Minutes of meeting held on **Wednesday 31st July 2024 at the Parish Council Offices, High Street, Metheringham, LN4 3DZ at 6.30pm.**  A public session, lasting no more than 15 minutes, commences at 6.15pm.

**Present**  
K Parker (chair) Catherine Redpath (CR)  
S Peek (SP) M Westerman (MWe)  
Mark Worthington (MWo) J Simpson (JS)  
R Grummitt (RG) Asia O Sullivan (AS)

Malcolm Wallace (MWa) D Parry (DP)

* **Chair’s comments.**

The chair opened the meeting with general housekeeping and welcomed those present.

* **Public Forum**

Members of the public were in attendance and the following was raised as concern;

Metheringham Football Club were in attendance (Dave Inman) and the following was discussed. The council was thanked for the effort that went into ensuring the grass was cut and it was confirmed this had now been resolved and the grounds they use are now in a fit state. A concern regarding the training for the council owned mower was brought up and it was confirmed that this was due to be discussed in the agenda that evening.

A member of the public (Christine Henderson) also attended and had concerns regarding the length of time of which the public toilets have been closed. It was of the public opinion that with no public toilets available for us, this brings down the village. It was also queried if a cleaning contract has been put in place for when the toilets are re-opened. Council confirmed that they are aware of the public opinion, relating to the toilets and the toilets are one of the points due to be discussed in the agenda following the public session.

The previous parish council clerk read out a prepared statement to council and advised that no response to the statement was necessary right away, but requested a discussion was made in council.

Another member of the public (June Gwillym ) provided an update on local policing. It was confirmed that we are up to 40 local PCSO’s. They have requested the panels of the local board ensure they are including all panels in any updates or discussions. It was also confirmed that it will be pushed for all surrounding villages to be classed as a town so we can be included in any policing events open to the public.

**Public forum closed at 08:35pm**

* **To resolve to accept Apologies for Absence and reasons given in accordance with Local Government Act 1972 S85(1)**

Prior to the meeting apologies had been received from Cllr F Pembery.

F Pembery’s (FP) absence was proposed by Councillor Peek and seconded by

Councillor Westerman and **agreed**.

* **Members Declarations of Interests:**

1. Members may make any declarations of interest at this point but may also make them at any point during the meeting in accordance with Metheringham Parish Councils Code of Conduct

No Declarations of interest.

1. Dispensations:  To consider and grant dispensation to relevant members in accordance with Metheringham Parish Councils Code of Conduct

No Dispensations.

* + **To approve the notes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 17th June 2024 and 26th June 2024 as a true and accurate record**

The minutes were approved with the following amendments necessary for accuracy to the 26.06.2024 minutes; Cllr D Parry to be recognized as giving apologies for the meeting and for the meeting to be changed to ‘ordinary meeting’ rather than the current ‘Annual General Meeting’.

Proposed by Councillor C Redpath and seconded by Councillor M Wallace and **agreed**.

\* **Reports from representatives on outside bodies:**

a. To receive a report from the County Councillor. – Not available

b. To receive a report from the District Councilors. – Not Available

\* **To receive reports from representatives to other village organizations and committees:**

a. Village Hall Management Committee  - No representative available, one due to be appointed shortly.

b. Metheringham Swimming Pool  - Cllr M Worthington provided a verbal update; The pool is busy, there is a healthy amount of funds in the account and a good balance. Small outgoings are being paid regularly and they are on target for meeting their annual budget. It was also confirmed that there is a grant currently available to the pool but this cannot be requested by the Pool committee but can be by council. This is due to be discussed in detail further in the agenda.

c. Metheringham Bowls Club – Cllr R Grummitt provided a verbal update; They have kept away from the bottom of the leagues and are doing well. They will be holding a social event on Friday which will include a BBQ. Good attendance has been recorded and they are looking to improve the clubhouse over the winter with a grant they received from Biogas.

d. Metheringham Community Hub – Cllr M Westerman provided a verbal update; There has been steady income and they are on track. DVD’s have stopped being sold due to low popularity. It was also confirmed there was a slight increase in members visiting.

e. Metheringham Football Club – Cllr R Castle provided was unable to provide a verbal update. Cllr Westerman and Cllr K Parker confirmed however, they were in attendance with the Football Club and there is a change in the Memorandum of Understanding, due to be discussed in further detail later this meeting.

f. Metheringham Gardening Club – Cllr K Redpath provided a verbal update; The club is doing well and they are mostly self funding, by growing seeds. The previous grass cutting incident on Caroline Road was discussed as they are still trying to locate the correct individual to contact to ensure this does not happen again (Chair K Parker confirmed Rob Kendrick would be best to contact regarding this). The club has also requested use of the space located to the side of the Parish Council office, as a community garden/seating area.

* + **To appoint a representative for Metheringham Village Hall.**

Chair K Parker was proposed as the representative by Cllr J Simpson and seconded by Cllr S Peek and **agreed**.

* + **To discuss and resolve TOR for the Finance, Staffing and communications committee.**

Item was deferred till a later time, as proposed by Cllr K Parker and seconded by Cllr K Redpath and **agreed**.

Cllr D Parry had to leave at this time (7:34pm) all **agreed**.

* + 1. **to resolve advert for Clerk**

Changes were made to a previous advert and agreed by all, Cllr Westerman was proposed to amend and circulate the documentation to resolve this item at a later date, proposed by Chair K Parker, seconded by Cllr Grummitt and all **agreed**.

* + 1. **to resolve working hours for clerk**

30 Hours was proposed by Cllr R Grummitt and seconded by Cllr M Westerman, all **agreed**.

* + 1. **to resolve pay grade for clerk**

A pro-rata salary was agreed at £35k-£40k based on experience (or the closest Grade to it once Chair K Parker has reviewed this. As proposed by Cllr C Redpath, seconded by Cllr M Westerman and all **agreed**.

* **To receive an update on grass cutting**

It was confirmed that the playing field is now playable and maps have been made of all areas which require cutting, so it is clear what area we are responsible for (as well as which areas LCC are responsible for). It was discussed that the edges of the fields do not require strimming. There was also a discussion regarding the hedge cutting for the football field and playing field, Chair K Parker is to request a quotation for this and we can resolve this at the next meeting or an EGM if required.

Proposed by Cllr M Wallace, seconded by Cllr R Castle and all **agreed**.

* **To Discuss and resolve swimming pool items from MOU review**

Item 1 - It was discussed that we agreed to apply to LCC in relation to the grant for the pool, on their behalf, however, there was confusion relating to if we required anything from the pool to be able to proceed with the request to the LCC.

Item 2 – Cllr C Redpath agreed to organise access for asbestos inspection.

Item 3 – Council have asked for proof from the insurer to confirm our insurance covers this modification to the Boiler.

Item 4 – It was agreed that there should be an agreement for the swimming pool committee to contact us prior to any changes that they make.

Proposed by Chair K Parker, seconded by Cllr C Redpath and all **agreed**.

* **Financial matters:**

Cllr R Grummitt advised they are struggling to locate the invoices as of yet, via the clerks inbox.

**i. To consider and approve the bank reconciliation for end of June 24 -** Bank reconciliation was approved, proposed by Cllr C Redpath, seconded by Cllr R Castle and all **agreed**.

**ii. To consider and approve payments made between 27th September and 24th October 23 –** Payments were approved by Cllr M Westerman, seconded by Cllr C Redpath and all **agreed**.

**iii. To approve the accounts for payments to be made –** Accounts approved by Cllr J Simpson, seconded by Cllr M Westerman and all **agreed**.

**iv To receive an update on staff payments –** No issues on behalf of the handyperson. A discussion was also carried out regarding the previous clerk and her requests for additional payments to be made to her. It was proposed that we pay a total of 2 days to the clerk along with a NDA, to ensure this matter can be closed. This was proposed by Cllr R Grummitt, seconded by Cllr C Redpath and all **agreed**.

**v To confirm notice for public viewing of AGAR requirements –** Notice posted on office notice board.

\*An additional 15 minutes was added to complete the agenda – proposed by Cllr S Pekk, seconded by Cllr R Grummitt and all **agreed**.\*

* **To Discuss and resolve to appoint councillor/s to advertise on social media and web site council business**

Cllr C Redpath was appointed, as proposed by Cllr M Westerman, seconded by Cllr M Wallace and all **agreed**.

* **To receive an update on public toilets, and discuss and resolve to have Mag-Locks fitted to outer doors on an morning open and evening close basis only to allow toilets to re-open very soon**

It was agreed that we wish to open the toilets as a priority, however, there was confusion relating to the how the proposed locks will work. Therefore, it was agreed we would obtain quotations on a number of different locks for the disabled toilet to ensure easy access for users, and timed locks can still be used.

* **To Receive an update following meeting with Football club**

**i To resolve fees for hire of Field / Pavillion**

Chair K Parker gave a member of the public/Football Club a chance to speak, it was discussed the fees they currently pay, and what they are entitled to, compared to other villages.

Therefore, it was proposed to keep the fees as they are for the time being and in future to increase these with inflation. Proposed by Cllr A O’Sullivan, seconded by Cllr R Castle and all **agreed with the exception of Cllr R Grummitt.**

**ii To resolve the rectification of training area on football field**

It was agreed that the council will organise for this and pay. A quote is to be obtained and anything further that needs rectifying in the future will be down to the users at the time to resolve.

This was proposed by Cllr M Wallace, seconded by Cllr R Castle and all **agreed**.

**iii To resolve who is responsible for strimming edges after grass cutting**

It was agreed that the handy person will strim football field, playing field and play park

* **To Discuss and resolve a response to questions raised by a Parishioner. I went through the finances that were published on the council website from 03/04/2023 to 25/03/24 and have a few concerns.**

**i It appears that the Parish clerk was earning around £70k per year. How can the parish council justify a payment of this amount to an individual when the current average wage in Lincolnshire is £28k**The individual with the highest salary within the council no longer works for the council and a new employee is to be appointed at a lower rate.

**ii With regards the cross refurbishment. It appears that the total cost of this was £18,245 which seems excessive for what has been done. I was unable to find any evidence of multiple quotes for this work prior to it taking place. I would like to see a copy of the quote and why the builder who was chosen to do the task was selected in the first place.**Only one person came forward to carry out the work, at the time the original quotation was reasonable, but there were unexpected fees that occurred during the work, meaning more materials were required. Unfortunately, we do not have accurate records of notes taken to show relating to the discussions made on the appointment of the contractor and the additional contractors that were contracted, however a new employee is to be appointed to ensure more specific and accurate notes are made in future.

**iv Regarding the mower that was purchased on 22/08/2023 and has not been used. 10 months have passed since this purchase so why was the training course not booked prior to this so work could have commenced upon delivery.**This is in the pipelines to be carried out, however, between the trainer and handyperson a date has not yet been agreed. This is being looked into and is a high priority.

**V I would also suggest that the council look into training on a hedge trimmer and strimmer/brush cutter along with safe use of pesticides after hearing about the requested tools list this evening.**This is to be looked into.

**Vi The book keeping seems vague on certain items such as wages. As this is public money I feel that there should be complete transparency on these items. I feel all quotes should be added as an annex to the minutes of the meeting they have been ratified at to ensure that the village who provide these funds know exactly how their tax funds are being spent.**This is being looked into.

**Vii As an additional item for transparency reasons, I would like to request that all quotes received are added to the copy of the minutes online so the constituents can see that the council are spending the public money correctly. Can you please let me know when these items will or have been discussed so I can check the minutes of the specific meeting.**Previous emails were discussed from the previous clerk.

Meeting closed at 8:35pm