

NASSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL



MINUTES - NASSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday 10th May 2023 at 7.30 pm in Nassington Village Hall

23.2264. Election Of Chairperson of the parish council

It was **RESOLVED** that Robert Peterson be elected as chairperson of the parish council. The chairman signed his declaration of office.

23.2265. Attendance and apologies for absence

Present: Cllr Alan Burns, Cllr Elliott Clark, Cllr Rebecca Downey, Cllr Charlotte Lemmon, Cllr Derrick Mortimer, Cllr Shane Rickwood, and Cllr Robert Peterson (chairman). Apologies received from Alain Kingsley, due to personal commitments. It was **RESOLVED** to accept these apologies Officer present: The clerk. Also in attendance three members of the public

23.2266. Declarations of Interest

Derrick Mortimer declared his standing personal but nonpecuniary interest in any matters relating to Nassington Preschool. Dispensations were discussed and granted for all members of the council who are also members of the cricket club, for members with allotments, for members with association with the preschool, and for members with association with the church. The council acknowledged that associations with and membership of other organisations might on occasion be pecuniary in nature, but felt those to be incidental to their other role, that the roles would not conflict and that members would put their statutory duty as duly appointed members of the council as priority in any decision making process.

23.2267. Election of members holding positions of responsibility or representation.

It was **RESOLVED** to make the following appointments:

- Vice Chairman: Cllr Derrick Mortimer.
- Committees/working groups:
 - Allotments: None. Communications with allotment members would be via the clerk and matters dealt with under delegated authority or brought to the council for decision.
 - Burial Board: Cllr Alan Burns, Cllr Rebecca Downey and Cllr Robert Peterson.
- Representatives on Village Organisation with own Constitution:
 - Newsletter: Cllr Derrick Mortimer and Cllr Robert Peterson
 - Village Hall: None was deemed required at the present time
- Lead member:
 - Neighbourhood Planning: Status quo maintained: Cllr Alan Burns as chairman, all council members as ex officio members of the Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee.
 - Governance: Status quo maintained: Internal control, checking accounts and support in governance matters: Cllr Derrick Mortimer
 - Neighbourhood Watch / PLR: None was deemed required at the present time
 - Footpaths & rights of way: None was deemed required at the present time All members will remain vigilant to highways related rights of way matters and report as necessary.
 - Playground / playing field safety checks: The clerk will continue to carry out this role and all members would have access to the online RoSPA checklist and carry out checks as they are able.
 - Environment/nature recovery lead: Cllr Charlotte Lemmon

23.2268. Protocol and policies:

- Draft recommended internal control document, to demonstrate that the council has made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding public money, as required by section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting. It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the drafts as presented.

- Draft recommended financial risk assessment, to demonstrate that the council has considered and documented the financial and other risks and dealt with them, as required by section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) of the council had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting. It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the drafts as presented.
- Draft standing orders and financial regulations, based on NALC model policies, plus a scheme of delegation policy had been circulated in advance of the meeting. It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the drafts as presented, with the amendment of 'Warmington' to 'Nassington' in the scheme of delegation. It was noted that salary payments are made by standing order; HMRC payments, electricity payments and ICO payments are made by direct debit.
- It was **RESOLVED** to re-affirm the council's adopted code of conduct, based on the North Northamptonshire Council model.

23.2269. Meetings:

It was **RESOLVED** that the meeting schedule remains 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7.30pm, excepting August, in the village hall, subject to change if necessary if a clash of school holidays would cause too many absentees.

23.2270. Approval of Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes, circulated in advance of the meeting, of the meeting held in April. The chairman of the meeting signed the minutes.

23.2271. Questions or address from members of the public:

- Representation was made by members of the public concerning the planning application at the former coal yard, expanding on the submission to the council, received by email and circulated to members in advance of the meeting. In essence, the immediate neighbours are strongly opposed to the proposals for the reasons outlined in their submission which had been presented to the planning authority.
- A representative of Heart Safe Communities UK was in attendance to ensure clarity concerning potential uncertainties concerning connection of AED cabinets to the electricity network in the parish. The chairman clarified that the council is not discontent with the actual units and is not seeking their removal. The council needs to satisfy itself that proper due diligence has been followed and that National Grid has been fully apprised throughout the installation process.

23.2272. Opportunity to consider co-option of new member of the parish council.

It was **RESOLVED** to co-opt Sam Attenborough as a new member of the council.

23.2273. Planning and Development:

1. NE/23/00296/FUL | Construction of four single storey E(g) business units and associated car parking | Former Station Yard Station Road: This matter had been discussed at the previous parish council meeting, prior to the official notification having been received and the public notices made. In the meantime, neighbour representations had been received and the council revisited the matter, as per its previous undertaking. The issues raised by the neighbours, and those raised in consultee submissions on the planning portal, especially ecological impact were taken into consideration during the ensuing thorough discussion. In conclusion, the council's previous position was reiterated, i.e. the council has no objections to the proposals and, as demonstrated in the emerging draft neighbourhood plan, is actively supportive of initiatives that can provide local employment opportunities and support of the micro economy of the parish and immediate locality. The council concurred with the concerns raised earlier in the meeting during the public session about the damage to local wildlife and agreed to mention in the planning response that planning officers should ensure they are conversant with the observations and objections made by the neighbours and residents. The observation of normal working hours and adherence to the business use as applied for must be included as planning conditions. The planning

officers should also be aware of the dichotomy regarding lighting, the opposing advice being the recommendations in the submitted ecological survey in contrast to those submitted by Northamptonshire Police Community Safety Department as consultee. The parish council would like to lodge its concern that the requirement for lighting would be in conflict with maintaining suitable conditions for the bats which use the area for feeding and navigation. The council would add to its consultee submission a request that, in keeping with the spirit of imminent changes to planning legislation encouraging biodiversity net gain, the undertaking contained with the application referring to planting replacement native trees and retaining natural habitat should be a planning condition, should the planning authority be mindful to approve the application.

2. NE/23/00422/FUL | First floor extension to side of dwelling | 19 Parkway Close Nassington. It was agreed that the council has no objections to the proposals. As the council had not yet formally been apprised of the planning application, it was agreed to re-visit the matter if adverse comment appeared on the planning portal, or if the council was directly approached with concerns, prior to the next parish council meeting.
3. Neighbourhood Plan: It was noted that not all of the fund from the last tranche of the grant received from Locality was spent and will have to be refunded to that body. In the meantime, the council requires a good draft of the neighbourhood plan in a as near to finished format as possible, now that all of the sections have been submitted by the site allocation group and the environmental group. A small section covering renewable energy is to follow, but the council would like to review at the June meeting, with a view to holding a stand-alone meeting thereafter to consider only the NDP.

23.2274. Governance

- a) A copy of the report into the council's governance and accounts for the year ended 31st March 2023 had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting stating "It is evident from governing documents and when speaking with the Clerk/RFO that the Council is aware of its responsibilities regarding public finances including risk management. However, as the Council did not carry out its annual risk assessment within the financial year, I am required to respond 'no' to internal control objective C.

As above, it is evident that the Council is fully aware of its responsibilities regarding accountability, governance and transparency. However, this could be even more effective by ensuring the following:

1. Reviewing previous internal audit reports to ensure recommended actions continue to be implemented. *In response, the council confirmed that this is the case, with virements being clearly identified as recommended in 20/21 and 21/22 IA reports; clearly identifying powers/duties in expenditures, as recommended in 19/20 and 20/21 IA reports; reviewing governance documents as recommended in 19/20 IA; having a compliant website as identified in 21/22 IA report, which the council is confident it complies with, having with fully WAGC documentation on its website, unlike the majority of other town and parish councils.*
2. Approving and recording in the minutes the reconciled balance of all bank accounts. *In response, the council considered that minuting of the bank balances with the quarterly review of budget vs actual expenditure to be sufficient, but will endeavour to include bank reconciliation monthly as capacity allows,*
3. Establishing a rota whereby a different member completes a checklist prior to a meeting throughout the year in order to test specific internal controls and report findings to the Council. *In response, the council considered the recommended model put forward in 2019:*
 - i) Bank reconciliation completed for previous month? *This would be evidenced by minutes coupled with the availability of statements for all members to view and the capacity for the majority of members to view the bank accounts.*

- ii) Invoice folder completed for previous month? *All invoices are submitted to all members electronically as part of the agenda. The council's accounts are kept electronically, including all invoices. There are no paper copies of any documents kept. All records are backed up to the cloud (in three separate repositories)*
- iii) All bank statements filed correctly? *The council's accounts are kept electronically, including all statements.*
- iv) Has VAT been reclaimed? *This will be reviewed annually, or more often if circumstances necessitate, and minuted accordingly. It was noted that VAT for the year end 31 March 2023 has been submitted electronically.*
- v) Contracts of employment due for review? *The council does not anticipate a circumstance where this would arise regularly. Pay reviews will be actioned when national negotiations are implemented.*
- vi) Payroll records up to date? *The council considers this to be a matter of statute, as RTI monthly payroll submissions are made as a matter of course.*
- vii) National Insurance and PAYE employer's contributions up to date? *PAYE is collected by direct debit by HMRC in accordance with the calculations submitted by the RTI monthly payroll submissions. The submissions are calculated by HMRC recommended payroll software (currently 12pay by Iris)*
- viii) Minutes for previous month initialled, signed, dated and filed? (Including council and committee minutes)? *All members witness the chairman sign, initial and date the minutes presented at each meeting*

In summary, the council will not be implementing a rota for members to 'drill down' each month to physically sign off the accounts, as every member has sight of every invoice by electronic means in advance of each meeting. It was resolved that all members take collective responsibility for checking the invoices to be authorised in advance of each meeting by means of the hyperlinks on the agenda. In addition, two members are required to authorise each electronic payments or alteration to a direct debit. All standing orders and direct debits are authorised by the council. Five members are bank signatories and have access to view the bank account, In addition, the lead member for internal control has electronic access to the bank account, but is not a signatory or able to authorise payments.

The council is mindful that the safeguarding procedures apply to all roles / positions in future as opposed to individuals at a given point. It feels that with the current framework in place, all public money and the council's assets are adequately safeguarded against deliberate fraudulent activity or accidental bookkeeping mistakes.

- b) Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Report (AGAR) had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Each of the 9 questions on the form was considered in turn. It was **RESOLVED** that the council:
 - prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations. made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
 - has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.
 - during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.
 - arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.
 - responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit. (It was confirmed that the matter of accounts being checked is carried out by the members who are authorising individual payments as well as all members checking quarterly submissions)

- disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant
- The last question regarding being a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts is not applicable.

The council was not able to affirm that it had considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly because the council had not undertaken a written assessment of the financial risks within the twelve-month period covered by the AGAR (it having been undertaken the previous February, 2022). A risk assessment had been undertaken since 31st March 2023, and whilst it pertains to the current financial year, the council is satisfied that the appropriate mitigation was in place during the year ended 31st March 2023. Risks had been identified during the year as part of the insurance renewal process, which was scrutinised closely and measures were in place to minimise financial risks, highlight anomalies and mitigate financial mismanagement, but these were not documented and signed off during the pertinent period.

The dates for the exercise of public rights (to inspect accounts and associated papers) were confirmed as 5th June – 14th July 2023.

- Insurance: Insurance renewal documents had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting and taken as read. It was **RESOLVED** that insurable risks had been considered and cover to be provided is adequate.
- It was **RESOLVED** to approve a maximum budget of £709 for a new laptop.

23.2275. Playing field

- Correspondence received regarding a situation potentially causing disturbance and flooding to the brook, culvert and bank at the playing field had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting. It was agreed that various groups with influence over safety of users at the park would be asked to contact parents to encourage that children do not leave dams in situ at the brook (the school, cricket club, preschool and parish council via the newsletter)
- Costs had been received for repair of the access road and carpark at the playing field. It was agreed to request additional cost of adding two more speed bumps, to alleviate the cause and effect of gathering speed due to the distance between the existing speed bumps. It was also agreed that grant funding would be sought for the works.
- The situation regarding public liability implications and actions regarding licences / agreements for users of the playing field as per ongoing correspondence remain in abeyance in the absence of input from the cricket club. The situation remains that there are no licences in place allowing for any activity by any party at the playing field.
- Rospa Playsafety has confirmed the annual inspection of the play equipment at the playing field is scheduled to take place in June.
- Following inspection carried out by HAGS, a report from that company had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting. It was **RESOLVED** that the council would cover the cost of top soil to be placed when the new grass matting under the zip slide is re-laid, the matting having been highlighted in the report as still not properly installed, which HAGS had agreed to rectify. It was **RESOLVED** that maintenance works to the roundabout also be carried out and costs requested for maintenance works on the multiplay unit, with a view to works being commissioned under delegated authority.
- It was agreed to begin a project to explore options for a replacement trim-trail at the play area using earmarked reserves and investigating grant funding.

23.2276. Community / Projects:

- a) It was agreed that data from the SID traffic recordings would be used to evidence grant funding applications for three new SID units..
- b) Details of plans to support nature recovery at the churchyard had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting and noted.
- c) Allotments:
 - A report was received concerning criminal damage and theft from one of the allotments. The council is unable to become directly involved in the situation and is aware that the aggrieved allotment holder may approach the police concerning the situation.
 - A succession of failed attempts to repair the water supply has led to a situation where the water supply cannot be left on currently. It was agreed that the clerk would purchase necessary parts to enable proper repairs to be carried out. A volunteer has come forward to carry out the works.
 - It was agreed that a clearance company would be instructed to remove the accumulated rubbish at the allotments.
 - It was agreed that the council's grounds works contractor would be appointed to prune the fruit trees in the community orchard area at the appropriate time.

23.2277. Financial matters:

- a) The accounts to year end at 31st March 2023 and balances had been at the previous meeting in April

ledger balance current account	1,821.68
Nationwide 95 day saver	86,519.84
Tailored reserve	24,769.01
Pockit prepayment card (petty cash)	2.23
Total cash:	113,112.76
Per cash book	
Balance b/f	113,223.00
Add receipts for year	73,530.37
less payments for the year	73,640.61
Balance c/f:	113,112.76

- b) It was **RESOLVED** to approve Section 2 of the AGAR as circulated in advance of the meeting:

	31 Mar 2022 £	31 Mar 2023 £
Balances brought forward	86,304	113,223
(+) Annual Precept	49,755	50,750
(+) Total other receipts	22,641	22,780
(-) Staff Costs	10,728	11,042
(-) Loan interest/capital repayments	-	-
(-) Total other payments	34,749	62,598
(=) Balances carried forward	113,223	113,113
Total cash and investments	113,223	113,113
Total fixed assets and long term assets	219,835	222,288
Total borrowings	0	0

- c) The accounts to month end at 30th April 2023 were approved

ledger balance current account	4,280.31
Nationwide 95 day saver	86,718.95
Tailored reserve	72,813.01
Pockit prepayment card (petty cash)	0.24

Total cash:	163,812.51
Per cash book	
Balance b/f	113112.76
Add receipts for year	51,527.33
less payments for the year	827.58
Balance c/f:	163,812.51

d) It was **RESOLVED** to approve the following payments, details of which had been circulated in advance of the meeting:

Goods/service	Supplier	Nett	Gross	Power
Membership	SLCC		177.00	LGA ⁱ 111
Grasscutting	Plough environmental		720.00	PHA ⁱⁱ S164HA ⁱⁱⁱ S96HA ^{iv} 136
Amazon	Biscuit tin	13.40	39.62	LGA ⁱ 145
	Litter pick pencils	8.82		LGA ⁱ 144
	Litter pick stickers	4.16		
	Correx board	4.14		
BHIB	Insurance		791.64	LGA ⁱ 111
CHT	Paediatric AED pads	84.95	101.94	PHA ^v s234
Walnut farm	Trees	173.00	207.64	
Display boards	XL displays	168.00	201.60	LGA ⁱ 111
Streetlighting electricity	SSE	111.83	117.41	^{vi}
AED April cons May payt	SSE	8.28	8.69	PHA ^{vii} s234
Streetlighting electricity	SSE	102.64	107.76	PHA ^{viii} s234
AED March/ April payt	SSE	3.37	3.53	PHA ^{ix} s234
Streetlighting electricity	SSE	99.05	103.99	^x
Data protection fee	ICO		35.00	GDPR
Salary and pension			769.78	LGA ⁱ S112 & pensions act

Plus transfer of funds to prepaid card for purchase of laptop as agreed above.

23.2278. Official announcements, notices or reports / Correspondence / representations of note:

- A FOI request regarding the licence at Jack's Green had been received and dealt with, after taking appropriate advice. The consequence of this was that the licensing authority will no longer share electronic copies of applications with local councils.
- Parish council forum dates were noted.
- The notes and presentation slides from the LAP North Place Development Conference were received and noted.

23.2279. Newsletter / Social Media / community communications would include

- Note to highlight the importance of not damming the book
- Nature recovery at the churchyard
- Maintenance plans at the park.

23.2280. Matters to carry forward:

- Plans for the bench at the village green and Parkway

23.2281. Exclusion of public

It was **RESOLVED** under the public bodies (admission to meetings) act 1960 to exclude members of the public present from the following agenda item as content could be prejudicial to the public interest

23.2282. Response to communications

It was agreed that the chairman would respond to communications received in relation to installation of equipment in the village, outlining the council's position and clarifying what information is needed and the council's expectations with regard to communications.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 14TH JUNE 2023

Approved by Nassington Parish Council:

Signature of Chairman		Date:
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ⁱ LGA – Local Government Act 1972

ⁱⁱ Public Health Act 1875

ⁱⁱⁱ Public Health Act 1875

^{iv} HA- Highways Act 1980

^v PHA – Public Health Act 1936

^{vi} Parish Councils Act 1957 s3 / Highways Act 1980 s301

^{vii} PHA – Public Health Act 1936

^{viii} PHA – Public Health Act 1936

^{ix} PHA – Public Health Act 1936

^x Parish Councils Act 1957 s3 / Highways Act 1980 s301