** Sarah Carter and Richard Powell. | | |
| 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. David Stephenson’s wife works for the Acle Pre-School in the Fletcher Room. | | |
| 3 | **MINUTES** The minutes of the meeting of 11th December 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.  **Current cemetery:** The contractor has been reminded that several graves need levelling.  The assistant clerk will set up online forms for funeral directors to book interments. | | |
| 4.2.1 | **Fletcher Room:** The Assistant Clerk continues to deal with the insurance claim for the leak and for the issue with the ceiling. | | |
| 4.2.2 | It was agreed to bring forward discussion of a possible replacement modular community building from agenda item 8.  The parish clerk reminded the meeting that it had been agreed at the December meeting that the hoped-for works date of School Summer holidays in 2024 was not going to be possible, given the many stages necessary to replace the building, including applying for a loan.  The **report from the surveyor** who inspected the building *(on 30th November 2023)* when the ceiling needed attention, had been shared with the councillors. The report states that the building should be usable for another year or so, giving time for the design to be decided on, and to apply for grants and possibly a loan. *(The wording in the report is, “When we discussed plans for the building, it was indicated to us that its replacement within the next couple of years was proposed and based upon our inspection, there was no obvious significant or imminent risk that requires the building’s replacement to be brought forward.”)* | | |
| 4.2.3 | The assistant clerk reported on the steps necessary to install a new modular building:  **Ground Lease with NPS** - this needs to be renewed before applying for funding. NPS, acting on behalf of Norfolk County Council, have suggested a reversionary lease, and provided Heads of Terms. This will be sent to the Council’s solicitor for advice.  **Planning** – BDC have suggested that the new building would require planning permission. At this stage Outline Planning Permission will be sought, as the final design is not yet known. Planning Permission will be required before applying for grants as funders will not commit to grants without this being in place.  **Funding** – Acle Parish Council does not have the money to pay for a replacement building. The parish clerk and the deputy clerk have been investigating the process to apply for a **Public Works Loan**. There must be a public consultation period of at least 1 month, and loan approvals are currently taking about 3 months. There are also multiple **grants** that could help reduce the cost to the Council, and therefore the amount of loan needed. The new ground lease and the planning permission must be in place before applying for both a loan & grants.  **Tender** - the contract will have to be put out to tender, in accordance with Government requirements for local authorities.  **Planning** – once the final design is known, it will be necessary to apply for full planning permission.  There will need to be discussions with the **Primary Academy**, to arrange for vehicular access to be able to complete the build.  The assistant clerk has already requested a list from the manager of the pre-school, about what could be done to **improve** the building in the short term; there may be some minor things that would significantly improve the user experience. The assistant clerk has researched grants that are for the upkeep/improvement/repair of community facilities, which may cover some or all of the costs.  There will also be a new **licence** with Acle Pre-School, to ensure more robust terms than are in place with the current hirers’ agreement.  This was all noted. | | |
| 4.2.4 | Three draft drawings of possible designs were shown to the meeting, each with two rooms. | | |
| 4.2.5 | It was agreed:   1. To move forward with the extension of the lease with NCC 2. To starting the process for outline planning permission 3. To starting the grant application process 4. To carry out minor repairs to keep the building safe and attractive for users | | |
| 4.3 | **Flooding:** Jamie Pizey had attended another meeting of Norfolk County Council, Broadland District Council, the landowner and Clarion Housing Association on 26th January. | | |
| 4.4 | **Brian Grint Centre and Chocolate Box:** It was noted that the current lease with the tenant ends on 30th July 2024. The deputy clerk will notify the tenant shortly of the proposed rent increase, in line with the Consumer Price Index, to take effect from 31st July 2024. A rent review was requested by the Finance Committee, and is in line with the current lease with the tenant. A revised lease will also be issued.  A design for a chalkboard sign board was considered, to be fixed to the side wall, aiming to advertise any events being held in the Brian Grint Centre, as well as giving information on the Council’s ownership.  There was some discussion about also adding a display board for archive items and photos. The deputy clerk will get some quotes.  It was agreed not to re-surface the adjacent piece of land so as to save costs. The weeds will be tidied up to make it neater. | | |
| 4.5 | **Folly Tree House:** Units 2 and 3 have started paying monthly rent. Units 1 and 4 are still in their rent-free period to allow for fitting out.  Robert Monument will grit the car park whenever there is a weather warning for snow or ice. A contractor has been booked to put back the rear fence which blew over in recent storms. | | |
| 4.6 | **Public Toilets:** The deputy clerk continues to get quotes for refurbishment. There has been no reply from BDC as to what reserves they have earmarked for the refurbishment. | | |
| 4.7 | **Resilience Plan:** Angela Bishop gave a report on the past work of the Resilience Group; a series of volunteers act as area co-ordinators so that information can be gathered or given out quickly. The Recreation Centre hall is designated as a gathering place for Acle residents. It was agreed to investigate if there is any training available, to update the Group and to encourage new volunteers to sign up. Jamie Pizey suggested that a Resilience Exercise might be useful. | | |
| 4.7 | **Donation for Acle Winter Beer Festival:** Profits will again be shared between local charities, including the Archive Group. It was agreed to pay for the purchase of promotional t-shirts, costing £250. | | |
| 4.7 | The deputy clerk reported thatBDC has re-confirmed the Public Toilets and the Library as **Assets of Community Value**. | | |
| 4.8 | It was agreed to investigate the design of a Parish Council **Logo**, for Council publications, websites and assets. | | |
| 4.9 | Details had been received of the new **Serious Violence Duty**,which requires specified groups to plan to prevent and reduce serious violence, including the Police, Fire Service and the District and County Councils. This was noted. | | |
| 4.10 | It was agreed that Jamie Pizey is the 3rd member for the **personnel committee**, (usually just Angela Bishop and Tony Hemmingway), for when a formal decision might be needed, as is best practice. | | |
| 5 | **PLANNING** | | |
| 5.1 | **Acle Academy** – multi-use sports courts (amended plans) (2023/1758)  The fencing around the court is now 3m high, with 6m high ball nets along the boundaries with the neighbours.  Environmental Health is proposing: *The use of the development shall not take place other than between the hours of 08:00 and 18:00; Monday to Friday. The use shall not be take place on Saturday, Sunday, bank holidays or public holidays.*  *No external lighting shall be erected unless full details of its design, location and level of illuminance (in Lux) provided have first been submitted to and agreed in writing with the local planning authority. Such lighting shall be kept to the minimum necessary for the purposes of security and site safety and shall prevent upward and outward light radiance.*  It was agreed to report no objection to the amended plans, given these recommendations. | | |
| 5.2 | **Police Station -** Hybrid application for conversion of an existing police station into 3 dwellings with Outline Consent and for construction of 2no. 4 bed dwellings (2024/0077).  It was agreed to object to the plans; overdevelopment of the site, and the front houses would obscure the view of the original building. | | |
| 5.3 | **3 -4 Calthorpe Cottages, The Green –** separation of the building into two separate properties (2023/3753). The councillors supported the plans. | | |
| 5.4 | **Land North of Damgate Lane** – change of tenure from self-build to market housing (20212094). This arrived in between meetings. The majority of the planning committee who replied objected to the proposed change in tenure. | | |
| 5.5 | **Decisions by Broadland District Council:** | | |
| 5.5.1 | **3 - 4 Calthorpe Cottages, The Green** - Installation of a biomass heating system and PV panels - Listed Building (2023/3191). Refused. | | |
| 5.5.2 | **Enchanted Florist** (2023/3182) – Prior Approval for the change of use of a retail unit to a dwelling. BDC decided that no prior approval is required so that the unit may be changed into part of the house. | | |
| 5.5.3 | **Acle Garden Machinery** (2023/3382) – increase in size of storage building – approved. | | |
| 6.1 | | **FINANCE REPORT** The finance report had been shared with all councillors in advance of the meeting: |
|  | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Receipts:** |  | £ | | 42 The Street | Rent | 1,295.00 | | 44 The Street | Rent | 600.00 | | Unit 3 | Reimbursement electricity | 318.79 | | Unit 2 | Reimbursement electricity | 1,992.67 | | Unit 2 | Reimbursement extra keys | 19.80 | | Broadland DC | Lottery for foodbank | 15.00 | | Various | Cemetery fees | 1,600.00 | | BDC | Grant for planting | 300.00 | | Upton PC | Share of costs | 28.23 | | HMRC | VAT refund | 17,558.89 | | Nationwide | Closure of account | 95,206.52 | | Lloyds | Bank interest, monthly | 7.64 | | NCC | Additional verge cutting payment | 309.66 | | **Payments made:** |  |  | | Siemens DD | Copier rental | 205.26 | | Telecoms World DD | Phone line for foodbank x 2 | 32.43 | | Comm-Tech DD | Broadband at BGC x 2 | 83.96 | | Total DD | Electricity at public toilets x 3 | 137.90 | | Wave DD | Water at cemetery | 18.17 | | SWALEC | Electricity for streetlights | 578.43 | | Anglian Water DD | Water at allotments | 53.87 | | Employment costs | Employment, pension and exps | 33.00 | | Bycrofts | Letting fee Unit 1 | 1,710.00 | | Bycrofts | Letting fee Unit 4 | 1,110.00 | | A L Shearing | Christmas trees | 360.00 | | SSE | Electricity at FTH | 3,200.00 | | Tesco Mobile | Staff phone x 2 | 36.89 | | C&M Glass | Repairs to windows in flat 42 | 448.80 | | Fiona Richardson | Doorbells for disabled access at FTH | 40.98 | | Seton | Grit spreader | 151.13 | | Wilkersons | Consumables | 72.04 | | Currys | Replacement wash m/c at flat 42 | 329.00 | | East Coast Waste | Skip for Fletcher Room | 220.80 | | Nfk Home Services | Repairs at flat 42 | 216.00 | | Rob Chapman | Repairs at BGC | 140.85 | | Roger Impey | Delivery for foodbank x 2 | 12.60 | | Cullum Line | Lining at FTH car park | 936.00 | | SSE | Electricity at FTH | 1,244.34 | | Pauline James | Various expenses | 118.36 | | Adam Fisher | Christmas lights for tree | 32.50 | | Appliance Plus | Repairs in flat 42 | 54.00 | | Acle Pre-School | Donation towards rent | 275.00 | | JP Chick Ltd | Structural engineer re Fletcher Room | 1,094.40 | | Glasdon Ltd | Bollards for New Road | 1,799.04 | | Mills & Reeve | Legal fees re Unit 1 | 1,516.44 | | Acle Rec Centre | Room hire youth club | 86.25 | | Fiona Richardson | Mobile phone | 26.09 | | **Invoices for Payment:** |  |  | | Various | Employment costs | 7,701.93 | | Flameskill | Extinguisher service – Fletcher Room | 53.40 | | Flameskill | Extinguisher service – BGC | 64.20 | | T T Jones | 4 x LED lanterns | 1,756.32 | | Sharp | Copying | 98.68 | | Acle Methodist | Room hire | 55.00 | | Secker | Service air conditioning Fletcher Room | 34.86 | | Wilkersons | Consumables | 30.47 | | Nfk ALC | Training – Canva for Pauline James | 76.80 | | Hugh Crane Ltd | Consumables | 167.64 | | Connect Electrical | Works at FTH July 2023 | 2,815.27 | | Zen | Christmas lights electricity – 2 years | 74.00 | | Acle Beauty Shack | Christmas lights electricity – 2 years | 54.00 | | Acle Dental Surgery | Christmas lights electricity – 2 years | 81.00 | | High Grade House | Christmas lights electricity – 4 years | 176.06 | | **Balance c/f 29.01.24** |  | 104,172.05 | | **Balances in Savings:** |  |  | | Government Stocks | Gilts (at latest valuation) | 76,037.00 | | BDC | Parish investment scheme | 216,097.64 | | Total monies |  | 396,306.69 | | Loan | Acle Recreation Centre | 7,500.00 | |  |  | 403,806.69 | |  |  |  | |

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|  | Invoices for the proposed January payments had been shared with the councillors in advance of the meeting. December’s payments, all payments made between meetings, and the clerk’s bank reconciliation as at 31st December 2023 were checked to bank statements by Jackie Clover.  Confirmation of the bank balances as reported above were confirmed by Jackie Clover.  A report of Actual v Budget for the 10 months to January was noted.  The payments were approved. |
| 7 | **RECREATION CENTRE** |
| 7.1 | Trustee Barry Brooks gave a short report; the year’s accounts showed an increase in income, but there would be a deficit owing to the refurbishment work done. |
| 7.2 | The Outdoor Bowls Club asked if the Parish Council could pay for half of the cost of new fencing. BDC has said that it is not appropriate use of S106 money as fencing is not really “sports equipment”. The total cost is £3,121 + VAT, so half is £1,560.  Jackie Clover, Barry Coveley and Jamie Pizey declared an interest as Trustees of Acle Recreation Centre, left the meeting and took no part in the discussion or voting.  As there is no budget for the outdoor bowls club, it was agreed to pay for half the cost, £1,560, but to take this from the budget for the Recreation Centre as a whole, for 24/25. |
| 8 | **FLETCHER ROOM COMMUNITY BUILDING** |
|  | This was discussed under item 4.2. |
|  | Prices for replacement buildings were considered in private session later in the meeting. |
| 9 | **BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN** |
| 9.1 | The draft Biodiversity Action Plan was considered. It was agreed to clarify that the proposal to “discourage floodlighting” was for housing and commercial units where the lights might come on overnight, and did not include floodlighting which is turned on for sports events.  It was agreed to add more to facebook etc, to encourage residents to support wildlife and insect-friendly plants in their gardens, and to raise awareness of Plastic-Free Acle and the Refill campaign. |
| 9.2 | Acle & District Men’s Shed have been asked to build some bird boxes and bug hotels to be put up around the Council’s land. |
| 9.3 | Sarah Carter had suggested that the Council applies for the Bees’ Needs Champion scheme. It was agreed to ask Sarah if she would be able to apply for this. |
| 10 | **HIGHWAYS** |
| 10.1 | Residents have reported issues with poor visibility in Reedham Road when exiting Middlesex Terrace, because of cars parked in the space marked by a white H-bar. It was agreed to contact Norfolk County Council to ask that this be looked at again. |
| 10.2 | White H-bars have been added by NCC in Old Road, by the pathway through from Oaks Lea, Gariensis Walk, to raise drivers’ awareness of pedestrians waiting to cross the road. |
| 10.3 | A resident has raised concerns about the risk of flooding in the gardens in Boat Dyke Lane. Most of this water is coming from A1064. The deputy clerk has raised this with NCC Highways who will inspect the drains for A1064 to check that they are clear and working correctly. |
| 10.4 | NCC Highways have agreed to investigate if the underground tank under the playing fields is adequate for the water that comes off Pyebush Lane. |
| 11 | **FINANCE POLICIES** |
|  | The following policies were reviewed and adopted:  Finance Regulations Review of Internal Controls Review of Audit Role of the Responsible Financial Officer |
| 12 | **NEXT MEETING – The next Council meeting is Monday, 26th February 2024,** at 7.00pm in the Methodist Church. |
| 12.1 | **Items for the next agenda:**   * garden at Methodist Church * Archive Group report |
|  | **At this point it was resolved under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 to exclude members of the public to discuss prices for the replacement Fletcher Room Community Building.** |
| 13 | The deputy clerk presented three quotes for a replacement modular community building, ranging from £170,000 to £230,000, plus the costs of the demolition and removal of the current building, access ramps and connection to services. This was noted. |

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9.45pm.

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