

Minutes of the Dersingham Annual Parish Council meeting held on 15th May 2023 at 7pm in the Dersingham Village Centre

Councillors present: Coral Shepherd (Chairman), Brian Anderson (Vice Chairman) Valerie Brundle, Tony Bubb, Robert Frost, Dane Hipkin, John Houston, Martin Noble, Mike Shepherd, Jordan Stokes, Ann Watkins, and Dennis Wright

Also present: Karen Orgill (Business Manager). Geraldine Scanlon (Assistant Business Manager – Minute taker)

- 14275 To elect the Chairman of the Council and to receive the Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office.**
Cllr B Anderson nominated Cllr C Shepherd; Cllr Tony Bubb seconded the nomination. **Councillors voted; and it was resolved that Cllr C Shepherd be duly elected as Chair.**
- 14276 To elect the Vice Chairman of the Council and to receive the Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office.**
Cllr C Shepherd nominated Cllr B Anderson; Cllr Tony Bubb seconded the nomination. Cllr V Brundle nominated Cllr J Houston, Cllr M Noble seconded the nomination. **Councillors voted; and it was resolved that Cllr B Anderson be duly elected as Vice Chair.**
- 14277 Apologies for absence - None received**
- 14278 Declarations of interest and request dispensations by Councillors in any of the agenda items listed – None Received.**
- 14279 To approve Minutes of the Full council meeting held 24th April 2023**
It was resolved to approve that the Chairman sign the Minutes as a true and accurate record.
Action points were reviewed.
Cllr C Shepherd
To contact the owner of the post office about the closure of Dersingham Sorting Office – Cllr C Shepherd advised she had spoken with the owner of the post office and will shortly complete a letter to James Wild MP. Cllr Brundle advised she had received a response from James Wild MP regarding the matter and would forward a copy to Cllr C Shepherd.
- 14280 To approve and adopt the Standing Orders for Dersingham Parish Council**
Cllr C Shepherd said the Finance & Administration Committee had revised the Standing Orders (S/O) which had been placed on SharePoint prior to the meeting and reminded Councillors the S/O act as rules of Councillor conduct and how the Parish Council performs as a business. Cllr Houston asked why the S/O were now being discussed and what their purpose is, as we have not had them before. Cllr C Shepherd explained the document presented to Full Council was a standard template which had been tailored to meet Dersingham Parish Councils requirements. Most of the changes made reflected the change in job title from Clerk to Business Manager. Dersingham has had S/O for many years and they should be reviewed on a yearly basis however Dersingham S/O have not been updated since being adopted on 24th July 2019. Councillors discussed the

proposed amendments. **It was resolved to approve and adopt the amended Standing Orders.**

14281 To approve and adopt the Financial Regulations for Dersingham Parish Council.

Cllr C Shepherd said the Finance & Administration Committee had revised the Financial Regulations (FR) which had been placed on SharePoint prior to the meeting, the last update to be made was 2019. Councillors discussed the proposed amendments. **It was resolved to approve and adopt the Financial Regulations.**

14282 To review the Asset Register

Cllr C Shepherd reported the Asset Register had been placed on SharePoint prior to the meeting. The total value of the Parish Councils assets is £2445,000.00 which is an increase of almost £7000.00. Cllr M Shepherd advised the changes reflect the replacement IT equipment and new benches. He said there had been no valuation done on property owned by the Parish Council and suggested a valuation of the Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Hall be obtained prior to the review of the insurance valuation takes place before the insurance renewal due 1st August 2023.

14283 To agree Authorised Signatories

Cllr C Shepherd asked if those Councillors listed as signatories are prepared to continue. It was agreed the following Councillors remained as signatories Cllrs Brian Anderson, Tony Bubb, Robert Frost, Martin Noble and Coral Shepherd.

14284 Appointment of Parish Council representative to serve on the following Committees/Organisations.

Councillor C Shepherd reviewed the current Committee representatives. **It was resolved to approve the following Committee representatives.**

Communications Committee

Cllr Tony Bubb
Cllr Coral Shepherd
Cllr M Shepherd – Joined the Committee
Cllr Jordan Stokes
Mrs Geraldine Scanlon (ABM)
Mr Stephen Martyn (Website)
Mrs Jo Halpin-Jones (Editor)
Mr Rob Smyth (Assistant Editor)

Environment Committee

There were 8 nominations for 6 vacancies and the following were elected.

Cllr Robert Frost
Cllr Brian Anderson
Cllr Tony Bubb
Cllr Coral Shepherd
Cllr Jordan Stokes
Cllr Ann Watkins

Finance and Administration Committee

Cllr Mike Shepherd
Cllr Brian Anderson
Cllr Robert Frost
Cllr Dane Hipkin
Cllr Coral Shepherd

Planning Committee.

Cllr Dane Hipkin
Cllr Valerie Brundle
Cllr J Houston
Cllr Martin Noble
Cllr Coral Shepherd

Cllr B Anderson pointed out that stated the membership of the Staffing Committee was by invitation of the Chairman only

- 14285 Appointment of Parish Councillors as representatives for the following:
It was resolved to approve the following:**

Dersingham Social Club. There were 2 nominations for the vacancy and the following councillor was elected. There were 2 nominations for the vacancy and the following Councillor was elected.
Councillor D Wright.

Norfolk Playing Fields Association.
Councillor D Wright.

Tree Warden
Councillor B Anderson and Councillor A Watkins.

Heacham & District Community Transport Scheme.
Councillor R Frost

United Charities Trustees.
Councillor D Wright and Councillor T Bubb.

DVCA Trustee.
Councillor C Shepherd.

Internal Audit Controller.
Councillor M Shepherd.

- 14286 To receive attached reports from:**
Councillor C Shepherd advised the following reports had been circulated and asked if Councillors had any questions.

a) Full Council

Dersingham Parish Council Chairman's Annual Report 2023

As we have reached the end of our four-year term as Councillors this will be a brief review of the last four years. In May 2019 I had the honour of being elected as the Chairman of Dersingham Parish Council. I am now older but not necessarily wiser but certainly more experienced in the mysteries of a parish council. I began with the hopes and aspirations of many a chairman before me but by early 2020 we were all facing an unprecedented challenge – Covid and all of the restrictions that brought. Throughout the various lockdowns the Parish Council continued to function, and we all got to grips with Zoom, where would the world have been without it. This year the Covid pandemic has been officially decreed as being over, although the disease is still with us, we have learnt to live with it, with the help of a few jabs. No there are no restrictions, no requirements to wear masks, life has returned to normality.

The Parish Council continues to provide services to the community – grass cutting, maintaining streetlights and emptying of dog and litter bins. The War Memorial Gardens have been restored to a garden of which we can all be proud. There have been two highlights, firstly the opening of the skatepark in a gap in Covid lockdowns in August 2021, a long-held dream of the younger people in the village. The project came in on time and on budget and it is used virtually every day. Secondly just before Christmas 2021 we replaced the Christmas lights at the Recreation Ground to give a modern feel. We have now replaced one of the basketball hoops and are currently working towards replacing the goal posts. On the more mundane side we had our streetlights surveyed and several were found to be in a very poor condition. We have received two grants from the Borough council and are in the process of replacing the worst.

We took advantage of the Woodland Trust free tree scheme to enhance The Warren and planted 420 saplings. Unfortunately, the extreme heat of the summer of 2022 has taken its toll and we now have to decide our next steps. We do continue to keep The Warren as a natural area for informal use by walkers, whether with dogs or without. We have planted two commemorative trees near the village sign in Lynn Road at the entrance to the village. A beech tree to commemorate her Majesty the Queen's platinum jubilee and an oak tree to commemorate His Majesty the King's coronation.

The last 12 months have been a poignant time, in April 2021 we saw the death of the Duke of Edinburgh followed just over a year later by the celebrations of her late Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebration weekend. We worked with several groups in the Village to put together a varied programme of events. I am proud to say the village celebrated in style. Sadly, this was followed only 3 months later by her death. Last week we returned to celebrations with the coronation of King Charles 3rd, village events were quieter but none the less enjoyable.

We continue to publish and deliver Village Voice to all homes in the village. I would like to give my sincere thanks to our editor, Jo Jones and all those who give up their time to deliver the magazine, whatever the weather.

Turning to the buildings owned by the Parish Council - The Village Centre and the Social Club. They both had a difficult time with a number of covid lockdowns

but are now fully re-open with business having returned to normal. The Social Club has a new management committee and terms of a new lease for the building are being agreed with them. We have almost completed new leases for the Sports Ground so that the new Sports Ground Community Interest Company can realise their dream of a new modern pavilion.

Having reduced the precept for three consecutive years we reluctantly had to put it up slightly last year to help us meet the challenges of rapidly rising prices. This year despite the economic situation we kept the precept at the same level without any reduction in the services we provide to the village.

We now need to look forward to the next 4 years, who knows what they may bring, but our emphasis must be to improve the lives of our parishioners.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of my fellow councillors for their help and support, both practical and moral, over the last 4 years which have been challenging in many different ways and I would like, on behalf of us all to thank our hard-working staff without whom we would not be able to function.

Coral Shepherd, Chairman

b) Communications Committee

Communications Committee Annual Report 15th May 2023

I would like to begin with a reminder of the work of the communications committee – we are responsible for Village Voice, the parish council website, social media and village noticeboards. Not much you may think, but these are our main ways of communicating with our parishioners, both letting them know what we are doing and for them to let us know what they think of the work that we do. Unlike other committees we only meet every other month but this is sufficient to cover our work.

Despite the varying restrictions imposed due to the Covid pandemic we managed to keep up the production of Village Voice and life has now returned to normal. We continue with Jo Jones as our and I would like to thank her for all of her amazing work which she has approached in a calm, professional manner. Geri does a sterling job of compiling the magazine, coordinating the distributors, and now also being responsible for financial dealings with the advertisers. Village Voice continues to be delivered to every residential property in the village, come rain, shine, wind or snow by a dedicated team of volunteers and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them. I know from personal experience it can be a challenge to find letter boxes and avoid losing fingers because of fierce springs and excited pets.

To keep the village up to date with our activities we maintain 4 notice boards around the village – outside Thaxters, the Coop and at the library.

Our website continues to be maintained by Stephen Martyn. It contains a wide variety of information about the parish council and the village such as contact details for parish councillors, a calendar of our meetings, agendas and minutes and our policies as well as information about village groups and societies. It is a valuable resource for councillors as well as for residents. Many thanks to Steve

for all his work throughout the year. We are now starting the process of setting up a new website as Steve wishes to step back.

The parish council Facebook page continues to be maintained and important messages are also put onto the village group page. It is a useful way of seeking views of parishioners together with more traditional methods of consultation.

Finally, my thanks go to all members of the committee and especially to the staff who have to implement our decisions.

Coral Shepherd

c) Environment Committee

The report for the Environment Committee 2023

Another busy year for the Environment Committee, as you can see below.

The War Memorial Gardens

Since a parishioner has taken on the caring for the Memorial Garden, it looks really neat and tidy, and the Environment Committee would like to thank him for all his hard work. It is a really nice place to sit and remember lost ones.

Other remedial work still needs to be done, such as the railings which need some attention. They still need to be cleaned and repainted, quotations for this work are ongoing.

The Warren – The committee has ordered two more logs to be placed on the Warren, we have had a site meeting and have decided where the other two are to be placed. They will be delivered, as yet we have had no delivery date. The supplier is very busy at present.

The Recreation Ground – A new basketball hoop has been installed, another to be installed in the near future. The five-a-side goal posts are to be removed, awaiting a quotation from a specialist installer.

Skate Park – Is still well used and liked by all. The picnic bench which was donated by a local timber company that was placed near to the skate ramps, has been vandalized and it has been removed from the site for safety reasons. A new bench made from recycled materials has been purchased to replace it. This bench has easy access for wheelchair users.

The Parish Council have a cleaning contract in place and all the benches and seats, bus shelters and the dog waste bins are now cleaned on a regular basis. We have had two new dog bins installed, which replaced old bins due to rusty bottoms. All sponsorships have been updated and new signs on the bins.

The bus shelters have some damage on the rear wall and are due to be repainted on the inside, awaiting quotations.

Streetlights – The council has replaced three street light columns this year and two more later this year.

Children's Play area – The area is cleaned, and safety checked, this is now done on a regular basis. This area is well used and nice to see families enjoying this facility. The council is obtaining quotations for new matting and for the refill of soil which is under the multi-play equipment.

The council has purchased an A4 sign 'No Dogs in the play area'. To be placed at the Bank Road entrance.

Trees – Quotes are required to trim the tops and sides of hedge surrounding the WWII Pill Box in Broadlands Close.

An oak tree was planted near to the Village sign.

The Environment Committee and I would like to thank Councillor Robert Anderson for all his hard work and expertise during his time on the council, we wish him well.

Flooding – The residents/environmentalists are greatly concerned about flooding in the Holyrood/sports fields areas this is due to dumped materials in the said waterways. This will be discussed at length at the next environment meeting.

Robert Frost

Chair Environmental Committee

d) Finance and Administration Committee

Finance and Administration Committee Annual Report 2023

This committee advises Council on the setting of the Precept with input from other committees. This year we were able to avoid an increase despite anticipated inflationary pressures and the need to build in contingencies to mitigate risks from uncertainties that face us in the coming year. This has mainly been achieved through the use of savings and unused contingencies accrued over the last two years. We hope this will be sufficient to maintain the services we currently provide but we anticipate that the coming year will be financially challenging and will require careful monitoring and management.

The committee also oversees general administration of the council, grants, leases, licenses and policies which are not personnel related or deemed to be the responsibility of other committees.

Work on the Sportsground and Queen Elizabeth 11 Jubilee Hall leases is ongoing and has proved particularly frustrating due to issues outside our control. Progress on both leases is now being made and we hope to finalise them in the very near future.

Provision was made in our 2019/20 budgets for a project to improve our internal communications by updating our IT systems. Unfortunately, this project was stalled due to the pandemic, but the financial provision has been carried forward each year to allow the work to be completed. We have made steady progress with this project during the last year and have implemented a new corporate email and document management system which is now available to all staff and most councillors. The challenge for the coming year is to maximise the benefits that can be achieved from the new ways of working.

Mike Shepherd,

Chairman of Finance and Administration Committee May 2023

e) Planning Committee

Planning Committee Annual Report 15/05/23

The focus of the committee is to provide parish comments on planning applications submitted to the borough for proposals within the village.

The committee has held all planning meetings in person this year, with all meetings open to member of the public to comment.

No major developments have been submitted this year, with most being individual dwelling developments and a couple of commercial premises.

The planning committee expects to adopt a more digital approach to meetings in 2023/24 to demonstrate plans and visuals at upcoming meetings, where necessary.

Dane Hipkin

f) Staffing Committee

Staffing Committee Annual Report May 2023

I would like to begin with a reminder of the work of the staffing committee, it oversees staff contracts, recruitment, remuneration packages and salary payments, working conditions, training, TOIL, and leave.

Due to the nature of its work, meetings are not open to the public and membership of the Committee comprises the Parish Council Chairman, Vice Chairman and up to 3 other councillors at the invitation of the Chairman. Like other Committees we meet monthly. Last year saw the departure of our previous clerk and we now have a new Business Manager ably supported by the Assistant Business Manager. Our finances are currently being looked after by a locum and we will be shortly starting to recruit a permanent finance officer.

14287 Date, Time and Place of all Council and Committee meetings up to and including the next Annual Parish Council meeting.

Full Council meeting, including completion of the AGAR form, 22nd May 2025 at 7.00pm, Garden Room

Annual Parish meeting 23rd May 2023 at 7.00pm, Garden Room.

With no further business the meeting closed at 8.25pm

**Action points from the Parish Council meeting held 26th September 2022:
Business Manager**

- To arrange to become a signatory on the main bank account.

Action points from the Parish Council meeting held 24th April 2023:

Cllr C Shepherd

- To contact the owner of the post office about the closure of Dersingham Sorting Office.

**Action points from the Annual Parish Council meeting 15th May 2023
Cllr V Brundle**

- To forward response received from Cllr Wild to Cllr C Shepherd

With no further business the meeting was closed at 7.41pm