

Fouldeu Parish Council
Monday 2nd May 2020

Parish Clerk report

1. Relating to agenda point 10. Since the White Hart was last discussed by the council, a community group has formed. One individual has requested information under the freedom of information act, they have also requested information regarding the register of electors. I have explained that my application is for the full register which is guarded by data protection and upon chasing the application it is delayed, due to working from home they are unable to access the relevant software. There is an open register which is available to anyone at a cost of £21.50 and to my knowledge the council have no wish to purchase it. I did however contact community at Breckland on their behalf and was informed that 'If a nomination is submitted as an unincorporated group, names, addresses and signatures will be submitted in the evidence and Breckland will check these against the electoral role as part of the validation process'. I also received another request regarding the register from an individual who I believe is connected to the group and one other for meeting details. These are the only communications I have received from the public relating to the White Hart Inn and I have received no others since the last meeting. I believe the vice chair has had some dealing with the group.
2. Relating to agenda point 13. Due to the current covid-19 situation, audit instructions were not received until 22nd April and as such preparations have not been completed. The submission deadline for the approved AGAR and supporting documents is Friday 31st July 2020. I would therefore suggest that that the council agree a meeting to allow for approval of paperwork. Please note whilst deadlines have been extended and remote meeting permitted, wet signatures are still required.
3. Relating to agenda point 15c Loss of income for the village hall. Having completed a NALC survey and a CAN survey the estimated loss of income for the hall is approx. £770 for the first quarter of the year based on last year's figures. Whilst the hall has a good balance and the parish council has good reserves to allow for this, it may be worth investigating a small businesses grant to cover this, an insurance claim or wait to see the extent of impact.
4. Relating to agenda point 16. Insurance, this is due for renewal on the 01/06/2020 at a cost of £611.08 the wording policy and schedule remain the same except for the hall being covered at a value of £318'736.00 (previously £309'453.00). There is a 3-year long term agreement which would reduce the premium to £580.53. However, below is a summary of the conditions which can affect that premium: -
 - The premium will still rise if the government increases the level of Insurance Premium Tax (IPT) or imposes any other charges or taxes.
 - The premium will still change as a result of amendments to the cover. The LTA agreement is a commitment from the insurer to maintain the rate applied to your cover.
 - The premium will still rise as a result of any index linking on the sums insured.
 - Premiums continue to be payable annually at the appropriate time.
 - If RSA PLC Insurance increases its rates contrary to the LTA, any commitment on the Councils part ceases.
5. Relating to agenda point 17. Covid-19, as we are all too aware a lot has happened and changed in a short space with a lot of information going around (my inbox has trebled in volume this last month) and just wished to recap on most of these issues and highlight some existing ones
 - Closing of recreation ground, this was done by Cllr West in line with advice from Norfolk ALC this is because risk assessments will not be carried out and to prevent spread of the virus during the lockdown period. Photos were taken and forwarded to me.
 - We are very fortunate in Breckland, all three home bin collections remain at normal service as well as the recycling centre which I did double check
 - Breckland have a Covid-19 Breckland Community Support Hub and the officer is liaising with Cllr R Pye.
 - Cllr Cooper is hub for one doctor's surgery, this I believe is in response to the above.
 - New legislation that now allows remote meetings until May 2021 - THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND POLICE AND CRIME PANELS (CORONAVIRUS) (FLEXIBILITY OF LOCAL AUTHORITY AND POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETINGS) (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2020)
 - Website has been reduced in response to the recreation ground and village hall being closed with information regarding support during these times replacing previous content.
 - There have been a number of tweets and e-mails commenting about helping vulnerable persons and grants available. However, I have received nothing regarding anyone wishing to form/ lead a group.
 - Banking and payments. I have paid some regular payments by BACS personally then had a cheque to reimburse me 1, to reduce the need for me to get cheques signed 2, uncertainty of which suppliers/ services are still in their offices and 3, uncertainty of if the receivers can bank them. If there are no objections, I would appreciate being able to continue doing so where possible. With payments, thankfully there is only one. Unfortunately Thetford Barclays has been closed and I am unable to go to the bank in Watton on my own, so if a councillor is that way and willing I would be grateful, if not the cheque will remain unbanked until such time as I can safely bank it.

6. Relating to agenda item 23. This point was touched on at the last meeting by Cllr Christian. There are currently no policies or procedures for what would happen in the event of the clerk's absence. It was suggested about an out of office response. Normal practice would be that the clerk's absence could be approved by the chair (or vice chair in their absence). Regarding an out of office reply a point of contact would need to be decided. Also, the council would need to agree someone who with the chair could spend funds in line with the adopted financial regulations in an emergency.
7. Other items since last meeting
 - a. A bursary of £175 has been awarded and the cheque received towards my CILCA
 - b. SAM2 correspondence has been received to say the decision has been delayed. (until the world returns to normal)
 - c. War memorial correspondence has been received giving an extension on the grant offer which will now be until 22nd May 2021. It is possible to extend this further but the council are responsible for contacting them and requesting the additional extension
 - d. Parochial Charity. Just for clarity I have spoken to one of the trustees of the charity and Foulden Parochial Charity is a charity in its own right and not a responsibility of Foulden Parish Council. However there are two traditions in situ 1, that a PC councillor be a trustee and 2, every 4 years the parish council elect the chair and vice chair.
 - e. Great British Spring Clean. Cllr Christian advised that due to the pandemic and public safety she would cancel this event. Since then the campaign have advised to reschedule for 11-27 September 2020, with no more e-mails received since.
 - f. Able care 'do not knock stickers' these have not been circulated as the signpost is currently only available in pdf via www.fouldennorfolk.org
 - g. CAN and NALC impact surveys have been completed in order for them to research the impact of covid-19 on parishes and village halls
 - h. VAT claim has been submitted and received for £878.23
 - i. Planning of 3PL/2020/0241/VAR has now been approved
 - j. First instalment of precept has been received £4200
 - k. FHS account. Correspondence has been received to state that as of the 26th June 2020 the current rate (0.75%) will drop to 0.15%
 - l. PPL PRS have advised on their site that license costs and covid-19 will be accounted for in the next review
 - m. £500 grant for the VE day event has been received.
 - n. Whilst it is not parish council business as such it is worth noting at this stage that the annual parish meeting is not covered by the new legislation 'THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND POLICE AND CRIME PANELS (CORONAVIRUS) (FLEXIBILITY OF LOCAL AUTHORITY AND POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETINGS) (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2020' that parish council meetings are (which allows for remote meetings) it is the view of Norfolk Association of Local Councils that the current Government guidance means that parish meetings should not take place in person