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Councillors Email:

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Cllr. Barbara Blower - blower@reedparishcouncil.co.uk

Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd March 2022 at 7.30pm held at Reed Village Hall.

Present Cllrs: K Langley (Chair), C d'Ayala (Vice Chair), E Kilby and B Blower.

In attendance the Clerk Catharine Toms, County Cllr. F Hill and Dist. Cllr. G Morris.

This meeting would be recorded for the purpose of the minutes.

1.3.22 **Attendance.** As listed above.

2.3.22 **To receive apologies for absence.** Cllr. J Kershaw, Dist. Cllr. A Hunter. Apologies accepted.

3.3.22 **To receive Members Declarations of Interest and to note dispensation granted.** Cllr. d'Ayala (item 17.3.22). Cllr. Kilby, for the remainder of his period of office, dispensation granted allowing him full participation at meetings in issues arising concerning The Cabinet public house including, but not limited to, planning matters.

4.3.22 **To approve the Minutes of the Meetings of the Parish Council held on 6th January 2022 and to authorise the Chairman to sign them as a true record.** It was proposed, seconded and all voted in favour to approve. Resolved. Approved minutes to be posted on the website. **Action: Clerk/Webmaster**

Standing Orders were suspended.

5.3.22 **To invite Members of the Public to address the meeting.** One member of the public wished to address the Council regarding his annoyance over the increase in the Precept. He felt it was unjustified as the Parish Council (PC) had, in his opinion, adequate reserves. He was also appalled that £42k of S106 monies relating to the Kilns development in the village had been effectively lost, as it had been allocated to projects outside Reed. It was explained to him that monies from that development had been in the form of a Unilateral Undertaking and that the PC had not been consulted on where the money should be spent. It had been allocated for schools and libraries. An attempt had subsequently been made by the PC and County Cllr. Hill to secure some of those funds for the Reed School library project. However,

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disappointingly, Herts County Council Officers had eventually decided that the application did not match the criteria as Reed School had enough school places to meet demand, and therefore, the money needed to go towards the Middle School in Royston, where Reed children would benefit at a later stage. The Parishioner argued that this was 'pooling' of money and was unlawful as it appeared to contradict legislation. He agreed to provide evidence of this legislation to the PC. He also agreed to write to the Head of Planning at North Herts Council (NHC) to challenge their decision and would share any response with the PC in due course.

Standing Orders were resumed.

6.3.22 To receive Chairman's Report. (See Appendix A). In addition, it had been spotted that there were some errors in the script on the informative sign by Rokey Wood. Cllrs. Kershaw and Kilby had since organised a revision to correct this.

Standing Orders were suspended.

7.3.22 To receive report from District Councillor – Cllr. Morris reported that the new owner of Newsells Stud had delivered an interesting talk at a recent Church event. It appeared that he was keen to get involved and be supportive of the area.

It was learnt that NHC had carried out effective enforcement action recently in Barkway concerning an illegally sited mobile home.

It was recommended that someone in Reed should research what would be involved in taking in Ukrainian refugees before the situation arose. County Cllr. Hill pointed out that people interested in helping should contact NHC and go through the appropriate channels. It was not a simple issue, as health, education and employment matters needed to be considered, not just accommodation. She would forward information to the Clerk and this could then be made available via the village website. **Action: FH/Clerk/EK**

8.3.22 To receive report from County Councillor – Cllr. Hill reported that all the budgets had now been agreed at County Council, including the Highways and Locality budgets for the forthcoming year. She mentioned that she did have a small amount of funding left in the current year, should any funding be needed to help towards the Jubilee event in Reed. The senior school allocations were now out. Libraries were open with normal hours/services again. The Herts Lynx bus service was being well used. Cllr. Hill was thanked for her report.

Standing Orders were resumed.

9.3.22 To review action points from the meeting on 6th January 2022 – reviewed.

Action Points from this meeting (see Appendix B).

10.3.22 To receive report from the Clerk on current financial position – It was reported that NHC had accepted the Precept request for 2022/23.

A list of monies received and payments to be authorised had been previously circulated to all Cllrs. Accounts showed a bank balance of £18,137.53 of which, £10,133.35 was Push Energy Community Contribution (ring-fenced for special projects), £2,867.49 was Bonfire Night reserves, £690.75 was P3 grant balance, S106 Sustainable Transport Reserve was £954.62, leaving general reserves at £3,491.32.

11.3.22 To agree accounts for payment. Payments to be authorised at the meeting were Clerk's salary and PAYE. £66.58 Clerk's expenses to cover stationery, stamps and software subscription for the year. £250.00 to cover costs of installation of the new informative signs, and £266.38 to NHC to

cover cost of dog bin emptying for 2021/22. Proposed, seconded and approved by all. Resolved.

12.3.22 To receive report on review of Governance documents and consider approval of recommended amendments – It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to defer this until the May meeting. Proposed revised documents to be sent out well in advance to enable Cllrs. time to read and understand them. A task for early April. The Clerk to align the current Financial Regulations with the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) model version. Cllr. Langley to review Standing Orders. Cllr. Kilby to review remaining governance documents. **Action: Clerk/KL/EK**

13.3.22 To appoint Internal Auditor – Cllr. Langley reported that he had emailed Mr McMeekin to check if he would be willing, once again, to carry out the internal audit. He agreed to follow this up. **Action: KL**

14.3.22 To ratify response submitted to NHDC under delegated responsibility regarding planning application for 2, Mill Corner Cottages, Reed – Case Ref No: 22/00110/FPH – The response of no objection was proposed, seconded and ratified. Resolved.

15.3.22 To ratify response submitted to NHDC under delegated responsibility regarding planning application for Drages Farm, Reed – Case Ref Nos: 22/00295/FPH & 22/00296/LBC - The response of no objection was proposed, seconded and ratified. Resolved.

The Clerk to provide Cllr. Kilby with responses to planning applications to enable these to be published on the website. **Action: Clerk/EK**

16.3.22 To receive update on project to preserve ponds and agree any action required – Cllr. Blower reported that she had managed to get a local Ecologist interested in the project. He had taken a quick look at both ponds and had then commented that he did not think a high level of management was needed. He offered to carry out an ecological survey of both ponds with the help of some of his students and to continue to advise the Parish Council as to the management of the ponds, all at no cost. Cllr. Blower had extended grateful thanks to him on behalf of the PC.

17.3.22 Save The Cabinet Action Group (SCAG) – to receive update – Cllr. Kilby reported that Environmental Health (EH) had issued a Prohibition Notice, as a result of discovering that staff were living illegally in an outbuilding. This had been appealed and had since been dismissed. A press release had been issued by SCAG and could be seen in the Crow newspaper. It was not a satisfactory situation with NHC being unwilling to give any updates on any enforcement progress. On site there was an old storage shed which was still being utilised, maybe for staff. Also, a railway carriage and a modern caravan. SCAG were in contact with all appropriate bodies, EH, Food Hygiene, Building Control and Planning, advising them all of any updates on the situation. Food Hygiene were about to conduct a new inspection of the premises. EH were being very responsive.

It was agreed that Cllr. Morris would arrange a meeting with MP Sir Oliver Heald, himself and the PC/SCAG. Sir Oliver would be supplied, in advance, with briefing papers, including a chronology and a copy of the latest press release. **Action: EK**

The aim would then be to arrange a further meeting to include NHC Planning.

18.3.22 Wisbridge Reservoir Project – to receive update – No update to report.

19.3.22 To receive bi-monthly Parish Council play area inspection report and agree any action required – Cllr. Kershaw had conducted an

inspection on 1st March and the report had been circulated. There was no obvious further deterioration in the equipment to report.

20.3.22 To discuss feasibility/cost of moving and reinstalling of climbing frame from the school to the Green – a meeting had taken place with one of the School Governors. The school was offering the Parish Council a large climbing frame structure for use of the children in the Play Area. The school wanted to replace this equipment as it was no longer considered suitable for their younger school children. On inspection it appeared that only one upright post needed some repair, with the rest of the equipment looking in sound condition. There was some concern raised about the costs involved in dismantling and reassembling, and cost of a suitable safety surface for it to go on. It was thought that most of the work could be carried out by volunteers. It was noted that if the offer of the equipment was accepted then it would need to be removed from school during the summer holidays. It was agreed that the next step would be to have another meeting of the Play Area Working Party soon and decide if this extra piece of equipment would fit in with the overall longer-term plan for the Play Area. Cllr. Langley to arrange Working Party meeting. **Action: KL**

21.3.22 To receive update from recent first meeting of the Play Area Working Party – It was decided that to start with, there was the need to have a realistic audit of the lifespan of the equipment already in the play park. This was all tabulated and circulated by Cllr. Kershaw. It was noted that with the extra Precept now in place, at least £1,000 per annum would be ring-fenced into a fund for expenditure for the Play Area. Although grant funding might be available to help purchase new equipment, most applications required capability to self-fund a proportion of the total cost.

22.3.22 To receive log from Parishioner detailing usage of footpaths used by cyclists and agree any action – the log submitted did not show much further usage by cyclists and as no complaints had been received from other parishioners, it was proposed, seconded and agreed that the situation would be monitored further and reviewed in six months. Cllr. d’Ayala would respond to the people to explain that a request to HCC for expenditure on installation of kissing gates could not presently be justified by the PC based on this current evidence. **Action: CD**

23.3.22 To discuss Queen’s Platinum Jubilee celebration and possibility of joint Jubilee Beacon with Barkway – Further to enquiries made to village organisations following the last meeting, it was evident that Reed felt it was important to mark the occasion of the Queen’s Jubilee. It was understood that there was an afternoon tea planned in the Churchyard on the Sunday. SCAG were also planning to hold a pop-up pub night in the Village Hall on the Friday evening. After discussion, it was considered appropriate that a village walk be organised by the PC on the Sunday which could incorporate the unveiling of the renovated village sign and inauguration of the two village informative signs, the walk finishing at the Churchyard, in time for the tea. In addition, the PC agreed that it was feasible (subject to agreement from Barkway PC) to take part in the lighting of a beacon on the meridian line between the two villages on the Thursday evening. It would involve a torchlit procession of people walking from each village to meet along The Joint (an East meets West event!) with the Beacon being lit at 9.45pm. County Cllr. Hill indicated that she would be willing to support the cost of this beacon through her Locality Budget. She also advised that HCC

were facilitating road closure applications for Jubilee events and that an application should be made as soon as possible.

It was agreed that in consultation with village organisations, a programme of events would be produced for the Jubilee weekend. Where there were gaps in the schedule, parishioners could organise their own activities, with the Green of course available for anyone to use.

Thought to be given in due course on a permanent marking of the meridian line on The Joint.

Actions agreed:

Investigate if still able to purchase a beacon @ £500 + VAT (EK)

Apply for Locality Budget funding for the beacon (EK)

Attend Barkway PC Meeting to gain support for joint beacon event (EK)

Liaise with other village organisations (KL/CD)

Apply to HCC for a road closure for beacon event (EK/Clerk)

Check out status on repair of village sign (EK)

Share responsibility for Beacon and Village Walk events (KL/EK)

24.3.22 **Push Energy Fund Projects / Community Noticeboard** – Cllr d’Ayala to progress matters. **Action: CD**

25.3.22 **To receive matters for report or referral to next agenda.**

(Information only) Review of Governance documents, Ponds protection project, Play equipment project and grant funding, Community noticeboard / Push Energy fund expenditure, Highways verges, consider the installation of an additional dog bin, NHDC Local Plan, Queen’s Jubilee celebrations.

26.3.22 **To note correspondence received. (Information only) From Ms. Shepherd regarding memorial bench seat** – An enquiry had been received seeking permission to install a memorial bench (in memory of her grandparents) somewhere in the village. The preferred location was not yet known. It was considered by the PC to be a nice idea and once more details were known, then advice could be given on who needed to be contacted to seek permission.

Thanks were given to the Haydens for having cleaned up the bus shelter recently.

27.3.22 **To agree date of next meetings. Annual Meeting, Parish Council Meeting, and Annual Parish Meeting - Weds 4th May 2022.**

Agreed. The Clerk to book the Village Hall. **Action: Clerk**

It was also agreed that a printed Annual Village Report would be produced again this year. The Clerk to invite representatives from village organisations to attend the meeting to read out a report and then submit their report by email for inclusion in the printed report which would be published at a later date. **Action: Clerk/EK**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.13pm.