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Minutes of the meeting of Newstead Parish Council held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 12th June 2024 at the Newstead Centre, Tilford Road, Newstead

Present: Cllrs; Emma Astill, Kyle Futers, Ernest Hardy, Tim Moore, Melanie Sherlock and Glynis Williams. Also present was Jane Johnson (Locum Clerk) and Borough Cllrs Martin Smith and Sue Pickering.

24.40 To Receive apologies for absence

Apologies were received from County Cllr Chris Barnfather and Borough Cllr Stuart Bestwick.

24.41 Declaration of members' interests for this meeting.

None. Cllr Hardy passed on a complaint regarding soil and a large stone being left on a grave. There was no known reason why this would occur and the most likely explanation was put down to children messing around.

24.42 To receive reports from County and Borough Councillors

Cllr Smith continued to chase Gedling BC over the lease for the children's play park, where he understood that no decision had been made by GBC as to whether to renew the lease agreement with the Notts CC. He had spoken to the relevant portfolio holder appraising him/her of the position as regards the lease agreement. In referring the General Election, he advised that the current MP Mark Spencer continues to 'bang the drum' for the rural parts of the borough. Cllr Astill noted that concerns raised by her previously with his office did not always get a response.

Cllr Pickering advised she had received a complaint from a resident as part of an ongoing neighbour dispute and the matter was now in the hands of Environmental Health department of Gedling BC, who would be raising the matter with the individual concerned.

24.43 Public session: Members of the public can take this opportunity to discuss Parish matters with Councillors

There were no members of the public present.

24.44 Clerks report on outstanding matters

24.25 - War Memorial – So far about 12 hours work has been undertaken on the site by Cllr Sherlock and Mrs Johnson, which primarily involves cutting out either weeds, brambles or self-set sycamores and removing dead branches from existing shrubs. Out of the four corners of the existing planting scheme, two have now been cleared, with two yet to do. Because of the amount of soil exposed, it was agreed not to replant at this stage, but to carry on with clearing out. This will then give a better assessment of how many plants/shrubs will be needed in future to complete the project. A further session on the memorial has been planned for Friday 14th June

24.27 - The Acting Clerk has drawn up 2 policies for approval by the Council, details of which are enclosed with the agenda.

24.33 - The RFO has now transferred £128.14 to the 1st Able Scout group as agreed.

24.35 – Details of the jobs put forward by the Council have been sent to Ravenshead Parish Council as agreed, with the exception of the painting of the Old Cemetery gates. This included a request to reinstate the seat next to the bus stop at the junction of Hucknall Road/Tilford Road. With the limit on the number of hours worked by the Lengthsman in any one month, it is anticipated working through this list will take some time.

Jane Johnson 5th June 2024

The planters have now all been planted out for summer by Cllr Sherlock at a cost of approx. £70.00. Cllr Astill felt it was very impressive that the planting out had been done for such a small cost. Cllr Sherlock confirmed she had shopped around for the plants, which had come from several different sources. In terms of watering, the Acting Clerk advised she had spoken with the Newstead Centre and it was agreed that Cllrs could fill up any watering cans from the cold-water tap situated in the courtyard area of the Newstead Centre. Cllr Williams asked whether the pictures she had forwarded had been passed to the Lengthsman on weeds growing up decorative metal railings in the terraces. In addition to the weeds growing up the railings, the uneven surface of the brick paving was noted.

24.37 – To note and agree tree work at the Old Cemetery – Further correspondence has now been sent to Forest Farms on what other options are available, aside from the complete felling of the tree, but a response from them has yet to be received. In addition, the Clerk has sought a further quotation from a different company known to have previously carried out tree work in the cemeteries, and has asked for alternative options which may be considered by the Council with regard to the tree. This quote has now been received and copies of this were distributed at the meeting. An email from the contractor was read out by the Clerk which advised :-

'there is also a just case for pollarding as an alternative to felling, not least because a small number of trees can tolerate the disease and recover and these could potentially be the source of our future ash trees, also pollarding keeps the tree's wildlife value and future management is easier and safer. HOWEVER, if you do pollard rather than fell then you must remember that if this tree dies it could still pose a risk to the public so it is important to keep a visual check for any deterioration and also a survey every couple of years is a MUST. As it was noted by the Council that a number of Ash trees in the cemetery were also suffering from Ash Die back, it was accepted the Council were already committed to carrying out further tree surveys in future, so the additional expense of surveying this tree would be mitigated. Following discussion, the Council agreed to opt for pollarding at a cost of £2.5k, to allow for the possibility of the tree recovering.

The lack of any action by Gedling Borough Council on the bank adjacent Foundry Terrace/Garden Terrace was again discussed, whereby weeds and brambles coming from the land was preventing cars being able to park adjacent to this. Also lack of maintenance generally when Cllr Moore reported that previously an office chair had been flytipped on the land and was not removed for some time. Cllr Smith suggested that the Parish Council in an effort to get things moving could perhaps write to VIA (Paula Johnson), who may be able to intercede by requiring the landowner to remove any obstructions from the Highway and this was agreed.

24.45 To confirm the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on the 8th May 2024 as accurate
The Council accepted the minutes as accurate

24.46 Correspondence received

Baby Bank Update – A summary of all the responses received to this consultation had been circulated to Cllrs where part of the next step was to make contact with all those organisations who had expressed an interest in developing a baby bank. Mrs Johnson advised that she had spoken to the Newstead Centre but nothing further had been heard at this time.

Decision Notice on 2024/0053 – Oak View Lodge, Station Ave, Newstead - The officers report and subsequent recommendations to approve the proposed office extension had been circulated to Cllrs. Whilst the extension itself was not felt to be out of keeping with the existing dwelling, it was noted that as a result of this decision an important principle had been established. This being that for new homes built in the green belt, which had replaced a smaller existing dwelling, extensions would not be considered as 'inappropriate development' so long as they did not extend the floorspace of the present dwelling by more than 50%, rather than as previously advocated based on the floor space of the original dwelling.

Planning

None

Finance

24.47 To note/approve the payment of invoices received in May 2024 and to authorise the payment of outstanding invoice

Payments and income received during May were noted and approved. The Council also approved the payment in respect of the wages and expenses for the Locum Clerk incurred during May. The Chairman and two Cllrs signed the list of payments as agreed.

24.48 To note the budget and review the financial summary as at the 31st May 2024.

The Clerk drew attention to the amount of income received by the Council over the first six months of the year in respect of cemetery fees. A refund of Statutory Maternity Pay had also yet to be received from HMRC. However other than these items, expenditure was as expected. Cllr Moore felt the Council should be more proactive in promoting the grants, which were available from the parish council as it was noted applications for grants had dropped off in recent years. The Council noted the position but advised that since Covid a lot of activities which the Council previously supported e.g. bonfire evening and the various church fetes no longer took place. Nevertheless, it was agreed to promote the grants available via the Council's facebook page.

Cllr Smith then drew attention to some correspondence which had been sent out by Gedling Borough Council which was available to the voluntary sector and parish councils. He explained this was funding given to Gedling Borough Council by the Nottinghamshire County Council and that if it wasn't spent would need to be returned. The end date for any bid for these funds which comprised of two elements and was primarily to provide services to vulnerable users was the 28th June and, so far, take up for this grant was low. Following discussion, it was agreed that a grant might be used towards the cost of the Xmas lunch which could help tackle isolation in the village and also towards a trip out for children attending the youth club. The Clerk is to explore whether funding would cover these activities and submit a bid, if possible.

Matters affecting the Parish Council

24.49 Policies recommended for Approval by the Council

- a) Model Publication Scheme for Adoption by the Council – A revised scheme had been circulated prior to the meeting including observation from the Clerk/RFO and was based on the model recommended by the Information Commissioner's Office. This was approved by the Council with no further amendments.
- b) Complaints Policy – Based on a model recommended by NALC, this was approved by the Council as circulated with the agenda.

General Matters

24.50 Review of the Lengthsman's Scheme from 2025 onwards.

It was noted that the hours allocated for the Lengthsman during 2024/2025 will be 71.5 hours per annum. Also, that the agreement is coming to an end in March 2025. An appeal is also to be made to Via to increase the amount given in any future years, where it was noted any increase in pay to the Lengthsman made at present, simply reduced the hours he was able to work for each parish. Cllr Smith advised the intention of the request from Ravenshead was to ensure continuation of the scheme, ahead of the elections to be held in 2025. Mrs Johnson confirmed that in 2015, the amount of hours worked by the Lengthsman was 78, so any pay rises agreed in future would continue to erode the number of hours worked by the Lengthsman. Nor was it clear in whether these hours also included travel time. It was agreed by Council to support continuation of the scheme, but also to press that any future funding agreed needs to be increased, or contain some form of index linking.

24.51 Garden Competition update and prizes to be agreed.

Cllr Williams advised that judging for the competition had now taken place with a winning entry agreed in all the categories. She explained that she and the other judges faced a dilemma with regards to the Children's

section of the competition whereby Newstead infant and primary school had also fielded a class entry into this section. It was felt that the resources of the school gave the school entry an obvious advantage in the competition over those entries submitted by individual families/children. It was therefore agreed by the Council to award an extra prize to both the school and for individual entries. It was agreed that each class winner would be given a £20 Amazon voucher with winners in the adult section being presented with flowers (3 in total, as the same individual had won 2 of the categories). The future of the competition in its present format was then discussed, where it was noted the number of entries continued to reduce each year. An alternative suggestion in place of the garden competition was a Sunflower competition whereby children at the village school were each given sunflower seeds, with the winner being the best sunflower grown. It was agreed that all winners of the garden competition would be contacted beforehand to ensure their presence at the prize giving ceremony, when photographs of the winners would also be taken.

24.52 To approve quote for repainting of the Old Cemetery Gates

A quote had been received from Sherwood decorators at a cost of £166 to paint the gates at the Old Cemetery. This was approved by the Council.

24.53 To confirm the date and time of the next meeting:

This was agreed for Wednesday 10th July 2024 starting at 7.30pm.