

Washingborough Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held remotely under current legislation on Thursday 15th April 2021 at 6pm.

AP 21/1. **CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME**

Cllr Fothergill opened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance. He explained that due to the current Government Guidance regarding Covid-19, no speakers had been invited to the meeting and the agenda for the meeting had been kept to a minimum.

AP21/2. **NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING held on the 5th March 2020**

These were agreed and signed as the minutes.

AP21/3. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Chairman reported:

It has been a year like no other with many and various lockdowns where facilities can't be used or can with strict limitations meaning that sometimes the Community Centre is open and others when it is closed. This has of course had a significant impact on our income but unfortunately costs don't disappear when not in use you will hear details from the Finance report.

The Council would like to thank everybody who has helped out during the pandemic especially the Washingborough Academy who provided meals for older residents and the Washingborough Lions who we were able to direct funds to.

The Council has continued to support the NHS by opening the Community Centre for blood donor sessions and the warfarin clinic which has required additional cleaning.

While the sports facilities, including the football pitches have not been used the grass and weeds still grow and our staff have worked hard at maintaining the pitches and courts so they will be ready for the new season.

Litter and dog bins have been emptied and dog warden services have been maintained during this period.

The Council has been able to rely on the resilience and adaptability of our staff for the support they have given, a big thank you to them.

Monthly Council meetings have continued via Zoom, as a result of a change in legislation, allowing us to carry on with Council business. New initiatives have been much reduced but when restrictions are lifted, we will push ahead with future plans.

There has been an increase in antisocial behaviour with damage to the pavilion resulting in destruction to some walls where the bricks have been thrown onto the roof damaging the solar panels, doors to the toilets have been smashed, guttering has been torn down and fencing has been destroyed. One of the nastiest incidences is broken glass trod into the grass where anybody not just children could be badly hurt. The police have been informed and have increased patrolling the area. If the culprits are apprehended the council will prosecute and ask for damages as it is our duty to exercise proper financial control of the council tax precept we are allocated. We would ask everybody to be vigilant and report any incidents witnessed to the police or the Parish Clerk. Costs for repairs or preventative measures

will be paid for by your council tax which will have to rise as a result of this wanton damage.

A great deal of concern has been expressed by residents about the speeding and volume of vehicles through the village. Studies have been carried out but are unfortunately not conclusive. At the last Council meeting the purchase of an interactive speed sign was approved which will be located at the 5 identified blackspots in random rotation. Whilst the onus is on the drivers to slow down if their indicated speed is over the limit the Council cannot take any action. In order to assist the policing of speeding drivers we are looking for volunteers to join a Community Speed Watch scheme where persistent speeders can be reported to the police for them to take action. Ideally, we would like several groups of 3 people so that a rota can be established and not left to one group to bear the brunt of the work. On the subject of volunteers, we are also looking for litter pickers.

I am pleased to say that we have recruited 2 new councillors, Reece Harrington and Paul Scigala, to help fill our 3 vacancies but saddened to have to announce the recent passing of Councillor Robert Dowlman who has given many years of dedicated service to the Parish. He will be sadly missed not only as a valued councillor but as a friend. If you would like to be part of the way forward, please contact the Parish Clerk for details.

AP21/4. FINANCIAL REPORT

The Finance Chairman reported:

This has been a very difficult year for the Parish Council as for most of it we have had to shut the Community Centre and Pavilion, thereby cutting off a great deal of our income source. We also waived the fees for this year for the clubs and societies who use our playing fields as it did not seem right to charge them when we did not know if they could use the facilities or not.

In addition to this we have suffered greatly from vandalism and have had people destroying the walls around the Pavilion and chucking those pieces of masonry onto the roof. We have had to remove the solar panels from the roof because of damage, and we are also having to spend a large chunk of money that would have been better used elsewhere on fitting railings to the front of the Pavilion to prevent vandals from breaking into the Ladies and Gents toilets there.

Despite these problems we have finished the year very much on track with regard to our budget by making economies wherever we could and not carrying out the planned improvements to the Community Centre.

Our precept request this year has had to increase slightly because up to now the Community Centre has usually been pretty much self-sustaining, its income paying for most of its expenditure. However, with the possibility of little to no income again this year we have had to make provision for the bills which still need to be paid, water rates, council tax, heating etc. so that the Community Centre will be there ready to be used whenever things open up again.

We do have a grant scheme whereby clubs and groups in the village can apply to us for an amount of money. The application forms are available from the civic office and in order to be eligible for a grant the application form must be returned by the deadline of 1st December. This is to allow the council to budget for this in the January precept meeting, for the grant to then be paid at the start of the financial year in April. Therefore, no applications for the upcoming financial year will be considered after 1st December. A grant has been awarded for 21/22 to the Penfold Players.

Our major project for the next financial year is that we hope to be able to refurbish the childrens' play area due to some section 106 money becoming available. We also hope to install some outside gym equipment for older teens and adults. I am sure the village will welcome these improvements.

AP21/5. ELECTORS' QUESTIONS WERE AS FOLLOWS

None

There being no further business the meeting closed at 6.15pm.

SIGNED

DATE