



Minutes of Hillington Annual Council Meeting held on the 19th May 2021

From 7.30 pm, at the St. Mary the Virgin Church, Hillington.

Parish Clerk: Caroline Boyden

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Present: Cllr Graham Rogerson (GR) Chair, Cllr Terry Kivlin (TK), and Cllr. Ben Wallace.

Caroline Boyden (CB) Clerk. 5 members of the public. County Councillor Stuart Dark (part time)

1. **Welcome** to all attendees from GR.

2. **Apologies** – Cllr Jonathan Worsley, Cllr. Jane Hill and Borough Councillor Moriarty

3. **Declarations of Interest**

3.1 To receive members declarations of interest in any of the items on the agenda - TK re proposed development 22 Lynn Road.

3.2 To receive and consider any written requests for dispensation for disclosable interests.

None received

4. **To sign as correct the record of the minutes held on Monday 20th May 2019**

Acceptance proposed by TK, seconded by BW and accepted.

5. **Annual Governance and Accountability Return**

5.1 To approve the appointment of Clive Dodds as our internal auditor – proposed by GR, seconded BW and accepted.

5.2 To review and approve the Annual Governance Statement 2020/21 including the Certificate of Exemption, Variance Report, and accounting Statement for 20/21 – proposed by TK, seconded BW, and accepted.

5.3 Approve the Asset Register and Financial Risk Assessment which now included online banking– proposed GR, seconded BW and accepted.

6. **To adopt the General Power of Competence**

The Parish Council can now adopt the General Power of Competence with two thirds of councillors elected and the clerk having the CILCA qualification. Proposed GR, seconded BW and accepted.

7. **Ward Members' Reports:**

7.1 **KL&WN Borough Council:** Cllr. James Moriarty, as follows: NOTE moved up the agenda as Cllr Dark not yet present.

I would be grateful if you gave my apologies for this evening to Hillington Parish Council. My report is below which I am happy for the Chair to read and pass on digitally and perhaps attach to the minutes.

“Obviously, the pandemic has dictated all activities and decisions throughout the year. Initially, this District was the hardest hit in Norfolk and the ONS reported more deaths in West Norfolk than elsewhere across the County. Of particular concern was the testing regime and the transference of

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untested people to and from the QEH to care homes. The deprivation and poor health of people living in Kings Lynn was an obvious contributor to the underlying cause, but people throughout the District were affected.

Events improved after the first wave and through the first lockdown which gave time to bring in more testing of vulnerable people in hospitals and care homes to stem the tide until the next wave struck in November. By then, the Council were obviously better prepared, as were other bodies, but there was still an issue over testing, self-isolation, and sick pay.

No full Council meetings were held in April and May 2020, but then they started again using the Zoom video conference system and this continued until this month.

Since highlighting the early issues with QEH, care homes and testing generally, Council Members received specific update briefings from the hospital top team and throughout the year, the Council, via a cabinet member specifically appointed to manage the issue, Cllr Stuart Dark MBE, has issued progress reports and information to all Parish and Town Councils; also, via the web site. The position in this area is now in line with other parts of East Anglia. The Council also supplemented its LILY system with council officers and volunteers to support vulnerable, lonely, and digitally isolated people.

FINANCE

The Borough Council has not had sufficient support from the Government to compensate for our lack of revenue. This is of course common across all sectors be they business, leisure etc, but a Council has statutory obligations to meet, and the Government are not supporting them.

We have had to use a significant portion of our General Reserve Fund to ensure a balanced budget (a Council obligation) and remain a going concern. This situation will continue next year, but then there will be a black hole in the accounts, with no likelihood, on present trends, of this being filled in 2023/4 and beyond.

Notwithstanding this position, the Council kept the tax rise within designated limits and only raised a Band D property by £4.50.

However, there are a variety of funds available to the Council provided we can submit an attractive bid. Unfortunately, to date, the Borough has been unsuccessful. At present we have a Town Board consisting of some Cabinet members, local business leaders and Officers, (full details on Borough web site) to create a vision for Kings Lynn and submit bids for “Levelling Up” monies.

A bid is in against the ‘Future High Street Fund’ and we may expect to hear the result shortly.

Although small in comparison, we have been given grants for improving the look of the High Street through signage and benches etc. Monies for extra cleaning and COVID support in tourist areas, but £600k, the majority of money received to date, has gone to ensuring the nurses training centre for the COWA and QEH comes to fruition.

There has also been a multitude of grants through the year to support smaller businesses and the Borough has processed over £60m to help keep these as going concerns and to support recovery.

‘EVERYONE IN’ INITIATIVE

This is also worthy of special note. Using a range of emergency accommodation options, including some new welfare cabins, we have ensured, as far as possible, that there are no rough sleepers in West Norfolk.

Districts across Norfolk have also joined a broader initiative for “no homeless in Norfolk”. Again, more Government money is needed and this initiative and our own ‘homeless strategy’, will be under threat when the moratorium on rent arrears is over.

CLIMATE EMERGENCY

This is one area where the Council has not come up to scratch. We started the year with Extinction Rebellion protesting in the Town Hall and daubing paint on the Council offices. A Cabinet member resigned and there was a vacuum for a few months. Following a reshuffle, Cllr Kunes was appointed

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as Cabinet Member for carbon reduction. A policy was agreed by Council, but with no strategy for aspects such as air quality, biodiversity, tree planting, refits for residents to make houses more energy efficient etc. etc. Furthermore, unlike many other Councils, a climate emergency has yet to be declared and most of West Norfolk is vulnerable to flooding. A cross party team of Councillors and Officers is currently looking to propose some goals, but I know of no timescale for this. However, we have received £2.84m from the Government to decarbonize Council buildings. Received with thanks and the scheme should be finished by end-September.

WASTE REMOVAL

North, Breckland and West Norfolk combined to secure a more efficient arrangement with Serco who, thankfully, TUPed the existing crews. As a result, we should retain at least the level of service we have enjoyed so far and from the teams who have been working through COVID. Also, we will have newer trucks with lower emissions, better fuel consumption, together with some hybrid vehicles. Waste food collection is due to resume on 21st June.

HOUSING AND PLANNING

As you would expect, house completions are down this year and are running about half the previous year; 300 compared to 600. Planning Applications have been suppressed but are now being submitted at a pace.

The Local Plan review has been completed and a series of briefings and presentations is starting. Representatives from Parish and Town Councils will be offered the opportunity to review the process to date and advised on the future programme.

However, the process of planning approvals for Council’s own development applications on council land has been brought into question following disputes on 2 cases. Kings Lynn Parkway and Hunstanton South End Car Park. For a start, these and similar applications have been considered in camera when they should have been open to public scrutiny. This has now been corrected, but damage has been done. There is also the suspicion of predetermination by the Administration once significant sums have been spent through the planning process. Very often this expenditure is part of a Government Grant which has to be repaid if the plans are not approved, therefore, there is pressure to ensure the “right” decision is made. Members of the Planning Committee on scrutiny panels also have a difficult decision to make which damages effective scrutiny. More will be heard of this. There is a Standards case under consideration.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

There is a change of leadership imminent at the Council with Stuart Dark being appointed the new leader. I hope there will be a more open dialogue in the future for the net benefit of the Borough and its people.

Tomorrow the new Mayor of the Borough is sworn in, Cllr Harry Humphry. He was a County Councillor in 2011 as well as a Borough Councillor and was in the cabinet at Norfolk County Council and voted for the incinerator which ended up costing rate payers over £20 million pounds. I have not forgotten.

Lastly, the QEH Building is in dire straits. Although there is high level lobbying, all of us should get behind the various initiatives for a replacement hospital building.”

8. Norfolk County Council: Cllr. Stuart Dark, as follows:

Now wearing two hats, County Councillor and Head of the Borough Council from tomorrow.

The member fund for County Councillors has increased from £6k to £10k and this is available for key projects within the parishes. The payment for the share of the SAM2 unit came from the fund last year.

Cllr Dark met with Sally Bettinson last Monday by the crossing at the Garage and confirmed that it is not fit for purpose and the road is dangerous. More signage will be made available with a repeater put in place. Full details will be sent to the Parish Council from Sally prior to procedure. The start has been

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requested to start in the summer months and it was mentioned that a local resident, living close to the crossing, had complained about the poor resurfacing which has left bumps causing vibration and noise to his property. Sally to also look into this and initial costing of around £5k was discussed but firm pricing to follow and funds are now available.

Last year was very difficult for Cllr Dark to get to online meetings but now hoping to get back to normal business. The next County meeting will take place at the Norfolk Showground.

BW made the point that larger cars leaving the garage were too high to get a good view and the visibility both left and right for lorries is shocking. Cllr Dark suggested that reduced visibility can slow speeds. GH mentioned that at night with lights on vehicles, the bumps could give the wrong impression for vehicles leaving the garage as looked like flashing to allow them to leave.

9. Public Forum – no comments

10. Resolution to approve that the minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 23rd of February 2021 be signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting. Proposed TK seconded BW, - motion carried.

Matters arising from the Minutes: Community Speedwatch:

The Speedwatch has started up again and GR was delighted with the traffic calming effect by the SAM2 unit on the far side of the garage.

11. Correspondence and Communications:

Insurance renewal discussed and clerk had obtained a further quote which offered a saving of £180.03 on a three year deal (£400.14 via Zurich). This was proposed by GR, seconded by BW, and accepted. Clerk to go ahead with arranging payment.

12. Planning Matters – no new applications to consider and the application at 22 Lynn Road has been given a final extension to the end of June with a refusal noted. The Clerk was thanked for her input in the latest Parish comment.

13. Finance

13.1 To approve the year-end review

13.2 To approve payments due for May

Both points proposed TK, seconded BW and accepted.

14. Matters for inclusion on the agenda for the next meeting:

14.1 Christmas Celebrations

14.2 Queens Platinum Jubilee – June 2022

Next Meeting will be on the 13th of July from 7.30pm at The Ffolkes.

Meeting ended at 8.14pm

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