



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF AYLSHAM TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN AYLSHAM TOWN HALL, ON WEDNESDAY 6th DECEMBER 2023 at 7.00 p.m.**

PRESENT: Trevor Bennett Chairman Kevin Cunnane
David Anderson Mary Evans
Joan Bennett Kay Montandon
Cheryl Bould Pat Prekopp

Sue Lake - Town Clerk Wendy Murphy – Finance Officer

6 members of the public

Prior to the start of the meeting the chairman asked councillors to join him in offering congratulations to Wendy Murphy who has just been appointed as Town Clerk at North Walsham. Wendy will be leaving Aylsham at Christmas

- 1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES**
Apologies were received from Dave Curtis, Catherine Fletcher and Annette Overton
- 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**
None Made
- 3. MINUTES**
Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 1st November 2023 had previously been circulated and were confirmed and signed by the chairman.
Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 14th November 2023 had previously been circulated and were confirmed and signed by the chairman.
- 4. INFORMATION ON MATTERS ARISING NOT ON THE AGENDA**
Nothing raised.
- 5. TO CONSIDER CO-OPTION OF NEW COUNCILLOR**
An application had been received from Lorna Garner.
It was proposed and **AGREED** to co-opt Lorna to the council.
After the Declaration of Acceptance of Office was signed and witnessed Lorna joined the meeting as a councillor

6. **REPORTS FROM POLICE, COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS**

Police – PC Ward advised there were a total of 41 calls to the police over the last month – resulting in 14 crimes. These included criminal damage to an oak tree but on speaking to the person involved he advised he was not responsible for the previous damage to trees. There were 3 shoplifting crimes and five teenage assaults on parents. He also advised he had been contacted by Highways regarding the state of the highway on Spa Lane and a site meeting will be held soon.

County Council – Not in attendance – Steve Riley sent his apologies and had not provided a written report

District Council – Sue Catchpole advised the grants panel meeting was scheduled to take place on Thursday 7th when the cricket application will be discussed. This grant pot is heavily oversubscribed.

Credits for Nutrient Neutrality should start to be available in the spring costing £3-4,000 per dwelling.

A mobile council information point will start in the early spring.

7. **ADJOURNMENT OF THE MEETING FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Philip MacDonald – Chief Executive of ACT attended the meeting to advise councillors that 2025 will see the 40th anniversary of Aylsham Care Trust and the intention is to celebrate with a series of events. This will be to both thank the community for their support and also act as an advertisement for their services, He would like to ask the Town Council for their support but as yet does not know what that will entail.

He also advised that they had received funding for Warm Spaces from Norfolk Community Foundation. Although this was not used greatly last year ACT still felt it was important to be able to offer the service again this year. They have also received funding for IT training should there be enough interest.

A resident spoke of his concern over the number of solar panels being installed at Heydon Road as this seemed far in excess of what was needed for the property. The Town Council had already discussed the plan. Sue Catchpole advised that should the planning officer be likely to approve the plan then she had called it in.

He also advised of a problem of flooding at the bottom of Heydon Road and who he should contact. PC Ward advised he had already spoken to highways regarding this.

8. **TO ANSWER QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

Kay Montandon had asked the following:

‘I would like the opportunity to seek the Council's approval to talk to various health providers in the town to see if they would appreciate our support in promoting, publicising and giving greater visibility to health provision - not just doctors but all the support and alternative provisions (physios, mental health support, gyms, nutritionists etc etc) Might we, for example, consider putting on a health day to gather providers together at the town Hall and allow residents to have informal chats and arrange further consultations. For very little investment this could have a positive impact on the wellbeing of the town and also demonstrate the concern of the council to improve lives.’

Councillors discussed this in detail and although acknowledging some of the difficulties were of the opinion it was still worth pursuing and **AGREED** that Kay should investigate further and report back.

9. TO CONSIDER PLANNING ISSUES

a) APPLICATIONS DETERMINED

Information provided with the agenda was **noted**.

b) APPLICATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

2023/3359

Land south of Spa Lane

Proposed erection of six detached holiday lodges and formation of a single car parking area, access road and ancillary works

Town Council Response – No Objection in principle but concerned at lack of promised reports and outcome of further issues required by Highways

2023/3389

3 John O’Gaunt Close

Removal of existing conservatory and replacement with flat roof extension to rear and side including partial conversion of the garage

Town Council Response – No Objection

2023/3495

103 Norwich Road

Proposed first floor rear extension

Town Council Response – No Objection

2023/3563

83 Cawston Road

Erection of new dwelling using existing access

2023/3566

83 Cawston Road

Demolition of existing builders store and erection of new single storey dwelling

Town Council Response – The two plans were considered together. The Town Council objected as the plans made no reference to the footpath and were a considered a cramped development out of keeping with the area.

2023/3609

194 Hungate Street

Detached garage workshop to rear

Town Council Response – No Objection

c) REQUEST FOR PLANNING CONSIDERATION

A request to consider asking that swift boxes be installed in new builds when considering planning applications had been received. Members felt this should be added to the biodiversity policy and would be discussed later in the meeting.

10. POTENTIAL NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS

a) To discuss any updated information on Norwih Road site

Nothing further has been received.

b) To note the response to the Burgh Road site

The response has been submitted to Broadland District Council.

The response from Anglian Water is now on the planning page and it was felt this was a poor response and suggested it should be challenged. Anglian Water advise they do not have the capacity at the moment but will be obligated to provide it but give no timescales. It was suggested contacting them and asking for a meeting.

Discussion also took place on the poor design of the development. The developers had advised that the drawings provided were possibly not giving the right impression. It was felt the Town Council should continue to press this point.

There was still disappointment at the lack of solar panels but the developers are unlikely to change their stance on this.

11. FINANCE

a) To receive and adopt the Monthly Financial Report to 24.11.23

This was adopted.

b) To receive and adopt the Scrutineer Report July – September

This was adopted.

12. BUDGET 2024/25

The Town Clerk advised that with the imminent departure of the Finance Officer the staffing figures will need to be adjusted.

The Town Council were asked to approve in principle the other figures in the budget and reworked sums will be brought to the next meeting.

Budgets were agreed in principle except for the Open Spaces budget. Councillors did not feel they could justify the large increase requested by the Recreation Ground Committee. It was **AGREED** that the request from the Recreation Ground Committee should be reduced from £120,595 to £65,000.

13. TOWN CLERKS REPORT

The Town Clerk presented and updated her report.

Christmas – The Town Council offices will close midday on Friday 22nd December and reopen on Tuesday January 2nd. There may be a need to work from the main Town Hall for a few days as work to repair the ceiling in the entrance way above the offices may take place immediately after Christmas.

Blickling Christmas Event – Offer of free entry

Marsham School – consultation on closure at the end of the school year. Marsham will then move into the Aylsham catchment area

Winter Pressure Grants – these are being offered again. Last year no one actually attended any of the sessions. Consideration of showing a film in the Town Hall with free tea and coffee to be considered.

14. TO RECEIVE CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The vicar had asked for a volunteer to read at the carol service on the 17th December. Kevin Cunnane volunteered and Lorna Warner offered to be a stand by.

15. PRIDE IN PLACE

a) To consider a proposal for Pride in Place Funding

The Town Clerk had prepared a report on possible funding under this scheme. It was too early to look at any funding for a new pavilion but instead the proposal was to re-surface the Smile Parks, replace the footpath through the Recreation Ground from the two car parks and also pay for the feasibility study for the crossing on Burgh Road.

It was proposed and **AGREED** to make the application in line with the report

b) To consider an application for a 'Clean Up and Bloom' Grant

It was proposed and **AGREED** to make the application to this fund for £300 for the purchase of plants

c) To consider a request for support from Aylsham Older Peoples Association

The Aylsham Older peoples Association are looking to apply from the same funding pot for solar panels and are looking for support from the Town Council. It was **AGREED** to do this.

Their request was unclear whether they were also asking for a grant from the Town Council but as nothing specific was requested then no grant was considered.

16. RECREATION GROUND

a) To receive the Recreation Ground Minutes 17 October 2023

These were noted.

b) To receive an update

Cheryl Bould advised that the meeting with CAN had established that anyone on the committee has to be a Trustee. She is remaining as an observer only until the Town council makes its decision on future funding.

She advised that the meetings are more productive but there is lots to do and very few volunteers to do it.

Lorna Garner asked if they needed any particular input but it was just general. The Rec Committee are holding a meeting on the 19th which will be a drop-in session to see what is happening and all are welcome.

A new employee has been engaged and started on December 4th.

17. HIGHWAYS MATTERS

a) To receive further details on Parish Partnership Proposal

Following the suggestion of creating bus stops near Budgens for when the Market Place or roads to the north of the town are closed the clerk had contacted the Highway Engineer who agreed it was a suitable proposal. She had also contacted Sanders who were also in favour.

b) To consider applying for Parish Partnership funding
Unfortunately there are no costs available yet but an application can be made and once the costs are known if considered too high the offer can be refused. It was proposed and **AGREED** to make the application

c) To receive any updates
As mentioned earlier Spa Lane has started to deteriorate again

18. OPEN SPACES

a) To consider a report on future Grounds Maintenance options
The Town Clerk had prepared a report on the possibility of taking the grass cutting in-house. The main disadvantage would be possibly staff sickness and holidays but it was felt this could be overcome.
It was proposed and **AGREED** to take the grass cutting in-house

b) To consider a proposal for new fencing at The Staithe
At the recent summer inspections the state of the fence around the Staithe was commented on. The clerk had received a quote for estate style fencing to include the whole perimeter and add in a vehicle gate (for grass cutting) and a pedestrian gate. This amounted to just over £6,000. Before seeking other quotes and also planning permission agreement in principle to the scheme was required.
This was **AGREED**.

c) To consider the removal of Sea Buckthorn from the MUGA
Again, at the summer inspections the surface of the cage at the MUGA was noted to have been made uneven by roots. Before any consideration of resurfacing can be made the roots need to be addressed. The tree surgeon advised that the plants causing the issue was sea buckthorn and needed to be cut down and the stumps poisoned. Some members were unhappy about these but acknowledged the need .
It was **AGREED** to take this action. An alternative plant will be considered to take its place

d) To agree and adopt a Biodiversity Policy
It is now a requirement for Town Council not only to be aware of biodiversity but also to have a policy. The draft policy was accepted with the addition of examples of wildlife elements to include in planning. These were swift bricks and hedgehog highways.
The policy was adopted.

19. CITTASLOW COMMITTEE

a) To receive minutes of Cittaslow Meeting held 15th November 2023
These were noted. The issue of the Communications Officer will be discussed at the next meeting

b) To consider the request for other groups to use the Cittaslow logo.
This was **AGREED**

c) To confirm decisions made by the Cittaslow Committee

These were **AGREED**

20. CLIMATE COMMITTEE

a) To note Minutes of ACE Meeting 6th November 2023

These were noted. The new procedure for meetings was agreed and the recent meeting was more productive.

b) To confirm decisions made by the Climate Committee

These were confirmed. It is anticipated that Jerome Mayhew will be attending a meeting in January

21. EVENTS COMMITTEE

a) To receive minutes of Events Meeting held 15th November 2023

These were noted

b) To confirm decisions made by the Events Committee

These were confirmed

c) To receive an update on the Christmas Lights Switch On

Despite the poor weather the attendance was very good and the event went well. Thanks were expressed to everyone involved with special thanks to Donna Butcher who was the main organiser of the event.

22. CHURCHYARD COMMITTEE

a) To receive minutes of Churchyard Meeting 27th November 2023

These were noted.

b) To agree to continue working with Rossi Long on the repairs to the wall

Rossi Long have created the structural document for the wall. They are also prepared to assist with the tender document and oversee the construction. As this will be a long and complicated process the clerk felt it was imperative to have a professional involved.

This was **AGREED**.

c) To discuss the striking of the church clock

Now the bells have been repaired the chiming of the clock can be reinstated. The Town Clerk has contacted the horologist but is still waiting for a response. There is a request for the clock to be silent at night but there is no guarantee that this will be possible. It was thought this was preferable with no striking between 10pm and 7am. If this is not possible a decision will need to be made whether there is a return to full striking or no striking.

d) To receive any updates

The work to the trees has been completed

23. RIVER WATER

David Anderson advised he was having difficulty contacting people so will continue trying and report back at the next meeting.

24. ARCHIVES

To consider a report on a photo library website – This was **AGREED**.

25. TO NOTE ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/FUTURE AGENDA

Nothing Raised

26. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The scheduled date for the meeting was the 3rd January. Due to the proximity to the New Year it was agreed to change this.

The date was confirmed as **Thursday January 11th 2024 at 7.00pm**

CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.38p.m.

Minutes Agreed..... 11th January 2024

DRAFT