

Minutes of the Eggington Parish Council
Meeting No.173 – held on Monday 4th September 2017 at 7:30pm

PRESENT : Chairman Rob Jefferis
Councillors John Westbury, John Symonds, Peter Moore, Richard Gorton

CLERK: Charlotte Gurney

PARISHIONERS: Mrs Susan Bradley, Mrs Linda Sear and Mr Hugh Smith

Public Statements:

Mrs Susan Bradley voiced her concerns about the verges being cut too often within the village. She felt that leaving verges longer was not dangerous, and that having lived in the village for 35 years she has yet to see an accident in the village. Also cutting the verges too often would interfere with wildlife and stop things growing. Further to this Mrs Bradley would like the Council to review the Natural Environment and Rural Duties Act when reviewing the contract for 2018 grass cutting. She also voiced her concerns over the length of time the building work at Thornham house was taking. Work had started in July, but then stopped, leaving the property as an eyesore.

Mrs Linda Sear advised EPC that Hedgelands nursery was no longer using the Village Hall and they had left without giving notice. There's a possibility that rent will increase from its current £250 per annum to anything up to £4000. Mrs Sear enquired about possible funding from either the Solar Farm Community fund or from the Parish Council. Cllr Westbury advised that it was unlikely that Eggington Community Benefit fund would be able to assist due to the provisions of its constitution. He also advised that the Parish Council would be limited in its s.137 funding (currently limited to some £1700). Cllrs Gorton and Jefferis felt that should the hall struggle the Council might consider taking over the lease and the running the village hall. Mrs Sear advised she had received the Council's letter regarding installation of new notice board and defibrillator and that the Management Committee would consider the request. Clerk advised she would send her a copy of Community Fund paperwork once it was signed off.

Mr Hugh Smith: queried the Council on how often verges and grass were being cut. He resides at Lynda Lodge and had noticed it wasn't being cut very often outside his property. Council advised him that (in theory) all parish verges should be cut approximately every 4 weeks, with main green areas every 3 weeks.

- 1. Apologies Received:** Apologies had been received from Pete Ellyard
- 2. Declarations of Interest and requests for dispensations:** None were made.
- 3. Report from Ward Councillor:** Cllr Versallion advised that wind turbine no.2 will be in front of Planning Committee in a week, and that CBC officers were recommending approval. Mile Tree Road appeals have been completed and the Travellers now have the right to occupy the land. They have requested Planning permission for 6 pitches. He also advised that CBC are considering taking over control of the Billington Gypsy & Traveller site, Greenacres.
- 4. To confirm Minutes of Meeting 171:** Proposed by Cllr Westbury and seconded by Peter Moore. Agreed as a true and accurate record.
- 5. Matters arising from those Minutes:** Cllr Westbury voiced disappointed with quality of the grass cutting **Issue 1:** volume of grass left at top and bottom of playing fields. The grass in both locations will degrade and become slimy. It appears the contractor was asked to collect grass but were not specific in getting it taken away. **Issue 2:** Council had asked for area outside of Osborn Cottage to be collected, and it wasn't. **Issue 3:** Cutting isn't being carried out regularly enough: grassed areas still look messy (i.e it hasn't been every two weeks as was requested). **Issue 4:** The Village Green should be collected every time, along with the churchyard. **Issue 5:** as cuts are being done piecemeal it never looks neat and even. **Issue 6:** Cllrs suggested that contractor notify the Council after every cut to advise what has been done. Understand weather may not allow for it all to be done in one hit, but would help council to monitor better. **Issue 7:** some of the verges look haphazard after cuts whilst other areas have been done very nicely. Clerk to feedback to contractor.
- 6. Financial Report:** Acting as RFO, Cllr Westbury reported the current financial situation as:-
Current Account £ 7,315.67

Deposit Account	£12,264.85
Total	£19,580.52

The RFO sought approval to pay the following outstanding invoices:

- a) Clerk' remuneration £348.68
- b) Hire of Village Hall £ 24.00
- c) Ed's Maintenance (grass-cutting) £580.00
- d) Came & Co (Council's Insurance) £399.75 (or £379.76)

The RFO advised that Came & Co (Insurance brokers) had offered a repeat of the 3-year deal, with Insurance provider recommended being Ecclesiastical Insurance. Amount needed to pay for the forthcoming year singly is the £399.75 but if EPC sign-up for three years, this would be reduced to £379.76 for this year. Cllr Symonds proposed acceptance of the 3-year deal. This was seconded by Cllr Gorton. All were in favour.

The Auditor's report had been received, and all was well. However they raised one concern, that the RFO in our smaller authority is an elected member, acting as RFO. Cllr Westbury read out the report's guidance, that the Council should appoint someone else as RFO to remove any potential conflict of interest. Options for this were discussed. Cllr Westbury stated that following this advisory note he didn't feel it appropriate to continue on as the Council's RFO, but that until the Clerk was sufficiently comfortable with dealing with the Council's accounts he was prepared to assist the Clerk in dealing with the bank accounts.

Authorisation to pay the outstanding invoices, and adoption of the accounts (as at 4th September 2017) and was proposed by Cllr Symonds and seconded by Cllr Gorton. Unanimously agreed.

7. **Planning and Development:** The applications by Hawthorns and Broadmead were yet to be decided, although the consultation periods for both had ended.
8. **Updates from Cllrs on Village Matters:**
Cllr Westbury advised that thanks had been received from Mr & Mrs Dyer (Woodbine Cottage) regarding cutting of the grass and verges.
9. **Social Media:** Following a previous discussion regarding communication to parishioner, Cllr Westbury advised that he'd created a Facebook Page "The Parish of Eggington, Bedfordshire". Clerk was asked to join and share the page. The Clerk offered to make poster for notice board.
10. **Play Equipment:** The Clerk advised Councillors of quotes received for the Playground safety inspection. It was unanimously agreed for Clerk to organise inspection as soon as possible for the company who had provided the cheapest quote. Update to be provided at the next meeting.
11. **Clerk's Update:** Speedwatch dates for training have still not been provided by Bedfordshire Police. Crime statistics for August show no crimes having been committed in the parish. Following Cllr Lockhead's departure, the co-opting policy was discussed. Proposed by Cllr Westbury and seconded by Cllr Gorton, it was agreed that the Clerk would progress advertising the vacant position on Facebook, as well as the Notice Boards in accordance with the process advised.
12. Next Meeting will be on Monday 16th October 2017, in the Village Hall

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was closed at 21:08 (9:08pm).

This is true and accurate record of the meeting.

Signed: *R. Jeffrerys* (chairman) Date: 16th October 2017