

**MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF SHERBURN-IN-ELMET PARISH COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE HARRY MOUNTAIN ROOM AT EVERSLEY PARK CENTRE ON MONDAY  
18<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2016 @ 7PM**

**Present:** Councillors P. Doherty (Chairman), C. Lake (Vice Chairman), B. Packham, T. Streatfield, M. Hobson, Mrs J. Prescott, K. Devers, L. Wake, M. Jordan, D. Palmer (CDO) and Mrs M. Gibson (Clerk)

Also present: 1 Member of the public.

**MEETING BUSINESS**

**109. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

Apologies were received from Councillors B. Thwaite, Mrs J. Brown and D. Buckle.

**110. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No Councillors had interests to declare.

**111. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

Minutes of the last meeting held on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> March, 2016, Part 2 minutes also the extraordinary meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> April were approved and signed by the Chairman.

**112. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

The Chair stated to Mr Dowson, the resident present, that the two letters he had submitted were on the agenda for later in the meeting, but if Mr Dowson wished he would deal with them during the public open session which would mean that Mr Dowson had the opportunity to speak. Mr Dowson said that was up to the Chair and the Chair said that they would be discussed during the public open session

Mr Dowson had submitted two letters to this council about three Parish Councillor's actions. The first was a complaint about Councillor Prescott and the second letter complained about Councillors Packham and Jordan. Mr Dowson states he has proof that Councillors Packham and Jordan have grossly misled the people of this village. He states both these councillors were notable by their absence at the Extraordinary Parish Council meeting about the Village Centre Project. His belief is that, for the good of the village, both these Councillors should resign from the Parish Council. Chairman stated that Councillor Packham wished to make a formal statement about this.

Details of this statement are given below:

**COMMENTS AND PERSONAL STATEMENT by Councillor Packham**

I would like to make a personal statement on matters raised in today's agenda, and on the statements made by Mr Dowson on boards in the village over the last 14 months.

First, I did not attend the extraordinary meeting on 11th April because in my view my presence would not have assisted the Parish Council in considering the issues raised and would instead have resulted in a meeting that achieved nothing. I thank those who did attend and achieved an outcome.

Councillor Jordan and I have been the subject of sustained and largely defamatory attacks on notices published in the village centre for the last 14 months. In that time there have also been unfavourable comments made about at least 5 other Parish Councillors and, without any justification whatsoever, my wife Karen.

The attacks on Karen have been particularly upsetting – I am an elected Councillor (despite Mr Dowson’s best efforts)- indeed I have contested the last four District and single County elections over the last 13 years and I have been elected each time but to accept that I’m not going to be on everyone’s Christmas card list. Karen gives a great deal of time to this community (the Informer, Sherburn in Bloom, the Old School and Library Committees) and does not deserve such treatment.

I did take legal advice last year on some of the more unpleasant defamation, and was advised that whilst the content would almost certainly be found to be defamatory, it would ultimately be a pointless and costly exercise. It was at that point that I decided the best approach was to do nothing to acknowledge or respond to these derogatory attacks. I have to say others did not take this view and on several occasions took successful action to have the comments removed, but as I was not in any event reading the notices, this was not a result of any action on my part – frankly I have better things to do.

Last week two new issues arose however which I believe need some response. The first is the two letters which are on this agenda and we will deal with in due course. My only initial comment is that Councillor Prescott is now being asked to apologise (and interestingly is herself being accused of an untruthful statement) for expressing a different opinion to Mr Dowson. So we now have yet another Councillor being attacked for trying to inform residents. At this rate no Councillor will want to make any comment about any issue in case Mr Dowson doesn’t agree with what they say.

The other issue is that my attention was drawn to a notice posted on the bus stop. I have already got used to notices calling me a “bully boy” or “the Godfather”, and of the rest of my colleagues as “hit men” and “puppets”. However, I believe Parish Councillors should take an entirely different view of the clearly defamatory description of a Councillor as “The village idiot”. Indeed, it makes no difference whether the person so described is a Councillor or not, it is completely unacceptable.

Frankly this whole issue has now gone on too long. It is interesting to speculate that if it was the other way round and I, as a Councillor, was putting similar comments around the village about a resident I would soon be up before the Monitoring Officer.

I appreciate that this may come as a disappointment to some of you but I have no intention of resigning from the Parish Council. I would further add that I will not attend any public meeting about this subject. Mr Dowson says he has “evidence” – well take it to the proper authorities; that is the proper course of action. But of course he has already done this in a very public way and the evidence he presented alleging wrong doing by Councillor Jordan and I was dismissed by the monitoring officer.

As a Parish Council we need a clear view on how we intend to respond to these letters and defamations. I have given my view and invite others to do the same.

Councillor Jordan then stated he had Mr Dowson come to his home and threaten him and his wife, who is still traumatised by this attack. Councillor Jordan contacted the Police who advised him to have no contact with Mr Dowson.

Mr Dowson stated he went to both Councillors homes to find out who had been instrumental in removal of the Toilets and both Councillors denied all knowledge of who this was. Both blamed others for this decision. Mr Dowson stressed he had not threatened physical violence to either Councillor, just threatened them with “the truth”.

Chairman then stated that he wished to make two points. Firstly, the Localism Act of 2011 means that complaints that Parish Councillors have failed to comply with the Code of Conduct must be made to the Monitoring Officer at Selby District Council. Secondly the email from Councillor Prescott which Mr Dowson had complained about was not from Councillor Prescott’s Parish Council email and concerned the Visiting Scheme, not the Parish Council.

The Chair proposed that Mr Dowson be asked to take his complaints to the Monitoring Officer at Selby District Council. The motion was seconded by Councillor Wake, a vote was taken, two councillors abstained (Councillors Packham & Jordan), but all other Councillors voted in favour of the motion. Mr Dowson then stormed out of the meeting stating “that is why I call you the village idiots, you are 100% liars”.

### **113. POLICE ISSUES.**

Chairman reports that he had called in the Parish Council office one day when the two officers were there and they report that a new officer has been appointed to take over from PC Richardson but was on Maternity leave until January. Also that the new Sgt was very keen to do something about youth problems and anti-social behaviour. Selby are taking a multi-service approach to this problem - when youths are detained they are taken to this group which comprises youth services, social services and Council to try and deal with this problem. Councillor Hobson reports that Police do want to work with the Parish Council regarding this problem. Councillor Devers stated that Julie Mulligan came to a previous meeting and was willing to come again, but as the election for Police & Crime commissioner is in May we should wait and see who the Commissioner is then. **Agreed that Councillor Devers be appointed Police Liaison Officer to co-ordinate with the Police on problems.**

### **114. NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**To Report and take comments on.**

**County Councillor reports;**

- i) Budget-** ongoing and are working through all areas to see where savings can be made, will keep the Parish Council updated.
- ii) Fracking** –If the plans for Kirkby Misperton are approved there could be many more applications, will keep Parish Council informed.
- iii) Devolution** – Little progress being made.
- iv) Street Lighting-** North Yorkshire policy on this is being strictly adhered to so unless requests meet this policy they will not be considered.
- v) Bus Services** –Unfortunately most of the services which are being cut are commercial services which the County have no control over, these are strictly commercial reasons for cutting services. County Councillor would much rather we had a good service but operators cannot justify costs.

## 115. CORESEPENDENCE

- i) **To receive letter from Access Selby regarding temporary road closures in the village for the Gala on the 21<sup>st</sup> May. This was noted.**
- ii) **To receive letter from NYCC regarding surface dressing work around this village-** Chairman reports that this has caused long delays today on the bypass and that Biggin Crossroads is due for closure for 1.5 days of work from 21<sup>st</sup> April. He is trying to get more details so that this can go on the Facebook page.
- iii) **To receive letter of complaint about Councillor Prescott-** this was dealt with in the public session.
- iv) **To receive preliminary report from Tree Surgeon on annual check-** There are no high problem risks found. Will send full report when he gets reply from SDC regarding TPO order numbers.
- v) **To receive letter from resident following extraordinary meeting accusing two councillors of misconduct and asking for their resignation.** This was dealt with in the public session.

## 116. PARISH COUNCIL BUSINESS

### a) PLANNING

- i) **Report on Planning meeting** –Councillor Streatfield reports separate minutes will be sent.
- ii) **Report from Transport/Traffic Committee** – No meeting held.
- iii) **Construction sites** - Nothing to report.

### b) COUNCIL

- i) **Community Development Officers report** –This has been previously circulated to all Councillors. Defibrillator box has now been fitted but at present there is no defibrillator to put in it. Chairman reports he is trying to contact Mr Stead regarding the defibrillator. **Resolved this report be accepted.**
- ii) **Update on Tesco Community Funding-** Chairman reports this is still on hold at the moment.
- iii) **Update on access to footpath Low Street/Fairways** – Councillor Streatfield reports no response on this matter. **Agreed this be left off the agenda as it will appear when planning permission is sought for the adjoining area.**
- iv) **Request for tidying up Village Centre-** Councillor Buckle not present so no report on progress.
- v) **Update on Tour de Yorkshire** – Chairman reports that a lot of work has been done and there is still quite a lot to do, but good progress has been made.
- vi) **CIL and Neighbourhood Plan** – Councillor Streatfield reports that consultants cannot quote until we have a draft plan and the consultants know what work is needed. **Resolved a separate working group be set up with public as well as Councillors on this. To be advertised on the Facebook page asking for volunteers to come on this group.**
- vii) **Update on Flashing lights on shops, Low Street** – Still no planning application for this. It is the colour of these lights which is affecting the amenity of neighbouring houses. **Agreed this can come off agenda as we would have chance to comment when a planning application is submitted.**
- viii) **Update on Council's Facebook page** - Councillor Streatfield reports that it continues to be popular. The item regarding road conditions by the Persimmon/Redrow development reached nearly 800 people. A more average item would reach about 200 people. In contrast an item asking for volunteers to help with a Community Litter Pick reached only 15 people.

80% of likes are 25-55 year olds and the largest single group reached are women between the ages of 35 and 44.

**ix) Disposal of old Community Mini-Bus** - Chairman had asked for this to be put on agenda as at least two local groups would be interested. **Resolved that as this belongs to the Community Mini Bus Association this council are not really involved but that a local group should be given the option to buy this bus.**

**x) Report of vandalism at Memorial Garden area by Library** – Clerk reports that gate has been broken off and is in the bin area at Eversley Park centre when the council wish to re-instate this. CDO reports he has been up to the site with Mr Varley and there are rats in the walls, Mr Varley will fill in holes and put down poison. There is a litter problem because of all the Takeaways in the area.

**c) FINANCE**

**i) To Agree minutes of Finance meeting held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> April (previously circulated to all Councillors). Resolved these minutes and actions be agreed.**

**ii) Cheques totalling £85,776.55 (see separate list) were approved and signed by the Councillors.**

**d) LAND & PREMISES**

**i) No meeting held.**

**e) PERSONNEL/TRAINING**

**i) Follow up Report on meeting with Sheena Spence YLCA** – Councillor Lake reports we have now got response from YLCA they are asking if Council have approved the Contracts of employment sent to them for checking. Council were awaiting their response. **Resolved a Personnel Committee meeting be called next Monday evening to approve these. Copies of contracts to be sent to all members before this meeting.**

**117. OTHER REPORTS**

**a) Selby Rail Users** – Next meeting this week. Subs payment cheque was signed.

**b) Gala Committee** – Councillor Lake reports having problems getting people to commit to helping. As is usual.

**c) C.A.B** - No report

**d) Community Association** – Councillor Prescott reports they are busy trying to get blue and yellow flowers in all the tubs for Tour de Yorkshire day.

**e) Eversley Park Centre** – The EPC committee have agreed they do not wish to join with Old School and Library hub.

**f) Yorkshire Local Councils Association** – No meeting held.

**g) C.E.F.'s** - Councillor Prescott reports that some leaflets regarding walks in the local area had been handed out at last meeting and had been very quickly snapped up. Find out why there are none for this Village.

**h) Rugby Club** – No report.

**i) Angling Club** – Councillor Hobson reports work going well and looking really tidy now. Clerk still waiting for quotes for fencing at this area.

**j) White Rose Football Club** – Clerk has not had confirmation of whether they are lighting a beacon for the Queen's birthday, but they state they imagine they would be.

**k) Fairways area**- No report.

**l) Aero Club Liaison Committee**- Next meeting 28<sup>th</sup> April at 8pm

**m) Village Centre Project** – Work should be finished on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April. Councillor Wake asked why the bollards are to be burgundy when ones at other side of road are black. It was stated that the project was to be finished as per the specification and then residents would be consulted.

**118. CLERKS REPORTS REQUEST FOR MATTERS FOR NEXT AGENDA**

- i) Letter from NYCC stating they will be paying £1069.19 towards the grass cutting for this season.**
- ii) Letter from Sherburn Bowls thanking the council for their floodlighting work. This will help with evening matches during the early season.**
- iii) Internal Audit- Clerk reports that this is to be done on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> April**
- iv) Complaint about dog fouling around the village - this to go on next agenda.**
- v) Letter from Yorkshire Water- work will be carried out 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> April and some discolouration of the water may be experienced.**

**Items for next Agenda;**

**Annual Public meeting will be held at 6.45pm before the next Parish Council meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> May 2016**

- 1) Bin by Library needs moving out of the bushes (Councillor Brown)**
- ii) Grass Cutting - Councillor Hobson**
- iii) Oak Terrace litter – Councillor Hobson**
- iv) Lady Popplewell Centre – Councillor Hobson**