Grindon and Thorpe Thewles Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 9th November 2021 at 6.30 pm in Grindon Parish Hall, Thorpe Thewles.

Present: Cllrs. Davies, Gillson, Lowson, Rees and Williams

In Attendance: Keith Mathews, SBC, M. Ireland, Clerk, 2 residents

1. **Public Forum**: A resident updated Councillors on the footpath issue raised at the September meeting. It appears that a space for maintenance vehicles has been installed on the site, at the location of the alternative footpath proposed earlier. If a footpath is still required, the only land available belongs to the Borough Council. Mr. Mathews stated that Planning Policy required a connection as a matter of principle; there needs to be an access to the green space for pedestrians. Cllr Williams noted a pathway, just before the access road into the estate, already in existence. She further noted that there is no pavement along the old Durham Road, but there is a grass verge; everyone walks on the road. Cllr Rees noted evidence of a previous pavement alongside the road. Mr. Mathews agreed investigate further and liaise with the resident. The Clerk was tasked with requesting the Borough Council install a pavement along at least one side of the road through the village. **Actions**: K. Mathews to investigate the need for another footpath and liaise with the resident, Clerk to request installation of a footpath.

2. **Keith Mathews - Section 106 funds:** Mr. Mathews noted that the 'Homes by Carlton' development provided approximately £110,000 for open space/green infrastructure projects, which must be spent on projects relevant to the development. Having had a discussion with the Clerk he had now identified three potential projects and wished to hear Parish Councillors views. The three options were:
    1. The play area in the village
    2. Land behind Thorpe Beck Farm and
    3. Wynyard Woodland Park.

    He noted the Astral Park development permission required the developer to provide open public space on site, therefore no Section 106 funds would be available from this development. The Borough Council believes what is in place currently does not meet the criteria. The land will not be transferred to SBC unless the developer provides funding for at least 25 years' maintenance of the site, so unlikely.
    The following discussion included improvements to the access through the woodland behind Thorpe Beck Farm – which would cost in the region of £30-35,000. It was noted that the old Durham Road was used by village residents for exercise, including dog walking and Councillors asked if some of the funds could be used to provide a footpath from the village to Cycle Route 1? Some items in the Play Park, installed in 2009, would need replacing in a few years and it was felt this would cost between £10-20,000. He was aware that Councillors were keen to improve access to the Park but the cost had been deemed too high. Cllr Gillson informed that a 30-metre ramp, identified by the Parish Council, would only cost £20,000 to purchase, although there were the installation costs to be added. Mr. Mathews asked for the information on the ramp be sent to him. As the Play Park belonged to the Borough Council, they would continue to maintain it. It was noted that the Wynyard Woodland Park was used a great deal by many villagers. The Borough Council has a scheme outlined for improvements, as it was recognized the Park needed a lot of TLC. It was thought £50-60,000 could be allocated to provide match

funding for funding bids. Cllr Williams asked if the funding could include lighting in the underpass, and/or a mural? Mr. Mathews responded that, as the Council had up to 5 years to allocate the Section 106 funds, there was pliantly of time for other potential projects to be identified, and agreed to put together a recommendation, including the views of the Parish Council, which would be presented to the Ward Councillor for approval. He further agreed to attend another PC meeting when invited. **Actions**: Clerk to forward the ramp information, Mr. Mathews to draft a recommendation paper.

3. **Apologies for Absence**: Ward Cllr J. Gardner

4. **Declarations of Interest**: Cllr Davies, Item 13.

5. **Councillor Co-option**: (This Item was taken after Item 13, once all residents had left the meeting). Cllr Rees reported that interviews with candidates had taken place the previous Wednesday. Two very strong candidates had been identified. It had been extremely difficult to choose one over the other, but they had finally agreed on Candidate A, though only by a fraction. The full Parish Council then spent some considerable time discussing the co-option, noting the strengths of each candidate. The general view was that both candidates had much to offer, and the best outcome would be to have both. The Clerk informed that the Parish Council cannot have more than 6 Councillors, so one had to be selected. The Chairman then put the matter to the vote, with Candidate A receiving one more vote than Candidate B, the Chairman abstaining. The Clerk was requested to inform candidates of the outcome as soon as possible. **Action:** Clerk to inform candidates.

6. **Minutes of 12th October 2021**: Cllr Williams noted a misspelling of her name in Item 6. This was corrected. Cllr Gillson proposed, with Cllr Rees seconding, the approval of the amended minutes. Cllr Rees concurring, it was **resolved** to accept the minutes as a true record.

7. **Matters Arising**: (a) A177 Blackspot – the Clerk informed that as SBC were aware of the problem and were currently undertaking surveys of the road, Officers felt it too early to attend a meeting until the results of the surveys could be analysed.
(b) The Clerk reported that she had still not received a reply to nay of her correspondence with the Planning Department at SBC.

8. **Maintenance &Village Improvement Committee Report:** Cllr Gillson reported that the planters had been purchased and were due for delivery on 20th November. Helen Smith had agreed to organize a team of volunteers to transport them to the agreed sites around the village. He then proposed the PC purchase a small storage shed, some 6' x 4', to be placed beside the Parish Hall, in which small items of equipment and supplies for maintenance could be stored. Research had indicated the cheapest would be provided by BonLea at a cost of £450 installed. It was **resolved** to approve the purchase of a shed from BonLea. **Action:** Cllr Gillson to purchase shed.

9. **Finance:** The Clerk presented the Financial Report for the previous period. It was noted that no transactions had taken place. Councillors **resolved** to accept the report. The Clerk requested payment of expenses incurred by herself between 1st July and 8th November, including travel costs other than PC meetings, postage and stationery, to the sum of £115.79. It was **resolved** to pay these expenses.

10. **Ward Councillor's Report:** None Received.
11. **Annual Budget 2022-23:** After some discussion it was agreed that the Clerk should cost in:
    - 4 new village boundary signs
    - Trees to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee
    - Benches and picnic tables
    - The parish fete.
    - A power supply for a Christmas Tree at the west end of the village
    - Digital Mapping – hardware, software and training.
    - An old agricultural vehicle for display purposes.

    The budget should allow for rent of the Parish Hall for the Annual Parish Meeting and increase the amount for tree maintenance.
    It was agreed that the vicar could use the Parish Council's printer, now based in the Parish Hall, to produce her newsletters, provided she paid for the ink.

12. **Correspondence:** Invitation from the Mayor to his Charity Ball, to be held at Wynyard Hall on 18th February 2022. Apologies, no Councillors available; CDALC – free webinar on communications, 25th November – Clerk to attend.

13. **Planning:** Application No: **21/2722/RET** - Rretrospective application to demolish an existing building, hard-standing and office. Cllr Davies declared an interest and would abstain from the decision of the Parish Council.
    Councillors noted the application did not comply with Local Plan policy EG8 due to the following: There is **no evidence of a functional need** - there are no American Miniature Horses on the property, instead it is being run as a puppy farm, with dogs barking continuously, an extreme annoyance for the neighbours. Councillors questioned whether the puppy farm was legal and licensed. The business had not been in existence for at least three years; Councillors wished to know if SBC had seen a sound Business Plan. It was felt the proposed plan for the location and layout of the buildings was fundamentally wrong and does not give any consideration to other residents who have not been consulted in advance of any of the works already undertaken; it is not in keeping with the local environment.
    Whilst Councillors had no objection in principle to a new business on the 22 acres of land, it seemed the owner was not developing it in accordance with the rules. For example:

    - The applicant has applied for residential occupancy of a caravan, sited only 15 metres from nearby houses; surely this application should have been for temporary accommodation?
    - An asbestos shed has already been demolished without specialist equipment, putting the neighbours at risk and there are concerns that the debris has been buried on the site – an environmental hazard.
    - There is no mention on the application of a septic tank – one has been installed without permission, though no-one seems to know exactly where – it was not there when the applicant purchased the property, which had NO sewerage system.
    - Hardstanding has been laid around the building and is being used to house commercial supermarket trailers and horse HGVs, all close to other residences in the neighbourhood and within clear site of the walkway and Cycle Route 1.
    - HGVs now frequently use the track to the property, causing difficulties for neighbours – **NB**: a condition of the original planning approval for the track was that proper passing places/laybys were installed – this has yet to be implemented.

- An unsightly 8-foot fence has been installed and a of number of trees have been removed but there is no indication that the applicant intends to provide soft landscaping and trees to replace these.
- The shed to be demolished is also asbestos, yet there is no mention of this.

It would appear that what the applicant states in the application differed considerably from that which is actually taking place. Councillors then voted on the application, with Cllr Davies abstaining, all others voted to make a **strong objection.**

14. **Items of Concern to Councillors: None raised.**

15. **Date of Next Meeting:** 6.30pm Tuesday 14th December 2021.

Meeting closed at 9.15pm

Minutes Authorised By:

Minutes Seconded By:

Date: