

## **BRININGHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2023, at Briningham Village Hall at 7pm.**

The Parish Meeting is an opportunity for parishioners on the Electoral Roll for Briningham to raise any matters of concern to them that relates to their local community. Matters can be raised at the meeting without prior notice.

#### **This meeting was recorded**

**Present:** Chair Cllr Helena Gregory, Chris Rix and Jackie Rix, Locum Clerk – K. Harris and Residents: Mr. Cook, Mrs Cook, Mr. Edwards, Ms Lewis

#### 1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies have been received from Cllr Gardner, NNDC Cllr Brown and NCC Cllr Aquarone

#### 2. Chair's report

As a new Chair for the Parish Council, there is not a lot I can say about the previous year. I would like to thank everyone who voted for us and who has given us the chance to serve the Parish. I hope we will be able to justify your support.

Despite the bumpy road so far, in that Tracy is unable to be here for family reasons and we lost Alison who did not take up her seat; we have lost our most recently appointed clerk and were concerned about the location of the laptop which we were informed was a serious breach of data protection and, on the advice of NPTS, we were ready to take decisive action.

The accounts are not finished – there is work to do on them to get them ready for the Internal Audit. We are lucky to have Mrs Harris as our locum clerk.

It is the duty of the Parish Council to protect the public purse and monies must be spent wisely. Much of the income goes towards the funding of the Parish Clerk, but the PC cannot afford 4 hours per week and Parish Councillors will work with the Clerk to reduce the workload.

The Chair asked the Clerk to update the meeting regarding the AGAR and Internal Audit. The Clerk said that the Governance information had not been completed. The Internal Auditor originally arranged for the PC was not available later in the month, so she had spoken to another Internal Auditor who can undertake the work in early June.

The Chair concluded by discussing the allotments: the allotment field has been perceived by residents as a large untapped resource and she welcomed comments from all residents.

#### 3. Public opportunity for questions to Councillors

The following comments were made by residents:

- The reason the accounts were not ready was due to the resignation of the newly appointed clerk during April – the resident attributed this to the actions of the incoming Council;
- A letter written to Cllr Cook, who decided not to take up the position of Cllr was horrible (The Chair explained that this was written on advice from Norfolk Parish Training & Support and was to comply with the recommendations of the Information Commissioner's Office);
- He wanted to know if the Clerk's role would be re-advertised because he didn't believe it was appropriate for a previous clerk, currently acting as locum clerk, to be offered the position;

- He stated that the Precept had been introduced by District Councillors in 2020 while they were operating as a stand-in PC and it had been recommended by the Clerk in 2019;
- A resident stated that the local District Cllr has very strong reservations about the current Parish Cllrs;
- The PC needs to work for the good of the whole village;
- A large amount of money has been wasted on administration and other work relating to the Allotments – the wasting of public money by the PC will be monitored by fellow villagers and this will be reported to a higher authority;
- Despite the increased allotment rent imposed by a previous PC, the allotment has been kept tidy and produce has been grown on it;
- None of this PC should be granted dispensations to speak on the allotments;
- A resident questioned how the Cllrs could take on some of the work of the Clerk as there was only 1 laptop;
- A survey undertaken by the new PC was illegal – the Chair clarified that there had been no survey, but she had kept a record of comments received;
- The latest Clerk who resigned had 30 years of experience – she would not have required any extension for the Accounts;
- Actions relating to the Clerk appointed in April and the appointment of a new Clerk were illegal;
- The retiring PC had been prepared to work with the new PC to ease the transition, particularly regarding payments.

#### 4. Close meeting

The Chair confirmed with members of the public that all business had been concluded and the meeting closed at 7.20pm