

MINAL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Remote Meeting Held on 14 September 2020

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| 1. Present:
John Bevan – Chairman
Brian Devonshire – Vice Chair
Rob Bailey – Vice Chair
Ruth Kolish
Anna Whitehead
Guy Gagen | Apologies Accepted:
None

In Attendance:
Adam Slater
Sue Hine Clerk/RFO
Jane Davies (County Councillor) |
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Declarations of Interest: None

This meeting was held remotely via Zoom in accordance with the Coronavirus Pandemic Regulations 2020.

2. Welcome to Adam Slater

Following the resignation of Chris Webb, the PC has a vacancy and Adam attended the meeting to find out more about the work of the PC. Adam gave a brief summary of his background and it is hoped he will be co-opted in November.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on the 13 July and 18 August 2020

The Minutes were approved and will be signed at a later date by the Chairman.

4. Matters Arising – These had been circulated. The actions that have been able to be carried out during the pandemic are transferred to Agenda items.

5. Questions from Members of the Public

No members of the public attended the meeting.

6. Issues since Last meeting and motorcyclist speeding on Greenways

The Gale family have erected gates across the bottom of Church Lane and the Parochial Church Council approached the PC because they felt this land was owned by the church. JB wrote to the Wiltshire County Council who sent a map from the historical records. This shows that the road leading east from Church Lane to Church Farm is not recorded as forming part of the publicly maintainable Highway. GG said that at the time the maps were drawn up public authorities were reliant on local landowner knowledge and it would be worth checking the church documentation. BD said that this was now a matter for the Diocese.

The Clerk has received a complaint about a motorcyclist speeding along Greenways. It is thought this is someone going to the farm and the complainant has been advised to get the registration which will be required by the police. No other Councillors had experienced this and are now aware.

7. Bridleways and Footpaths

The Clerk had directly rung Centrewire who confirmed that RE had made the order. The gates should have been delivered by now so BD will ask RE when GH can collect them.

As a result of the pandemic and more usage of the paths, BD proposed that the PC apply for a further grant to replace more ageing stiles. The Clerk and BD had walked the routes and the Clerk had sent out maps of the locations to Councillors. All Councillors approved the motion. **Action: BD and Clerk**

Jane Davies left the meeting

8. Ash Trees in Church Lane

The Clerk had had lengthy correspondence with the WCC Tree Officer. The TO only makes site inspections for TPO trees but planning is required for trees in a Conservation area. JB had received a quote from an Arboriculturalist for £300 to inspect the tree and advise whether it would recover from pollarding. BD suggested that the trees be removed entirely as the costs for pruning are significant and they will require on-going work. This was not approved by Councillors. AS suggested the quote for a third reduction was good and after some discussion Councillors approved this quote.

This led to a further discussion about other trees and AS asked if the PC had a risk assessment for trees on PC land. RK and AW said that schools undertake regular inspections of trees on their land. Other trees that need attention soon are the Sycamore trees at the end of the Church yard and the cherry trees in the playground. The trees at the bottom of the playground are outside the fence so are believed to be the responsibility of Highways but the clerk will need to check this. **Action: Clerk to ascertain costs for a tree surveyor and draw up risk assessment with AS.**

9. Church Lane Gully

Following the recent works AS reported that although the situation was better the drains still became overwhelmed in a recent storm. JB said that this was due to the low-lying situation and the rain coming down Woodlands Road. The gullies are in a poor state being blocked with rubble and tree roots. AS suggested the PC write a formal letter to WCC reminding them of their statutory obligations and the likelihood of an accident when the standing water freezes at the top of Church Lane. This action was approved. AS also asked if the PC had any objection to the residents digging out the small gully half way down Church Lane and JB agreed as it was unlikely the Parish Steward would do this. **Action: AS**

10. Planning Applications

Planning applications considered during this period were all tree applications. 20/05540/TCA, 20/06565/TPO, 20/06683/TCA. No objections from PC and approved by WCC. 20/07777/TCA had been circulated by the Clerk and the PC approved a No Objection response.

11. Playground

The Clerk reported that the bill for sanitisation had been paid and a decision

was required as to whether to continue sanitising the playground now that schools were back. After some discussion Councillors decided not to continue daily sanitisation. The rate of infection in this area is reported as fairly low and GG said that sanitisation only lasted a short period anyway. The posters encourage parents and children to take responsibility for cleaning and sanitising their hands. BD asked whether the PC needed another poster enforcing this and removing obligation from the Council. AW said that the current poster was comprehensive.

The Clerk reported that some of the upright posts on the mound are rotten and have broken off. The inspection is also due. The Clerk has been having difficulties getting quotes for the work from Sutcliffe and local people. Sutcliffe is based in Pontefract and other play equipment maintenance companies are similarly regionally based which puts up costs for maintenance. The inspector travels from Durham and is not currently staying overnight. The Clerk feels what is required is a more local contractor. AW suggested a local contractor who may be able to fix the posts. The Clerk has continued with the current independent inspector because he is known to Sutcliffe and other playground inspectors charge by piece of equipment which will be more expensive than a flat fee but it may be necessary to employ someone else. **Action: AW to advise contractor. Clerk to continue to chase guarantee from Sutcliffe and inspection.**

12. Responsible Finance Officer's Report and AGAR

The Clerk had prepared and sent the financial statement and a breakdown of expenditure against budget plus a screen print of the balances which were approved. The Clerk had sent off the Certificate of Exemption to the Auditors and the public inspection period was now over. AS asked whether the PC undertook financial planning and monthly analysis. The Clerk said that financial planning took place on a regular but not monthly basis and that future planning to meet obligations such as trees will be considered at budgetary meetings. The PC has acted, over the last couple of years, to improve the reserves in line with official guidance from NALC and the external auditor for smaller authorities.

13. Website

RB reported that setting up the website requires a lot of initial work and it had been difficult to contact people over the summer. Work would commence shortly.

14. Any Other Business

RK reported that she had had no enquiries for the Parish project to support vulnerable residents and asked whether we wanted to keep the Mobile phone. RB requested that the mobile phone be kept for future emergency planning and this was approved by Councillors. GG said that the operation may be required again and RK suggested writing to Area Coordinators to thank them. **Action: Clerk.** BD reported that both properties in the Werg have now sold.

Meeting finished at 7.40pm – next meeting Monday 9 November 2020