

Parish Clerk report

1. Relating to agenda point 8 – internal audit. As yet this has not been completed, the internal auditor is struggling due to the impact of covid-19 and its repercussions.
2. Relating to agenda point 9 - AGAR. As the internal audit is not yet complete it means the AGAR can not be completed. I would suggest requesting an extension from the external auditors (which I think gives 3 weeks at a time if allowed) Then the chairman can raise an extraordinary meeting to allow the AGAR to be completed. Whilst completing the AGAR I found no evidence for an adopted risk assessment. I will include a template for consideration by the council in the next meeting for the current financial year 2020-21
3. Relating to agenda point 10.b) – re-opening of the village hall. On 23rd June 2020, the Prime Minister announced further easements of the coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions as part of Step Three of the government’s plan to return life to as near normal as we can. The village hall is in the list of businesses and venues permitted to reopen and this was from 4th July.
ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) have worked with government to produce guidance to help Halls with their re-opening planning. The documents can also be found on the CAN (Community Action Norfolk) website <http://www.communityactionnorfolk.org.uk/sites/content/re-opening-village-halls-and-community-buildings> This information has been forwarded to the Village Hall Manager and due to the community organisations, it is tailored specifically for halls and forms a good basis for the councils considerations.
I have also been asked by a councillor to price 2 sanitisation units. If the council could please decide and confirm they would like me to go ahead with this.
4. Relating to agenda point 11 – recreation ground. The playground equipment was taped off at the end of March in relation to advice given by Norfolk ALC. Again, as part of Step Three of the governments plan it is permitted to re-open. However, their guidance is unrealistic <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-playgrounds-and-outdoor-gyms> and National ALC are intending to engage with the government on the impractical nature of most of their guidance. In regard to risk assessments I have not received or found anything specific in relation to play equipment, however National ALC has sent editable generic workplace ones for councils to use.
5. Relating to agenda point 12 – decisions between meetings. Local authorities are required to hold meetings to make decisions. I have spoken to Norfolk ALC regarding this issue as things do crop up between meetings that do not warrant holding an extraordinary meeting and wanted to see what the best practice was for dealing with this. They responded by showing examples of documents (policies, minutes etc.) from Hoveton council.
The law permits a Council to delegate decision-making and discharge of statutory powers/functions (including “power to spend”) to a Council Officer such as a Parish Clerk/RFO. These delegated powers are then evidenced in documents such as employment contract, job description, minutes of decisions, financial regulations etc. etc.
6. Relating to agenda point 13 – community champions. As you are aware Norfolk ALC has launched a well being initiative and a number of e-mails have been circulated. In one they have said “In the immediate, foreseeable future we must concentrate on the personal issues and so we are about to launch a separate strand to the Well-Being Initiative called “Joining the Dots”. While separate it will be complementary to, and run alongside, the current “Norfolk Parish Councils’ Climate Safeguard Project” As the flow could well increase and for this reason we are suggesting that you appoint two (or more) volunteer councillors. One to receive the “Joining the Dots” emails thus championing that end of the spectrum and the other to champion and receive all emails on the “Norfolk Parish Councils’ Climate Safeguard Project”. You will also continue to receive them, but you should then be able to work with the relevant champion to decide what action Foul登 Parish Council needs to take”
7. Relating to agenda item 16 – FHS and charity commission. I would like permission from the council as sole trustee to contact the charity commission for the governing document for FHS and the Recreation Ground for completeness of records. If I am permitted, I would like to also query the exclusion of Wheat Furlong from the 2004 scheme, should there be a quick resolve to this long standing query.
8. Relating to agenda item 17 – policies and procedures. There has been no change in the model documents for the following policies:- complaints, data protection (data schedule to be produced for next meeting) and equal opportunities. I would advise setting a review date of 24 months and/or until such time as significant changes are made. In regards to a code of conduct model this is currently in a consultation period where Norfolk ALC are encouraging councillors and clerks to consider it and respond to the LGA consultation with the deadline being 17th August 2020. This can be seen in the Norfolk ALC 9th June bulletin which was circulated.
9. Relating to agenda item 20 – planning applications. None received
Outcome of previous applications

3PL/2020/0225/F White Hart Inn, change of use to residential has been refused.

3PL/2020/0115/F Cold Harbour Barn, conversion of barn to single dwelling has full permission

10. Other items since last meeting

- a. The cheque of £175 has now been paid in.
- b. SAM2 correspondence has been received. It is expected a decision will be made in their July meeting and they will notify me accordingly.
- c. All documents on the website should now be in pdf (un-editable) as discussed at last meeting.
- d. Communication has been received since the last meeting that an application has been lodged with Breckland council to register the White Hart pub as a community asset. A letter was returned expressing the councils support. This was agreed by majority of the council. The application has been approved by Breckland unless it is called in under the call-in procedures. The call-in expiry is set at Monday 6th July.
- e. Cost and dimensions have been received from Cllr S Pye regarding the new notice board, councillors have agreed this by majority. Written confirmation has been received from the residents at the Wood Yard who have no objections. An application for consent has been sent to Norfolk County Council and an e-mail response has been given as acceptance. Due to many still working from home they are unable to provide the usual document format.
- f. Covid-19 small business grant for the hall has been applied for and £10,000 was awarded on the 18th June.
- g. An invitation has been received for the parish partnership grant 2020/21 and has been circulated to councillors as requested in the last meeting. This is in relation to the village hall car park and is a match funding scheme.
- h. Grass cutting and the recreation ground. In May it became apparent the grass had not been cut I chased this issue with the first response being that they could not access the grounds as it had been taped off. I addressed this issue with photos and that it was only the play equipment. I then received an invoice for May (including rec. ground grass cutting). After further investigation and photos it appeared that they hadn't cut it in April despite invoicing for it. I have put Mays invoice on hold and requested that they amend and re-issue and I have requested a credit for Aprils invoice. There is also a discrepancy between the two invoices which would mean there was 3 days between cuts rather than the agreed 2 weeks. The grass was finally cut on the 17th June. I have asked Cllr West to notify me over the next month or so when he notices the grass being cut to keep a record. I am still waiting for the credit and amended invoice.
- i. An e-mail was received regarding a bid for Government funding that Norfolk County Council are proposing. Their proposal is to enhance transport links from local villages to Swaffham. Basically, they are looking at a Flexible demand responsive bus service for villages south of Swaffham , a proposal which they believe will benefit residents of Barton Bendish, Beachamwell, Cockley Cley, Cranwich, Didlington, Drymere, Foulden, Gooderstone, Hilborough, Ickburgh, Little and Great Cressingham, Methwold, Mundford, North and South Pickenham, Northwold and Oxborough. The bid will be for Government funding from their Rural Mobility Fund. They requested help as part of the bid.
Foulden Parish Council agreed by majority to support this bid and Cllr Parker responded on behalf of the council.
- j. I have contacted the charity commission in regard to getting the last known trustees for the village hall to enable the progression of the license to be updated, but do not expect a response soon.
- k. I have received a signed contract from the village hall cleaner.
- l. Year end forms have been completed with the charity commission for 1105467 - FHS land and YBARJQU7 - Recreation Ground.
- m. I have received the electoral register, however it is password protected and to get the password you have to ring the office. The office however is still closed.
- n. I received an e-mail which wished to raise concern to the parish that WHICAAG would be in competition with the village hall. I did make the gentlemen aware that the council has responded to Breckland both in regard to the change of use of the White Hart and the application as an asset of community value.

- o. Post sleeves for the recreation ground. The council agreed by majority on 20th May to approve the cost for the sleeves.
- p. E-mail received regarding heartsafe defibrillator. It would appear that the model installed at the village hall is wi-fi compatible. If and when wifi is reconsidered at the hall this may also be worth a consideration.
- q. EDF direct debits have been altered from £34p/m to £23 p/m, this is following the first bill of £51.16 inc. VAT
- r. I have circulated the disclosure of interest forms and relevant links to Breckland council to all councillors and asked I receive a copy as well as the monitoring officer for anyone wishing to update their forms. I have not received any return forms. If anyone needs the information re-sent please let me know.
- s. Grass cutting, since circulating this report I have received another incorrect invoice and have put it on hold. I spoke to the finance manager last Thursday and I should have received the credit and amended invoices on Friday. That is not the case.
- t. Correspondence received by clerk for the attention of Cllr Parker regarding the White Hart Inn and the application for asset of community value. Clerk responded on behalf of Cllr Parker explaining it would not be appropriate for Cllr Parker to respond as he has had no previous dealings with the issue due to declared registered interests (owner of pub in neighbouring village). Clerk responded that a community group had formed and they placed the nomination not the Parish council, however the Parish Council do support the application.