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Cllr. Nick Payne - [payne@reedparishcouncil.co.uk](mailto:payne@reedparishcouncil.co.uk)

Cllr. Simon Aries - [aries@reedparishcouncil.co.uk](mailto:aries@reedparishcouncil.co.uk)

**Minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 7.30pm held at Reed Village Hall.**

**Present Cllrs: K Langley (Chair), E Kilby, B Blower, N Payne and S. Aries.**

**In attendance the Clerk Catharine Toms, Dist. Cllr. M Prescott, County Cllr. F Hill, PCSO Chris Brabrook and four members of the public.**

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

1.11.24 **Attendance.** As listed above.

2.11.24 **To receive apologies for absence.** None.

3.11.24 **To receive Members Declarations of Interest and note dispensation granted.** None received. Cllr. Kilby, for his period of office, a dispensation granted allowing him full participation at meetings in issues arising concerning The Cabinet public house including, but not limited to, planning matters.

4.11.24 **To approve the Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2024 and to authorise the Chairman to sign them as a true record.** It was proposed, seconded and all voted in favour to approve the minutes. Resolved. Approved minutes to be posted on the website. **Action: Clerk/Webmaster**

Standing Orders were suspended.

5.11.24 **To invite Members of the Public to address the meeting** – A member of the public was present to thank the Parish Council, on behalf of the village, for the great success on achieving substantial grant funding for the new play equipment. He wondered whether consideration could be also given to the provision of a 5-aside football goal on The Green. It was also clarified to him that the Parish Council was responsible for the management and upkeep of the defibrillator located in the phone box outside the Village Hall.

Another member of the public was present to volunteer the services of her husband to re-paint the phone box in 2025. The only cost would be for the paint,

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estimated at £96, which he would be happy to order and be re-imbursed for. It was unanimously agreed by all to gratefully accept this generous offer. Resolved.

**6.11.24 To receive Chair's Report** – (See Appendix A).

In addition, the Parish Council wished to minute huge thanks to Cllrs. Langley and Blower for the sheer perseverance with the challenging grant funding bids which had resulted in two successful applications for funding which could now allow replacement of some of the older pieces of play equipment on The Green.

Cllr. Langley also wished to minute his thanks to the Officers at North Herts Council, Becca Edwards and Laura Hartley who had provided very good support in the bid process for the Prosperity Fund grant application.

Standing Orders were suspended.

PCSO Chris Brabrook arrived in the meeting at 7.40pm.

**7.11.24 To receive report from District Councillor** – District Cllr. Prescott reported that North Herts Council (NHC) were consulting local Councils regarding waste bins. Those that were being consulted were likely to have 30% of their bins removed. This was all about cost cutting at NHC. Reed Parish Council had not been consulted, however only had one waste bin by the Village Hall, so this was likely to remain. Other bins in Reed were dog waste bins, owned by the Parish Council and with emptying paid for by the Parish Council.

**8.11.24 To receive report from County Councillor** – County Cllr. Hill gave the following report:

**Events** - The Step2Skills Adult Learning Service Job Fair took place in Stevenage on 24<sup>th</sup> October and was very well attended. The Halloween event again took place on 31<sup>st</sup> October at Royston Fire Station with an incredible number of visitors from the community. The Fire Station is hosting events for SEND schools and clients from local care accommodation from 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> November. There will be Christmas Extravaganza on 2<sup>nd</sup> December at Royston Fire Station. I carried out a Rural Councillors' Surgery in Nuthampstead with District Councillor Martin Prescott on Saturday, 2<sup>nd</sup> November. The Services for Young People Awards Evening took place on 4<sup>th</sup> November celebrating the remarkable achievements of young people through their engagement with Services for Young People projects. There is also a Councillors' Surgery in the Royston Market on Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> November.

**Highways Updates** - Lining has been renewed and foliage cut back on junctions including The Joint/Brickyard Lane and Church Lane/A10. I will continue to monitor and report as appropriate. There are issues in Church Lane with flooding. The water is coming off the fields and blocking the drains. I have requested additional cleaning and am also working with street cleaning officers to ensure the drains are kept clear of silt and debris. There are also issues with sewage discharging from a manhole in Driftway/High Street. This falls under Thames Water but has been highlighted to them. There have been reports of flooding on Blacksmiths Lane/Jacksons Lane. On every occasion reported, HCC Highways has inspected promptly, and the water has disappeared. This is surface water that drains relatively quickly after heavy rain. However, the area is being monitored and residents should continue reporting if they believe there is an issue.

**Street Cleaning/Drainage** - I continue to work with District Councillor Martin Prescott on issues such as street cleaning, where the lack of cleaning is causing blocked drains and the North Herts (District) Council "consultation" on the litter bins.

**Royston Library** - Winter Reads started on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2024 and ends on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025. There are six challenges and prizes including an iPad.

**Public Health** - I am working with partners on improvements to physical/mental health through nutrition education, exercise such as health walks, park runs and groups addressing social isolation.

Cllrs. Prescott and Hill were thanked for their reports.

PCSO Brabrook reported that crime levels were generally low, however there were the usual seasonal crimes taking place such as hare coursing and break-ins of outbuildings. He encouraged people to report any suspicious activity to the Police. The Police had been attending local Councillor Surgeries and would be happy to attend any other community events.

PSCO was thanked for his report and he departed from the meeting at 7.55pm. Standing Orders were resumed.

9.11.24 **To review action points from meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2024** – (see Appendix B).

Cllr. Payne had prepared a final draft of a 'What's on in Reed' central source of information sheet. It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to adopt this initiative as an ongoing project, with modest expenditure, keeping it up to date and reprinted as necessary. Information would be made friendly for non-computer users and the document formatted to make it more eye catching. An initial leaflet drop would be done, it would also be posted on the website, on the noticeboard and copies be made available inside the Church. **Action: NP**

10.11.24 **To receive report from the Clerk on current financial position**

A list of monies received and payments to be authorised had been previously circulated to all Cllrs. Accounts showed a bank balance of £52,107.09 of which, £9,839.35 was Push Energy Community Contribution (ring-fenced for special projects), £2,947.23 was Bonfire Night reserves, £690.75 was P3 grant balance, S106 Sustainable Transport Reserve was £651.87, Play Park Reserve was £24,766.45 leaving general reserves at £13,211.44.

11.11.24 **To agree accounts for payment** Payments to be authorised at the meeting were Clerk's salary and PAYE. Proposed, seconded and approved by all.

12.11.24 **To approve and sign bank reconciliation** – Cllr. Aries cross checked the accounts schedule against the bank statement that figures agreed. Resolved.

13.11.24 **To appoint an additional bank signatory** – It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to appoint Cllr. Kilby as an additional signatory. The Clerk to action this with the bank and remove signatory of former Cllr. d'Ayala. Resolved. **Action: Clerk**

14.11.24 **To set a date for an informal meeting to discuss the budget for 2025/26** – Cllr. Blower volunteered to circulate potential dates for either late November or early December with date to be agreed via WhatsApp. **Action: BB**

**15.11.24 To receive update on renewal of the agreement with the Cricket Club for use of The Green** – It was reported that Cllrs. Langley and Aries had attended an informative and amiable meeting with members of the Cricket Club. It was noted that December 31<sup>st</sup> was actually the date of the 5 year agreed review and the actual period of the agreement was 1/1/2020 to 31/12/2029.

It was noted that the agreement acknowledged the status of The Green as Common Land but did not acknowledge that it is also a Village Green. A phrase was added into the agreement to register this fact.

Matters about parking on The Green were raised and difficulties were noted by both parties. The Cricket Club would consider installation of signage to warn drivers to exercise care.

It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to continue and endorse the agreement with the Cricket Club for use of The Green. Resolved.

Standing Orders were suspended.

A member of the public present spoke on behalf of the Cricket Club to say that they were delighted that the agreement continues to the benefit of both parties.

Standing Orders were resumed.

**16.11.24 To agree any works required to maintain the Parish bench seats** – Cllr. Aries reported that one bench needed replacing, whilst the others needed maintenance. None were in very good condition, but a plan of works needed could be prepared ready for work to be done in the Spring. **Action: SA**

Cllr. Langley to contact the daughter of a former Cllr. who had indicated a wish to have a memorial bench placed somewhere in Reed in memory of her late father.

**Action: KL**

It was concluded that bench maintenance was not ideal work for the Community Payback people as they needed to work on projects as a team.

**17.11.24 To consider and make comment on planning application:**

**Full Permission Householder : First floor side extension to include side elevation Juliet Balcony.**

**1 Woodbine Cottages, High Street, Reed, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 8AH**

**Case Ref No: 24/02121/FPH** – After consideration of the application, it was proposed, seconded and agreed by all that there was no objection providing that the Planning Officer ensured that the proposed extension and materials used would be sympathetic to the existing. Resolved.

The Clerk to respond accordingly to NHC. **Action: Clerk**

**18.11.24 To ratify response submitted to North Herts Council on Reserved Matters application:**

**Land Between Royston Road and Cambridge Road, Barkway, Hertfordshire.**

**Case Ref No: 24/01883/RM** – Proposed, seconded and agreed by all. Resolved. (See Appendix C)

**19.11.24 To receive update from the Turney Trust regarding site RD1** – There was no update to report.

**20.11.24 To receive update on Wisbridge Reservoir Project** – Archaeologists had been working on the site and banks were being erected, so it was beginning to look like a reservoir. Work was ongoing.

**21.11.24 To receive update from Save The Cabinet Action Group (SCAG)** – It was reported that The Spice Cabinet had now closed. Posts put on social media by the Proprietor had referred to the unacceptable living conditions there for the staff. SCAG had written to the new NHC Enforcement Officer – Ms.

Christella Menson pointing out that NHC view that the residential use of The Cabinet was incidental to the business use was incorrect, the truth being that clearly the business was separate to the residential use. The owner of the building was now trying to market The Spice Cabinet area on a new lease basis but there had been no uptake because of the history of the place. Ms. Menson had replied to SCAG saying that she believed that the Appeals would be determined by the Inspectorate, however these had been outstanding for about two years. She did think that a meeting with SCAG would be beneficial when the results of the planning appeals were available.

Dist. Cllr. Prescott indicated that he would try and organise for NHC Anthony Roache to meet with SCAG and the Parish Council as there was a need to work out a sensible way forward. If necessary, he would escalate the matter to the Chief Executive as it seemed that NHC were sweeping the whole issue under the carpet. Cllr. Prescott was thanked for his support.

**22.11.24 To receive update on Highways matters** – (see item 8.11.24)

**23.11.24 To receive update on project to preserve ponds and agree any action required** – Bulrushes had now been removed, with thanks to Cllr. Aries and Mrs Haydon. No further work was needed at present.

**24.11.24 To receive bi-monthly Parish Council play area inspection report and agree any action required** – An inspection had been carried out by Cllr. Langley and there was no change to report other than further minor deterioration.

**25.11.24 To receive update from Play Area Working Party on grant applications and agree any action required** – Cllr. Langley acknowledged the recent grant awarded of £19,250 from the NHC Prosperity Fund. With monies also received from the National Lottery of £19,500, contribution from the Precept and donations over the past 2 years it was now possible to proceed to order the new play equipment. One of the conditions of the NHC grant awarded was that the monies needed to be spent by 31/03/25. It needed to be clarified with the preferred supplier if it was possible to have installation of equipment by the end of March. The Working Party would meet to plan to pull the whole project together to meet the deadline. **Action: KL/BB**

It was agreed that the VAT payable on ordering the equipment, would be reclaimed from HMRC, but could be funded in the interim from Push Energy funds. **Action: Clerk**

**26.11.24 To receive update on availability of Safeguarding Courses** – matter ongoing. **Action: BB**

**27.11.24 To receive update on arrangements with Probation Officer for the various maintenance projects with the Community Payback Team – Ditches, Tree Planting and Maintenance of Parish Benches** - Matters were on hold currently with the Community Payback Team. They had made a useful contribution with their work as the ditches were now functioning well. They would be prepared to dig the holes for planting of the fruit trees but would like to attend on a Saturday, which could be an issue as would require availability of the Village Hall.

**28.11.24 To receive report from Bonfire Night on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> November** – It was reported that the event went well. The method of event worked well. Traffic was the usual problem, but it was managed as best it could be. Feedback from the event had been good and it had raised a decent amount of money to go towards the Play Area fund. Thanks were given to all those involved, particularly Mr Graves who had cleared the bonfire site afterwards and especially to Cllr. Kilby

whose support enabled the event to be held without the expense of using outside Contractors and having to pay their insurance.

29.11.24 **To receive update on renovation of Community Noticeboard (Push Energy Fund)** – no further update.

30.11.24 **To receive matters for report or referral to next agenda. (Information only)** Ponds Protection Project, Wisbridge Reservoir, Projects for Community Payback work, Play Area Project, Community Noticeboard, Turney Trust and Site RD1, Plan for renovation of Parish Council benches, Budget for 2025/26 and Precept application, Safeguarding courses, What's On in Reed Publication

31.11.24 **To note correspondence received. (Information only)**

- Acts of Kindness Bags – It was agreed to let Cllr. Prescott know if there was any requirement for these in Reed.

- Royston & District Transport – Awareness of the organisation to be made, including the need for additional volunteers and funding.

32.11.24 **To agree date of next meetings.** Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2025 (TBC). Agreed.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.17pm