

Minutes of Great Melton's Annual Parish Council Meeting

Thursday 27 May 2021 at 7.30 pm, held at Great Melton Cricket Pavilion

Parish Councillors present: Rob Richardson (Chairman), Bruce Fleming (Vice-Chairman), Mary Barnard, Phyllis Curson, Peter Markham and Liesl Richardson. Also present: Luisa Cantera (Parish Clerk) and three members of the public. Ian Sears joined the meeting as a newly co-opted councillor at item 21.

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 and seconded. 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.

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 councillors were present at the meeting.

4 Members' declarations of interest in items on the agenda

Cllr Curson declared an interest in item 12.7, discussion on grant to the Parochial Church Council, as she is the Church Warden. The Chairman and Cllr L Richardson declared an interest in item 21.1 as tenants of town field.

5 Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2021

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

6 Chairman's report from Cllr R Richardson for the 2020-21 year

The Chairman's report follows the end of the minutes.

7 Clerk's report

The Clerk gave a summary of her report, which is available to read on the website.

8 Open forum for public participation

No members of the public requested to speak at this stage in the meeting.

9 Consideration of adoption of the General Power of Competence

The Clerk explained that it would be useful for the Council to adopt the General Power of Competence. The Council is eligible because it has a qualified clerk and two thirds of councillors were elected at the last election. The Council **RESOLVED** to adopt the

General Power of Competence.

10 Updates from councillors

10.1 Update on the Sheringham Shoal and Dudgeon Extension Project

Cllr L Richardson recently attended an Equinor webinar and gave a summary. She explained that if the project goes ahead, the offshore wind farms will supply power to 850,000 homes. She reported that there was a lot of concern over the environmental damage during the building stage of the project, for example removal of hedging and digging trenches for laying cables. Equinor said that they will ensure that any damage to the land route is minimal. The current consultation period is six weeks, although it is unclear whether approval will be for the Sheringham Shoal Extension Project, the Dudgeon Extension Project, or both together. Whichever project begins, both projects will use the same trenches where possible; Equinor will liaise with Anglian Water on their forthcoming project. Several parish councils have asked for smaller meetings with Equinor and Great Melton PC could request a meeting. Councillors agreed to send their comments to Cllr Richardson by 4 June in time for the consultation deadline.

10.2 Update on speeding/traffic issues discussed at the last meeting

Cllr Fleming reported that two horse riders attended the January meeting to speak about their concerns on speeding vehicles on Great Melton's roads. Following the last meeting, Cllr Fleming wrote to the highways engineer, who has now left his role at the County Council, and will continue discussions with his successor. Councillors asked Cllr Fleming to ask why the village speed limit is 60 mph and to request speed checks.

10.3 Update from councillors on any recent meetings attended

Cllr Fleming reported that he attended a District Council Parish and Town Council forum in April. It covered discussion on the improvements to the A11/Thickthorn roundabout, Covid-19 and service demands, the Greater Norwich local plan, Long Stratton by-pass, food innovation hub at Easton, community resilience, and working arrangements for staff at the District Council.

11 Planning applications

11.1 Update on application decision taken by South Norfolk District Council (SNDC)

SNDC approved the following application considered at the January 2021 meeting: The Willows (2020/2243) – Demolition of The Willows and erection of replacement two storey dwelling and detached garage.

11.2 Comments provided by the Parish Council to SNDC since the January meeting

Gralie, Burdock Lane (2021/0360) – Erection of oak porch and change profile of bay window, also to include curved brick wall and extend driveway.*

1 The Croft (2021/0242) – Single storey flat-roofed rear extension.*

Willow Croft (2021/0424) – Erection of log/bin store in front garden.*

*These applications received a no objection comment from the Parish Council and SNDC approved the applications.

12 Finance

12.1 Review of the asset register for 2020-21

The Clerk confirmed that there were no changes to the asset register since the previous financial year.

12.2 Internal Auditor's report and consideration of recommendations

The Internal Auditor asked that an Annual Risk Assessment is reviewed - this will be discussed at the next meeting. The asset register will be added to the website.

12.3 Agreement of the accounts for the year ending 31 March 2021

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

12.4 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.

12.5 Approval of the 2020-21 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.

12.6 Approval of the 2020-21 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.

12.7 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. Cllr Curson did not vote on this item.

12.8 Renewal of the insurance policy with BHIB (year 3 of a 3-year policy)

The Council **RESOLVED** to renew the insurance with BHIB for the coming year.

12.9 Approval of payments

The following payments totalling £2,848.05 were approved by the Council:

BHIB Ltd	Annual insurance	£330.62
Gt Melton PCC	Grant towards churchyard upkeep	£400.00
Greenbarnes Ltd	New noticeboard	£1,038.85
M Bergin	Internal audit for 2020-21	£20.00
L Cantera	Salary and related expenses	£978.08
	SLCC annual membership	£67.00
	Mileage	£13.50

13 Co-option of a new councillor to fill a vacancy

The Council received two applications for the vacancy. On a vote, the Council **RESOLVED** to co-opt Ian Sears. He signed a declaration of acceptance of office.

14 Parish celebration event discussion for post-Covid times

Councillors agreed that the May 2022 village fete should be made extra special as the last couple of years it had not been possible to run the event. Cllrs Curson and Barnard will speak to the organisers to say that the Parish Council would like to be involved.

15 Discussion on environmental issues and role of the Parish Council

Cllr Markham spoke about the regulations relating to the felling of trees and cutting of hedges and the need to be careful during the bird nesting season. He asked that the Parish Council takes more interest in parish issues such as these and writes a letter to the owners of land to ask that they consider environmental impact and bird nesting.

16 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.

17 2021 village litter pick

Cllr Barnard had suggested a September litter pick but it was too early to decide whether it could go ahead. She is happy to organise a litter pick for either September 2021 or March 2022.

18 Correspondence

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

19 Agreement of meeting dates for the second half of 2021

Dates were set as follows: 16 September 2021, 25 November 2021 and 20 January 2022.

20 Items for the next meeting agenda

No items were put forward.

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

- 21.1 To consider the appointment of a land agent to represent the Parish Council (fees to be met by the project, not the Parish Council)

Cllr Fleming led this item. The Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Tom Corfield as the land agent. The Chairman and Cllr L Richardson did not vote on this item.

- 21.2 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 had seen a copy of the Clerk's timesheet ahead of the discussion.

The next meeting will be held on 16 September at 7.30 pm. The Chairman closed the meeting at 10.20 pm.

Chairman's report (from item 6)

This past year has been different for so many reasons. We have been meeting online instead of in person at the Cricket Pavilion, we have had a change of clerk, we have a smart new website and notice board, and cheques are a thing of the past now that we have moved to online banking. The usual round of business has continued thanks to Zoom but regrettably few members of our community attend our meetings regularly.

During the year councillors have attended meetings of the Parish & Town Council Forum at South Norfolk District Council, the A47 dualling between Easton and North Tuddenham, A11 improvements at Thickthorn, and perhaps most importantly the Sheringham Shoal/Dudgeon Extension Project. This project is very likely to cause disruption to the village by cabling travelling from an offshore wind farm in the North Sea to connect to an electricity substation just south of Norwich. The Council is planning to appoint a land agent (costs to be met by Equinor) to represent the village's interests. Almost in tandem, Anglian Water is looking to run a new water pipeline that may well come through the village.

The village is small, we have just 60 electors, with few facilities so annually the Parish Council gives financial support to the church for maintenance of the churchyard. The Cricket Pavilion received a Covid-19 government support grant to keep it going in tough times as well as a small grant from the Parish Council in May 2020.

The Council continues to discuss speeding issues without much hope of being able to convince the authorities to reduce the speed limit throughout the village, which is a great pity. We will keep trying though. We have also discussed overgrown hedges and ditches with representatives from South Norfolk District Council and interested parishioners and parish councillors. These issues have been largely addressed and action taken where necessary but may be revisited when appropriate.

Our annual litter pick couldn't take place in 2020 but Cllr Mary Barnard, who usually organises these, hopes that September will be the time to get the village together in this strangely therapeutic activity, for which we have recently received a generous grant from South Norfolk District Council. It has been noted by me and perhaps other parish councillors that Mrs Sally Starling, a Great Melton parishioner, has been litter picking in the village 6 days a week since the start of the pandemic. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank her for her continued efforts.

We received another grant of £750 from Equinor for walkover surveys on Parish Council-owned land, which was used to pay towards the new notice board.

We continue to comment on planning applications as they come in.

Our previous parish clerk, Chris Lacey, retired from the position in May 2020 after 12 years of unwavering commitment to the parish of Great Melton. I would like to take this opportunity to say an enormous 'thank you' to Chris for his support, friendship and guidance over the years. I would also like to extend our thanks and appreciation to Luisa Cantera, our new parish clerk, for joining us during such a difficult year; her experience, skill and capabilities have guided us through our parish business online and she meets all the parish councillors in person tonight for the first time.

David Gregory, a long serving councillor and a previous clerk to Great Melton, resigned in January 2021. I would like to extend our thanks, on behalf of the Parish Council, for his long, dedicated service and commitment to the village and all its activities. We are hoping to co-opt a new councillor at tonight's meeting and hope that whoever it is finds us a conscientious and friendly group.

Finally, I would like to thank Luisa our clerk for her work during her first year with us, Margaret Dewsbury, our District and County Councillor for her support, and of course to our parish councillors who are a very pleasant group to work with on village matters.

Rob Richardson, Chairman 2020-21