

Leavening Parish Council

Website: <http://www.leavening.online>

Email: clerk@leavening.online

Minutes of the Meeting

The regular meeting of the Parish Council was held on **Monday 5th February 2024** at **7.00pm** at the **Venerable Bede Church**, Leavening.

1. To receive apologies and approve reasons for absence

No apologies were received, all Councillors in attendance.

2. To receive any Declarations of Interest

Declarations received for Cllr Hampson and Cllr McDermot who are members of the Community Allotments group

3. Minutes from the previous meeting & and matters arising

Minutes were recorded as a true and accurate record.

Matters arising included the following items:

- Resignation of Councillor – The Chair reported that Cllr Robert Chambers had tendered his resignation and the group thanked him for his contributions in the past two years. The resignation will be immediate following this meeting.
- Allotment Consultation - The Parish Council confirmed it agreed and submitted its response to the consultation for the Community Allotments following the last meeting.
- Precept Setting - The Chair had confirmed with North Yorkshire Council retaining the precept at £1,800 for the year, passing on no additional cost rise to residents.
- Traffic/Speeding - An ongoing discussion with North Yorkshire Highways had resulted in the progression of an action request the Speed Management Protocol with NY Police which would see a request for a further survey on traffic speeds. Enquiries have also been taken forward relating to a Community Speed Watch Programme. This would move forward following a review by NY Police. The Chair agreed to explore options for “street furniture” on main routes into the village to be considered at a future meeting.
- Hedge cutting – follow up on actioning hedge cutting of the Cemetery ahead of Spring would be taken forward.
- Appointment of Clerk – adverts had been circulated widely with the job description available online and the deadline for submissions was Friday 23 February 2024.

4. Public Session Opens

Four residents were in attendance to discuss the progression of the Community and the Chair agreed to bring these in for discussion under the appropriate item.

5. Planning Consultations

- *Jolly Farmers* – planning had been agreed and the next steps to be taken forward by the pub.

Chair: J. Johnston, Vice Chair: N. Audsley, Councillors: R. Ashworth, L Hampson, S McDermott,

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- *High Penhowe* – feedback had been submitted by the PC and the Planning team was keen to receive further input from Leavening residents despite this falling outside the parish boundary.
- *Busk Hill* – Further planning had been refused on the basis that this would impact on high landscape value.
- *Community Allotments* – planning consultation was ongoing, and discussion would follow under item 7

6 Finance & Budgets

- To receive financial statements of accounts since the last meeting and review expenditures for the next Financial Year
- Year End Accounts 31 March 2023
Few transactions since the last meeting meaning the current balance stood at £6,537.29.

Councillors agreed that a sum of around £5,000 should be ring-fenced to support the refurbishment of the Play Area on the basis that if additional fundraising is successful, the Parish Council should contribute. Cllr Hampson raised that there may be other items to consider in the next year for expenditure including recruitment of a new Clerk and other items. Cllr Audsley identified the obligations for the PC to allocate and spend funds in the year where possible and that currently the PC and EC were in a positive financial position meaning an allocation to the Play Area was possible.

Action: Cllr Audsley and Johnston to take forward allocation of funds to a designated Play Area account before Year End.

- Updates on committee expenditure
The events committee had outstanding payments to process for the firework display and had recorded issues with access to the banking app. The EC meeting of 22 February 2024 recorded a balance of £3,630. A request for a back dated annual contribution to the PC insurance (based on a long-standing agreement) was registered with the Chair of the EC.

7. Update on Community Projects:

Community Allotments

This substantive issue was discussed for a significant portion of the meeting. Karen McDermott from the Community Allotment Group was invited to update on progress to date following the re-submission of the Planning Application on 17th January 2024.

Residents fed back a series of concerns which included the following:

- **The proposed location** – residents present felt the proposed site was not appropriate given the concerns raised by residents. Members of the community allotment group outlined that they had taken forward a comprehensive review of options and had worked hard to identify a site for purchase with North Yorkshire Council. This has been a very challenging piece of work for the allotment group. The Parish Council acknowledges this site is the most appropriate out of those

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considered in the original Submitted Sites discussion and has supported this decision in writing to the Planning team.

- **Privacy** – the invasion of privacy by access to an area of the village with no through flow and also onlooking views into residents' properties bordering the proposed allotment area.
- **Ownership of the track** – the allotment group, on the advice of North Yorkshire planning team, took forward a call out for evidence relating to ownership of the track which gives access to properties at the rear of Wold View and the proposed entrance to the allotment site. Karen McDermott had conducted a thorough review of this and had found no evidence with the Land Registry or other historic government sources that this was owned. It was recorded therefore by North Yorkshire Council that there was likely no ownership of this track. This has been disputed by some residents, namely Mr G Holtby. The Parish Council was unable to resolve this at the meeting, but it was agreed that if ownership could be confirmed in the coming months, resolution would be possible.
- **Sustainability credentials** – members of the allotment group confirmed that this project was committed to sustainability and ecology and acknowledged that there would be a need to clear the current areas to tidy the site in anticipation of development. A discussion was taken forward about the badger proofing of the site.
- **Safeguarding and access to the site for events** – there was some misunderstanding between residents about the use of the site for large-scale public events such as the bonfire of fete. It was confirmed by all parties and agreed by the Parish Council that this would not be the case. The allotment space had provision for communal gathering and there would be no major access for large groups of people.
- **Drainage** – this is raised as a key issue and concern about the ditch on the boundary of the proposed allotment. The planning discussions to date have not identified this as a high-risk issue for the project, but Karen McDermott confirmed a more detailed engineers report on the risk of flooding would be helpful to resolve this discussion.

Residents had the opportunity to feed in comments on the original planning round and were also in contact with the Planning team at North Yorkshire Council. Following the resubmission of the Planning Application a decision was expected by mid-March and would likely involve a site visit and invitations to key stakeholders to participate.

Councillors agreed that the Community Allotment group should continue to work with residents on any ongoing disputed issues and there should be a move to resolve these most appropriately and civil manner to ensure the delivery of what is an important community project for the village.

Action: Parish Council to monitor progress and continue to be a conduit to discussion where appropriate.

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Leavening Play Area

The Chair reported positive progress with the submission to the Community Lottery Fund for a small grant (under £20,000) to refurbish the play area. This would also require a contribution from the Parish Council and potential additional fundraising to purchase new equipment.

A meeting was taken forward with Sian Wallace, Head of Leavening Primary School, to identify opportunities to involve school pupils in the design of the play area and also future play programmes. The Chair also met with Image Playgrounds Ltd about the current designs and options to enhance the area if fundraising is successful. This was a positive working relationship which had helped navigate the project to date. A decision on the Lottery funding was due by mid-April 2024.

In terms of the ongoing commitment of the Play Area Committee, the Chair reported that the current committee via Philip Schofield and Jeff Pacey had agreed to wind down the current committee and close the bank account. This would mean an outstanding balance from the Play Area bank account would be transferred to the Parish Council and would be reallocated to the appropriate account for a new group. This required further work by Cllr Johnston and Cllr Audsley to resolve the new governance arrangements for the play area by the Year End 23/24. Councillors agreed to endorse the next steps on this project.

8. Power Cuts in the Village

The Chair had written to Angela Fothergill at Westow Parish Council about the request to find further information on the reason for power cuts in the area. An update was anticipated for a future meeting, but Councillors agreed it would be useful for Leavening to be a voice in this enquiry to Northern Powergrid.

9 Leavening Events Committee – Update on activities.

The Events Committee met on 22 February 2024 to confirm plans for future events – these included the opportunity to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of D-Day on Thursday 6th June 2024 at 9:30 pm with a short ceremony to light the beacon at the Picnic Area (Leavening Brow). The group also agreed to the return of the annual Village BBQ and Fete with provisional dates of 6th and 7th July 2024 respectively. A community litter pick was also being planned and this would be updated via the appropriate channels when a date had been confirmed.

The Events Committee also agreed to report back on progress at the Annual Village Meeting which would act as their AGM, confirming the officers for next year.

10. Parish Council Communications (noticeboard, Facebook, website)

Updates were ongoing via the noticeboard and Facebook. The chair reported changes to the certificates and provision of the domain name provider which had seen some website downtime. There was the potential that the Parish Council would be invited to move to .gov domain names. A further update will be received when further details are available.

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11. Any Other Business - Questions to the Chair and Councilors

Issue of Water Treatment Works – councillors discussed the historical reporting of leaks from the water treatment works at the bottom of the village (near Madeira) and the impact on the local environment. It was agreed that this would be followed up by Cllr McDermott and could be a more significant issue which requires escalation to NY Council and Yorkshire Water.

12. Dates of Next Meetings

- Monday 8th April 2024, 7pm
- Wednesday 22nd May 2024, 7pm – for the Annual Meeting of the Village and Meeting of Electors
- Monday 10th June 2024, 7pm
- Monday 9th September 2024, 7pm