

**Minutes of Spaldwick Parish Council Meeting held at 8 pm
Thursday 14 April 2016 in the Community Room at Spaldwick Primary School**

Present: Cllrs Fane de Salis (Chairman, presiding), Harriman, Jackson-Rimmer, Robinson, Smith and Wakefield, and the Clerk (Mr D Stowell)

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr Johnson and County Cllr Bywater
2. **Declarations of Interest** as to personal and prejudicial interest in any agenda item – none.
3. **Minutes of Meeting held 17 March 2016** were approved and signed.
4. **Matters arising from minutes (not on the agenda)** - none.
5. **Public Open Forum** – not required

6. Finance

Annual accounts for year ended 31 March 2016 – the Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer presented the summary Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31 March 2016. Cllr Smith reported that he had checked the summary including the bank reconciliation against the bank statements and cash book prior to the meeting and could confirm that they were correct.

The Clerk's proposed allocation of funds at 31/3/16 was questioned, in particular the sum of £40000 for the Village Hall & Playing Field Reserve. Following discussion it was resolved to amend the description to "Replacement & Maintenance of Village Assets."

It was agreed that the Clerk would amend the document accordingly and that it should be signed by the Chairman subsequent to the meeting confirming its acceptance by the Council.

The following payments were approved

100657 E G Leach, 10 plants for village boxes, £6.00.

100658 NALC, LCR Magazine, £17.00

100659 CAPALC Membership fee 2016/17, £223.16 (replacing cancelled cheque 100656)

The following receipt was noted

HMRC, VAT repayment £924.38

7. Planning

The following new planning applications were considered

16/00688/TRCA, 7 Thrapston Road, Sycamore - Fell (remove to ground level)

Council noted that the owner had received a complaint from a neighbour that the tree is causing structural damage to their garden wall with the consequential risk of injury to their children from loose bricks falling into their play area; and that the LPA does not intend to recommend that the tree be protected by a Tree Preservation Order and has agreed that it may be felled. It was resolved to confirm that the Parish Council has no objection to this decision.

16/00781/TRCA, Church House, 4 Pound Close, T1 Lime Tree: Fell - this tree is growing within a group of Lime trees. It is in contact with the wall and roof of the adjacent outbuilding. The wall has bowed inwards away from the tree and it is highly likely that there will be ongoing structural damage as a result of the tree. Due to the number of adjacent Lime trees its loss would be unnoticeable and therefore there would be no effect on the amenity value of this group of trees.

It was resolved to submit the following observations to HDC:

The location of tree T1 has been wrongly stated by the applicant in Section 3 as Easting 512739 Northing 272909 – this is the location of the nearby dwelling 2 Pound Close. The location reference could probably be more accurately identified as Northing 512703 Easting 272864. It is also difficult to identify individual trees on the satellite photograph provided.

However, assuming the narrative to be accurate, Spaldwick Parish Council has no objection to this work being carried out as it will reduce the risk of structural damage to the outbuilding whilst having no significant effect on the group of trees.

16/00620/FUL, 2 St James Gardens, First floor extension over double garage to plot 2,

It was resolved to submit the following observations to HDC:

1. Spaldwick Parish Council recommends **approval** because it will have no adverse effect on the neighbouring dwellings (existing or proposed) or on the surroundings including the Conservation Area.

2. It is noted that the site plans are in error as they show the electrical sub-station in the location proposed in Planning Application 1102077FUL, but in fact it has not been relocated and the permission expired in April 2015.

The following applications determined by the Local Planning Authority were noted

16/00688/TRCA, 7 Thrapston Road, Sycamore - Fell (remove to ground level) - work may proceed, it is not intended to apply for a TPO. (See new application above).

16/00318/HHFUL, 1 Mount Pleasant, Extension to side and rear of existing property – permission granted.

The following development regarding a previous application was noted

15'02372/FUL, Spaldwick Service Area – Exchange of comments between Environment Agency and the applicant's agent confirming that the requirement for information to demonstrate that the fuel tanks to be retained and any redundant tanks do not pose unacceptable risks to the environment.

8. Assets – Provision / Maintenance

To note updates on matters previously reported; to consider any further action regarding them; and to receive reports of any new problems.

Play Equipment Monthly Inspection Report 5 April 2016 - The cushioned flooring beneath the climbing frame is loose with gaps between the tiles. One bolt missing and one bolt loose on suspended floor of climbing frame, floor still secure. The wooden steps of the climbing frame are slippery due to wear and weather, they could do with a coat of paint or preservative. Replacement steps to be considered, to comply with current safety standards. Cllr Robinson agreed to obtain a quotation for any necessary work.

Proposed re-surfacing of playground – Cllr Robinson reported that a second quotation has been received and that a third is expected to be available in time for the May meeting.

War Memorial – Cllr Smith reported that, subject to confirmation at a meeting with the contractor that it fully meets the requirements, an acceptable quotation (£1800 + VAT) has been identified. This will support an application for a grant from the War Memorial Trust.

9. Highways, footpaths, byways etc.

To note updates on matters previously reported; to consider any further action regarding them; and to receive reports of any new problems.

Gritting bin at Belton's Hill – The Clerk will ensure that this is ordered and installed shortly.

10. Changes to bus routes arising from parking problems and retendering of subsidised services

Information is still awaited from CCC regarding details of the successful bidder and the type of vehicle to be used, so that the exact route and stops can be discussed with a view to ensuring a satisfactory outcome for local residents.

11. Proposed conversion of Community Room to classroom

– No update has been received following the letter of 4 March from the Board of Governors stating that no changes in use will take place pending clarification from HDC and CCC with regard to any specific conditions of use that were agreed in 1989.

12. Anglian Water Pollution Watch campaign

– It was resolved to work with AW to explore the general level of understanding of the sewerage network and its function; to identify the likely

locations of discharges from the network; to discuss the wording for signs at these locations and to consider ways of working together to spread the word. Cllr Robinson agreed to liaise with AW and take the lead on behalf of the Parish Council.

13. Correspondence noted

A letter from Zoe and Bob Murphy supporting the PCC proposal to consider extending the use of the church by initially providing toilets and kitchen; and raising the question “Would it not be in our interests to use the money set aside for a Village Hall to redevelop the church so that full use can be made for Sunday Church Services and community events”.

14. AOB

Payments by Parish Councils to Churches

The Chairman recently drew the attention of the clerk to an article in the March edition of The Clerk, which states that advice received from DCLG in 2014 clearly states that parish councils cannot contribute towards the maintenance or improvement of Church of England premises or, in certain circumstances, to property held in relation to other denominations and faiths. The Minister at the time pledged to examine ways of removing this financial prohibition which remains unrepealed in the Local Government Act 1894. Confirmation of the Government's intentions are awaited.

As the article cast doubt on the legality of payments made in recent years to the PCC for churchyard grass cutting, the clerk reported that he had assumed the authority for the parish council to make these payments to be derived from Local Government Act 1972, Section 214(6): A burial authority may contribute towards any expenses incurred by any other person in providing or maintaining a cemetery in which the inhabitants of the authority's area may be buried. N.B. A Parish Council is a burial authority.

However the SLCC Clerk's Manual states that this power probably does not extend to a parish council giving money to a PCC for the ongoing maintenance of an open Church of England churchyard as a PCC has a legal obligation to maintain its own, open, churchyard. It states that in practice many parish councils do provide funding for the maintenance of open Anglican churchyards, but in doing so they may risk illegality.

In view of the argument in the Clerk's Manual, repeal of Section 6 (1) (a) (i) of the 1894 Act may not be sufficient to remove the perceived restriction on payments to the PCC for grass cutting. The clerk will, therefore, ask NALC and SLCC to liaise with DCLG to find a way of allowing parish councils to make financial contributions to churches towards the cost of churchyard maintenance and alterations to facilitate community use if they so wish.

30 mph sign, Thrapston Road – it was reported that one sign had been rotated 90 degrees. The Chairman agreed to rectify the problem himself if possible.

15. Dates of forthcoming meetings

21 April 8 pm, Spaldwick School, Annual Parish Meeting

19 May 8 pm, Spaldwick School, Annual Parish Council Meeting.

In the absence of any further business the meeting closed at 9.30 pm