**WEST ACRE PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON**

**Monday 14th March 2016 AT 7PM**

**AT THE VILLAGE HALL**

A meeting of West Acre Parish Council was held on Monday 14th March, 2016 at 7pm at the Village Hall.

Those present were: Henry Birkbeck, Antonia Hanbury, Ralph Sliwa, Eoghan Sheils, Jeremy Cameron, (Councillors) and Lorraine Copeman (Parish Clerk).

Also present were: Jim Moriarty (Borough Cllr) Belinda Bush, Adam Bush, Colin Filer, Sue Filer, Sally Bridle, Brian Cawston and Brian Wright.

**Minute 1: To elect a chairperson:** S Bridle chaired the meeting until a new chair was elected. Councillors discussed taking it in turns to chair meetings. Jeremy offered to chair the meeting, all Councillors agreed to this.

**Minute 2: To receive apologies:** Stuart Nairn (Rector), Martin Hickey, Fiona Bolingbroke-Kent.

**Minute 3: To approve the Minutes of the previous meeting:**  The minutes were approved and signed.

**Minute 4: To receive Declarations of Interest:** These remain unchanged from the previous meeting.

**Minute 5: To discuss Matters arising from the last meeting:**

(i) **Commemorative Plaque:** A cheque for £306 to Brett & Son was approved. Action: HB to send cheque.

(ii) **Unkempt appearance of West Acre:** Henry stated that work had begun to clear the ford area; more hedges would be cut later in the year. Action: HB to deal with this later in the year. **Car Park Sign**: Henry reported that some pub goers felt there was no adverse effect on safety; however the Parish Council recommended that a new larger car park sign be erected. Action: HB to discuss a new car park sign with Serena.

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**(iii) The Model Standing Orders for Councils’:** Henry stated that he had read the 20 pages of Standing Orders for Councils and had circulated it with amendments by email to all Councillors. As there had been no adverse reaction Henry proposed producing the amended version for adoption at the next meeting. Action: HB to circulate amended version of Standing Orders before the next meeting.

**(iv) Printing costs of Parish Council newsletter:**  Ralph told the meeting that the newsletter had been printed and circulated before the meeting and that the cost had been £45.00. Ralph proposed that the cost be discussed and accepted at the next meeting. He had received a quote of £55; however; the last issue had been £10.00 cheaper. Action: LC to place this on the next agenda.

**(v) Legal issues regarding repair of the Church wall plus possible purchase of Premium bonds:** Lorraine read out an email from the rector Stuart Nairn regarding the legal issues regarding the Church wall. (This can be found in the folder). The issue of the annual £100 donation would have to be discussed at the next meeting with regards to continuing to donate to the Church wall or to purchase Premium Bonds. Action: LC to place this on the next agenda.

**(vi) Revised Budget:** Henry distributed a revised budget sheet (this can be found in the folder). There had been no decision with regards to NALC subscription. After discussing the budget Ralph proposed and Antonia seconded that the budget should be accepted. All Councillors agreed. Action: LC to add NALC subscription on the next agenda.

**(vii) Village Hall Planning Fees:** Ralph spoke to the Councillors regarding the Lottery application and stated that the issue of the planning fees will be a future discussion, depending on gaining the funding.

**(viii) “Lid” Shelter for school bus stop:** A discussion was held on whether the thatched bus shelter should be moved to a more suitable site or to purchase a new bus shelter. It was felt that Councillors should have had the opportunity to discuss the siting of the thatched shelter before it was re-erected. Henry also felt that the parishioners should be consulted regarding any plan to have the shelter re-located. Action: ES to obtain quotes for a new bus shelter, HB to obtain quotes to re-site the thatched bus shelter. LC to add bus shelter to the next agenda.

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**(ix) To discuss the future of the Parish Council:** A discussion was held after issues arose from the resignation of S.Bridle. Eoghan stated that no-one is disputing the PC does good work and that the Estate does fantastic work around the village, however: there is confusion as to what PC business is and what Estate business is. This needs to be clarified. Concerns were raised about Henry being chairperson. S. Bridle spoke about her resignation and concerns, with Henry replying that a Declaration of Interest has been declared in writing. After much discussion it was felt there were 3 options:

a) Do nothing and carry on as we are.

b) Carry on as a Parish Council and clarify PC business and Estate business.

c) Have Parish Meetings and not have a Parish Council.

Ralph stated that parishioners should be informed and their opinions taken into account. This will be put in the next PC newsletter and on the PC website. The newsletter will be brought forward to give the community the opportunity to express an informed opinion on the debate at the next meeting as to whether we stay as a Parish Council.

Eoghan will submit reasons for change, with Henry submitting reasons for keeping the Parish Council for the Pc newsletter. The deadline for this is 14th April 2016.

**Minute 6: To discuss Matters of Finance:**

**(i) Approval and payment of £150 to West Acre village Hall for over 60’s and children’s Christmas Party :** Antonia proposed and Eoghan seconded the approval and payment of £150 to West Acre village Hall for the 0ver 60’s and children’s Christmas parties. All Councillors agreed. Action: HB to issue a cheque.

**(ii) Cheque book signatures:** Antonia and Eoghan agreed to be the two new signatories. All Councillors agreed. Action: HB to send new Mandate forms to the bank.

**Minute 7: to discuss external audit for smaller authorities:** Henry discussed the issues stating that Parish Councils could choose their own auditors, however; he felt the Government scheme was better. The deadline to opt in or out was 31st March 2016. It was agreed to opt in.

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**Minute 8: New Village Hall:** Ralph reported that earlier today he, Sally and Henry attended a 3 hour meeting with a representative from the Lottery Fund, who stated his feelings were unofficial. The rep felt that the application did not have a very strong case as it did not show a social need for groups as opposed to a demand. He also questioned whether a joint project with West Acre Theatre was viable. An example given was that the billiards club and dog club satisfy a demand not a need. The panel meets at the end of March/early April. Sally stated this was hugely disappointing and that Ralph had done an excellent job. Eoghan stated there were different ways to have a new village hall. A discussion was held regarding a joint project with the theatre. Action: RS to keep Parish Council informed of the outcome.

**Minute 9: West Acre Theatre**. There was nothing to report from the theatre. Action: JC to contact the theatre with regards to the issue of a joint project

**Minute 10: Public Participation:** Colin Filer stated that the War Memorial had started to look scruffy and that a working party was required. Colin would be willing to be a part of the working party.

Ralph asked if the parishioners attending the meeting wanted to send in any written articles for the Parish Newsletter. Henry suggested an Events diary.

Jim Moriarty stated he hoped the Parish Council would continue as it is extremely useful when other issues arise eg: roads/housing. He also sympathised with the issue around the New Village Hall. He also reported that Minutes and Financial issues come under the Transparency Code. The Agenda and Minutes are on the Parish website. Action: HB to put financial reports, budgets and spending on the website.

Sally Bridle reported that a letter had been received from the Police stating the case had been dropped regarding the damage to road signs and bus stop. Sally also said that the signs were unsafe. Action: JC to contact Highways

**Minute 11: to view displayed correspondence for the month.** Lorraine stated that most of the correspondence for sharing had been electronic, since the last meeting. The other few items were displayed at the back of the hall.

**Minute 12: to receive other matters for discussion.** Lorraine asked the Councillors if there were any issues they wanted to raise at the next SNAP meeting held at Hunstanton.

**Minute 13: to confirm the date and time of the next meeting.** The date of the next meeting will be May 9th 2016, commencing 7pm at the Village Hall. This will be the Annual Parish Meeting followed by the Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council, commencing 8pm.

**Minute 14:** The meeting was closed at 8.30pm.

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