

# LITTLE RIBSTON PARISH COUNCIL

## **Minutes of Little Ribston Parish Council extraordinary meeting held on August 7th 2018 at 7pm**

PRESENT: Cllr M. Bell, Cllr C. Sewell, Cllr. Marr

IN ATTENDANCE: Melanie Spencer (Clerk and RFO) and 3 parishioners

### **1. APOLOGIES**

No absences

RESOLVED: That this be noted

### **2. DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY AND OTHER INTERESTS**

TO RECEIVE DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS OF ANY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS FOR THE PURPOSES OF SECTION 31 OF THE LOCALISM ACT 2011 AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT INTERESTS UNDER THE MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT

**Resolved: To note no interests declared**

### **3. PARISH COUNCIL Minutes**

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on February 20<sup>th</sup> 2018 as a true and correct record.

**RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday June 19<sup>th</sup> and June 27<sup>th</sup> 2018 had been approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman of the meeting.**

### **4. Verges**

Three quotes had been received

G. Marsden £70 plus Vat per cut

G Baxter £80 per cut

Chris Trott £270 monthly

**Resolved: To action the appointment of G Marsden to cut the verges monthly from March to October, beginning with October cut.**

### **5. Laptop /Transparency Fund**

A response from the YLCA with regard to the use of the transparency fund was read and discussed.

**Resolved: To action Clerk to research and buy a laptop which would be appropriate for council business and for the cost to the Clerk to be reimbursed immediately.**

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## 6. Training

Cllr Sewell stated that the Clerk's salary, costs and training is costing over half the budget and in her opinion training should not be done until the spending on everything is considered first and the Cllrs are up to speed with the spending of the PC.

The Clerk pointed out that the Cllrs had discussed the budget and accounts at the last ordinary meeting for over an hour

Cllr Sewell stated being a new Councillor that she didn't understand the accounts at that meeting.

The Clerk stated that the Councillors had reviewed the accounts and budget at the AGM in June and had resolved to sign off the accounts and AGAR to state they were happy with the finances of the Council.

It is important that if they are unsure of anything it should have been brought to the attention of the meeting before they signed rather than after, to prevent any issues later.

The Clerk explained how the budget works with regard to the precept and pointed out training had been budgeted for and that the Parish Council reserves were a matter for the Councillors to decide and that they were lower than recommended due to a number of factors including;

Low precept demands for a number of years which did not take into consideration contingencies for new expenditure such as GDPR, transparency funding and the extra hours required for the Clerk to fulfil the role.

Clerk in previous years working a number of unpaid hours.

New Clerk's contract which complies with legislation which states number of hours worked and agrees to pay for any extra hours worked.

Parishioners' complaint about formal procedures not being fully complied with, which has led to more meetings and therefore clerk's time to comply

Cllr Bell explained that the Clerk had taken on (reluctantly) the role of RFO which required extra hours to deal with Payroll, HMRC and the accounts which no one else would complete.

Cllr Sewell stated that she had offered to help with the accounts on a number of occasions as she was a part qualified accountant.

Cllr Bell read out the YLCA response with regard to training for the Clerk.

Parishioners asked if they could speak.

**Resolved: To allow Parishioners to contribute to the discussion**

Dr Hopkins Stated that any business which spent close to 50% of its revenue on governance costs would not be viable.

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Mr Newton argued that the reason the Clerk was a paid employee of the Council was that it is a responsible position, which requires ongoing training to insure things are done properly.

The Clerk stated that the training courses run by YLCA and attended by the Clerk had highlighted many of the issues with the PC's procedures, and therefore were very valuable.

The Clerk pointed out that a large part of any organisation including local government was made up of salaries. She also pointed out that the same people who had publically criticised the PC with regard to improper procedure were now complaining about the cost of training which would help the PC and the Clerk to work more effectively.

Dr Hopkins responded by stating that he wasn't against training and that the Clerk could receive training from manuals and You Tube video tutorials.

The Clerk stated that she had offered her time to the PC and made herself available for the training as she believed it to be beneficial to the Parish; however she now felt unable to attend because of the negative response received

Cllr Bell and Cllr Marr stated they believed the training to be vital.

A vote took place

**Resolved: To note Cllr Bell and Cllr Marr in favour, Cllr Sewell against.**

Ms Franklin asked why the Council had scheduled a meeting at such a time when two Councillors could not attend.

The Clerk explained that the meeting was urgent because no agreement was reached between Councillors with regard to purchasing a laptop and there were HMRC deadlines which may result in a fine if not completed by the deadline.

That parishioners had complained about verges not been cut and the training courses were getting full.

It was also pointed out by the Clerk that Cllr Long and Cllr Adams were no longer Councillors as they had not returned the correct paper work by the required deadlines.

Dr Hopkins asked if HMRC could be paid some other way, instead of using a computer. The Clerk explained that she needed the computer to complete the live Payroll information on the HMRC site.

Dr Hopkins argued that the PC was not viable and should be dissolved or merged with another PC to save money.

The Clerk stated that would be a matter for the parishioners and the principle authority to decide

Cllr Bell stated that in her opinion the complaints about training and complaints about the Clerks salary were due to unjustified personal reasons and were creating bad feeling within the PC.

Cllr Marr stated that this was a Parish Council meeting and not a parishioners meeting and that in her opinion the parishioners and some Cllrs were creating extra expense to the Parish by insisting in emails and meetings that the Clerk repeatedly use the allocated two hours a week to justify her role, when it could be used on useful PC business.

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Dr Hopkins asked who had voted Cllr Marr onto the Council  
Cllr Sewell stated that Cllr Marr had been voted on by the other Cllrs.

**The Chairman brought the meeting to a close at 8.35pm**

**Next meeting August 28<sup>th</sup> 2018at 7pm**

**Melanie Spencer**

**Clerk/RFO**

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