



## *Reed Parish Council*

**Clerk: Catharine Toms, 1 High Street, Barkway SG8 8EA**

Tel: 07763 167116 e mail: [clerk@reedparishcouncil.co.uk](mailto:clerk@reedparishcouncil.co.uk)

Councillors Email:

Cllr. Ken Langley (Chair) - [langley@reedparishcouncil.co.uk](mailto:langley@reedparishcouncil.co.uk)

Cllr. Caroline d'Ayala (Vice-Chair) - [dayala@reedparishcouncil.co.uk](mailto:dayala@reedparishcouncil.co.uk)

Cllr. Martin Higgs - [higgs@reedparishcouncil.co.uk](mailto:higgs@reedparishcouncil.co.uk)

Cllr. John Kershaw - [kershaw@reedparishcouncil.co.uk](mailto:kershaw@reedparishcouncil.co.uk)

Cllr. Peter Lawrence - [lawrence@reedparishcouncil.co.uk](mailto:lawrence@reedparishcouncil.co.uk)

### **Draft minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2019 at 8 PM in Reed Village Hall**

**Present Cllrs: K Langley (Chairman), C d'Ayala (Vice-Chair), P Lawrence, M Higgs and J Kershaw.**

**In attendance the Clerk Catharine Toms, Dist. Cllr Tony Hunter, Dist. Cllr Gerald Morris and County Cllr. Fiona Hill and two members of the public.**

The Chairman proposed to move item 7 & 8.1.19 to the end of the meeting. The reason being that matters of a sensitive nature involving staff and salary would be discussed and that members of the public would need to be excluded at that point. Agreed.

1.1.19 **To receive apologies for absence.** None.

2.1.19 **To receive Members Declarations of Interest.** None.

3.1.19 **To approve the Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 31st October and 28<sup>th</sup> November 2018 and to authorise the Chairman to sign them as a true record.** The minutes were approved. It was proposed, seconded and all voted in favour. Agreed.

4.1.19 **To invite Members of the Public to address the meeting.** A resident was present to express concern regarding the safety and appearance of Pittys Pond. It was agreed to suspend standing orders at various points in the meeting to allow contributions from members of the public present.

5.1.19 **Chairman's Report.** The Council was informed that since the last meeting the Appeal regarding The Cabinet had been dismissed. The Head of Planning at North Herts District Council (NHDC) had been in contact to arrange a meeting with representatives from the Parish Council and Save The Cabinet Action Group (SCAG). This had been scheduled for 8<sup>th</sup> January at NHDC.

It was reported that the telephone box containing the defibrillator appeared to have had power failure. BT engineers established that power was going into the box and it was in fact only the light bulb that had failed. This would be replaced. However, BT had no record of a defibrillator having been installed into the telephone box. To regularise this, a contract had now been filled in to include the defibrillator. The Ambulance Service had also checked out the defibrillator and informed that the pads would soon need changing. A Councillor queried what the maintenance requirements were for the defibrillator. The Clerk to check through records and advise at the next meeting. **Action: Clerk**

6.1.19 **To receive update on matters relating to The Cabinet** – Standing Orders were suspended to allow a member of SCAG to report on matters.

- **To ascertain owner's next steps in regard to the dismissal of his appeal**
- **To agree to meet with SCAG and NHDC Enforcement Officer to ascertain**

**detail of the Enforcement and the timetable for completion by the owner**

It was proposed, seconded and agreed that members of the Parish Council would accept the invitation to meet with NHDC Head of Planning to discuss matters relating to The Cabinet. Prior to the meeting with NHDC on 8<sup>th</sup> January, members of SCAG and the Parish Council would meet to get fully prepared. They would expect to have to answer questions from NHDC but also would be putting questions to NHDC such as what the intentions and obligations were of NHDC and ask what had happened with regards to enforcement since the appeal had been dismissed on 11<sup>th</sup> Dec. They were keen to work with NHDC on the matter, the ultimate aim was to get The Cabinet back open again as a village pub. Cllr. Hunter indicated that NHDC would treat the matter very seriously as it was now a legal matter and that NHDC would be led by their Legal Department in dealing with the enforcement. It was noted that there was a 4 year rule by which enforcement needed to take place. At worst this could end in Nov 2019, or at best in Aug 2020, 4 years from when the current owner took domestic occupation of the premises. In either case it was important that the enforcement process was now started quickly.

It was also noted that the owner of The Cabinet continued to carry out works on the property without planning approval. The Enforcement Officer at NHDC had been made aware of this but had said that this matter would not be looked at until the appeal had been determined. Stand Orders were resumed.

**9.1.19 To agree to set date of Tues 14<sup>th</sup> May 2019 to hold the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council, followed by the bi-monthly Council Meeting** - It was explained that due to the ordinary elections due to take place in May 2019, the Annual Meeting needed to take place no later than 14 days after the newly elected Council taking office on 7<sup>th</sup> May. It was therefore proposed, seconded and agreed by all to set the date of 14<sup>th</sup> May 2019 for the Annual meeting and bi-monthly Parish Council Meeting. Clerk to book Village Hall. **Action: Clerk**

**10.1.19 To set a date for the Annual Parish Meeting 2019** - It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all that the Annual Parish Meeting would be held on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May. Also, it would be asked if a representative from Neighbour Watch (NW) Team would like to attend to do a ten minute presentation. Clerk to book Village Hall and liaise with NW Team. **Action: Clerk**

**11.1.19 To receive update on planned Neighbourhood Watch awareness session** - The Clerk to contact the NW Team again and suggest a Saturday morning session at Reed Village Hall with an invite open to residents from nearby villages as well. Failing that, the back up would be to invite them to do the ten minute presentation at the Annual Parish Meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> May. To be reported on again at the March meeting. **Action: Clerk**

**12.1.19 To receive update on Highways issues -**  
**- To discuss the matter of drainage and flooding from pond in The Kilns onto junction of new footpath and Brickyard Lane and agree any necessary action** - Due to boundary changes on The Kilns development and a drainage ditch having been filled in and not piped, flooding was occurring which would eventually affect the highway. The matter needed to be resolved by the developers but they continued to ignore repeated warnings from the Parish Council about this issue, so there was little else the Council could do about it. Herts County Council (HCC) would be contacted regarding clearing the channels from the road into the ditches, this would help to prevent large puddles forming in the village lanes and along The Joint. **Action: PL**

**- To discuss possible speed limit reduction to 20mph and change of signs** - Concern was raised about vehicles travelling too fast within the village and that fact that a 30mph limit was not appropriate. It was thought that HCC would probably require street

lighting to implement a mandatory speed restriction. County Cllr. Hill would have a discussion with the HCC Locality Officer to see if an 'advisory' (without calming measures) speed limit could be done through Locality Budgets. To be reported on at the March meeting.

**13.1.19 To receive update on schedule of maintenance work required to Pittys Pond** – It was reported that the first phase of work would be to remove a stub with three Ash trees and a large bow from another Ash tree. The second phase would be during the summer, once the water level had dropped, to dig out the silt and other rubbish that had accumulated in the pond. This would allow the water table to do its job, retaining water in the pond during the summer months.

Standing Order were suspended to allow a member of the public to query which trees would be removed and to ask if professional contractors would be carrying out the work. It was understood that the work would be carried out free of charge by employees of New Farm under guidance of the Parish Council. Standing orders were resumed.

**14.1.19 To discuss requirement for hedge trimming around the village** – It was agreed that letters would be written to occupiers of properties with overgrown hedges that were obstructing footpaths, to politely request that excess vegetation be trimmed back as soon as possible. The Clerk to write template letter and pass over to Councillors for appropriate delivery. **Action: Clerk/PL**

**15.1.19 To discuss recent Playground Inspection report and agree any necessary work required** – The report had not indicated any major work needed. However, Councillors would meet to go through the report and physically check on the equipment and agree any other work required. To be reported on again at the March meeting. **Action: PL/CD**

**16.1.19 To review shortlist and agree action for the usage of Push Energy Community Contribution fund monies** – it was agreed that the list of ideas would be sent out to Councillors and they would be asked to rank the ideas, this information would then be collated and brought to the March meeting for further action. **Action: CD/All**

**17.1.19 To receive matters for report and or referral to next agenda. (Information only)** – For referral to next agenda: Push Energy Community Contribution Funds Shortlist, Maintenance requirements for the defibrillator, Update on The Cabinet, Speed limit for the village, Play area maintenance requirements.

**18.1.19 To note correspondence received. (Information only)** The Clerk reported that there was nothing not already covered elsewhere apart from the final Consultation on the NHDC Local Plan – Modifications Report. The document would be read through and it would be decided if a response was needed. **Action: KL**

**19.1.19 To agree date of next meeting.** Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2019. Agreed. Members of the public left the meeting at 9.30pm.

**7.1.19 To receive financial report from the clerk and approve accounts for payment.** Copies of the accounts and a list of payments for approval were handed to all Councillors. Accounts showed a bank balance of £12,632.69 of which £8,348 was Push Energy Community Contribution (ring-fenced for special projects), £945.37 was Bonfire Night Reserves, leaving general reserves at £3,339.32. The Bonfire Night Reserves of £945.37 would be held safe for next year's event. Accounts for the Clerk's salary and PAYE were agreed. Accounts for village maintenance item, play area inspection report, dog bin emptying for 2018/19, training and admin. equipment were also approved. **Action: Clerk**  
It was queried if the reserve fund should be put into an account that would earn some interest. Appropriate accounts would be investigated and reported back to the March meeting. **Action: CD**

**8.1.19 To consider proposed budget for 2019/20 and agree Precept request.** The actual income and expenditure from Apr 18 to Jan 19 along with forecast income and expenditure Feb 19 to Mar 19 was examined in detail. It was explained that there had been a national salary review for Clerks and further to an assessment of the role at Reed Parish

Council by officers at HAPTC it indicated that there had been an underpayment of salary since April 2018 and there was a further increment due from April 2019. The forecast to 31.03.2019 had been adjusted to allow for a back payment of salary. The budget for 2019/20 reflected the new appropriate salary. As general reserves were being eroded and in view that there was a possible election in May 2019, it was considered that an increase in Precept was needed to maintain a sensible level of reserves. The permission to borrow from the PWLB did not have any impact on the budget or the proposed Precept application. It was proposed, seconded and all voted unanimously in favour to agree the proposed budget and associated Precept application of £5,000.00. Agreed

The Clerk to put in Precept request to NHDC by 18<sup>th</sup> January. **Action: Clerk**

A working party to meet to do a full assessment of Clerk's job, finalise back pay owed for 2018/19 and agree salary for 2019/20. **Action: KL/CD**

The Clerk in future months to audit hours worked and tasks undertaken to assess if the estimated 16 hours per month estimated to do the job was appropriate. **Action: Clerk**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.20 PM