

Minutes of Great Melton's Annual Parish Council Meeting

Thursday 5 May 2022 at 7.30 pm, held at Great Melton Village Hall

Parish Councillors present: Rob Richardson (Chairman), Bruce Fleming (Vice-Chairman), Mary Barnard, Michelle Collins, Peter Markham, Liesl Richardson and Ian Sears. Also present: Luisa Cantera (Parish Clerk). There were no members of the public present.

1 Election of Chairman for the coming year

Cllr R Richardson opened the meeting and invited nominations for the office of Chairman. Cllr R Richardson was nominated by Cllr Barnard and seconded by Cllr Sears. With no further nominations, all councillors agreed to elect Cllr R Richardson to serve as Chairman for the coming twelve months. He signed a declaration of acceptance of office and said that he wishes to stand down as Chairman for 2023-24.

2 Election of Vice-Chairman for the coming year

The Chairman invited nominations for the office of Vice-Chairman. Cllr Fleming was nominated and seconded. With no further nominations, all councillors agreed to elect Cllr Fleming to serve as Vice-Chairman for the coming twelve months.

3 Apologies for absence

All parish councillors were present at the meeting. Margaret Dewsbury (District and County Councillor) sent her apologies.

4 Members' declarations of interest in items on the agenda

The Chairman declared an interest in item 8.1 as tenant of Town Field.

5 Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2022

The minutes of the meeting were approved without amendment and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

6 Clerk's report

The Clerk gave a summary of her report, which is available to read on the website. She explained that most of her time in the past few weeks had been dealing with year-end finance, reviewing policies and researching the answers to questions from Equinor regarding Town Field. The access strip of land to Town Field appears to be unregistered and Cllr Collins offered to help the Clerk with reading the legal documents and registering the land.

7 Open forum for public participation

No members of the public were present.

8 Updates from councillors

8.1 Update on the Sheringham Shoal Extension and Dudgeon Extension Project

The Parish Council's land agent met with Equinor and other land agents in late March to discuss Equinor's proposals for off-shore wind farm cabling to be routed through the village. There is still much to negotiate between landowners, the land agents who represent them and Equinor and further updates will follow. The Clerk was asked to contact the land agent to ask about compensation for future loss of income for Town Field.

8.2 Update from councillors on any recent meetings attended

Cllr L Richardson and Cllr Fleming attended a Norwich Research Triangle meeting in March hosted by George Freeman MP. Parish, District and County Councillors from villages close to the Norwich Research Park had been invited to the meeting. The purpose of the discussions is to create a stronger voice with which the communities can better shape their futures, such as improving local amenities, putting in place walking and cycling routes, aiming for net zero, and positive housing development. The group will be working on defined aims and objectives.

The Chairman, Cllr Fleming and Cllr Markham met with Adam Mayo from Highways in February. Anglian Water was working in the village at that time and Mr Mayo was able to follow-up on a few issues identified during the meeting.

9 Consideration of appointment of a Parish Councillor onto the village hall/pavilion committee

The Clerk was asked at the last meeting to find out whether the village hall committee should have a parish councillor as a trustee. This was discussed at their March meeting and the secretary confirmed after much discussion and research that one of the three trustees should be a parish councillor. A willing villager was appointed as the 'parish representative' and the committee suggested that this person could remain unless the Parish Council wished to appoint a councillor. The minutes of the village hall committee were shared with councillors prior to the meeting. The Council **RESOLVED** to put forward Ian Sears with Mary Barnard as substitute as the Parish Council village hall trustee. The Clerk will contact the committee secretary.

10 Finance

10.1 Review of the asset register for 2021-22

The Clerk presented the asset register. There was one addition (the new noticeboard purchased in April 2021) and one disposal (the old noticeboard, formally disposed of earlier in the year). The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the asset register.

10.2 Internal Auditor's report and consideration of recommendations

The internal audit took place on 29 April 2022. Mr Graham completed the form on the Annual Return and provided an additional written report. He made no formal recommendations as he reported that he believes the governance procedures and accountancy records are of a very high standard.

10.3 **Agreement of the accounts for the year ending 31 March 2022**

The Council **RESOLVED** to adopt the accounts as presented by the Clerk.

10.4 **Approval of the 2021-22 Annual Governance Statement**

The Chairman read out the statements in the Annual Governance section of the Annual Return requiring councillors to respond to each statement. The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Annual Governance Statement.

10.5 **Approval of the 2021-22 Annual Statement of Accounts**

The Clerk read out the figures in the Accounting Statement. The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Statement of Accounts. The Chairman and Clerk signed the AGAR form on behalf of the Council.

10.6 **Exemption from external audit**

It was noted that as income and expenditure for the year was under £25,000, the Council could exempt itself from external audit. The Council **RESOLVED** to exempt itself from external audit and the Clerk and Chairman were authorised to sign the form.

10.7 **Consideration of any grant requests**

Great Melton Parochial Church Council (PCC) requested £400 towards the cost of churchyard maintenance. The Council **RESOLVED** to grant £400 to Great Melton PCC.

10.8 **Insurance**

The Clerk had approached three alternative insurers and none were able to provide a more competitive quotation already received by BHIB (existing insurer). The Council **RESOLVED** to renew the insurance with BHIB for a 3-year period starting 1 June 2022.

10.9 **Approval of payments**

The following payments totalling £1,428.94 were approved by the Council:

BHIB Ltd	Annual insurance	£366.07
Gt Melton Pavilion	Meeting venue hire 2022	£60.00
Gt Melton PCC	Grant towards churchyard upkeep	£400.00
R Goreham	Internal audit for 2022-23	£30.00
L Cantera	Salary and related expenses	£502.87
L Cantera	SLCC annual membership	£70.00

10.10 **Confirmation of closure of the savings account**

The Clerk received a letter in late March from the bank where the Council has a savings account. They will return to the funds to the Parish Council in late June as they are no longer providing services to parish councils. The Council **RESOLVED** to pay the funds electronically into the current account.

10.11 **Opening a savings account**

The Clerk provided details of a savings account with the bank the Council has a current account with. The Council **RESOLVED** to open a savings account.

11 Policy reviews

11.1 Website accessibility privacy statement

The Clerk explained that the website accessibility privacy statement must be reviewed once a year and advised that it was not necessary to make any changes. The Council agreed.

11.2 Standing Orders

It was agreed to postpone discussion on this document to the next meeting due to lack of time.

11.3 Freedom of Information

The Clerk presented a policy that is required for all parish councils. The Council **RESOLVED** to adopt the Freedom of Information policy, as presented.

12 Highways matters

12.1 Discussion of matters raised by a parishioner about damage to the grass verge at the war memorial and roadside water ponding

The damage to the grass verge looks to have been made by a heavy vehicle when the ground was soft in Winter. There is also an area close to the verge with standing water. The correspondent suggested railings, bollards, a seat, and/or information board about the war memorial - all with the effect of deterring vehicles mounting the verge. This matter was discussed with the Highways Engineer at a site recent meeting. Cllr Fleming will talk with the Highways Engineer to discuss what options the Parish Council might have and report back. He will also contact the parishioner who raised the issues.

12.2 Agreement to set up a Highways Working Group

The Clerk suggested that as councillors are keen to work on finding solutions for speeding traffic, it would be useful if a group of councillors meet specifically to discuss highways' matters. The Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllrs Sears, Fleming and Markham. They will report back their discussions at every meeting.

13 Correspondence

Councillors were able to read the correspondence ahead of the meeting. There were no questions.

14 Items for the next meeting agenda

Review of Standing Orders, defibrillator training for the village, and an update from any meetings of the Highways Working Group will be included on the next agenda.

15 The Council RESOLVED to exclude members of the public and press (under the Public Admission to Meetings Act 1960) for the following confidential items:

15.1 To note the cost of living pay increase for the Clerk, effective from 1 April 2021

The cost of living pay increase for local council staff was announced on 2 March 2022 and the backdated amount included in the Clerk's salary paid at the end of March.

15.2 **To review the Clerk's working hours for the past year**

The Council **RESOLVED** to pay the Clerk for additional hours worked during the past year. Councillors saw a copy of the Clerk's timesheet ahead of the discussion.

The next meeting will be held on 5 September 2022 at 7.30 pm. The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.40 pm.