Grindon and Thorpe Thewles Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 13th December 2022 at 6.30pm in Grindon Parish Hall, Thorpe Thewles.

Present: Cllrs. Davies (in the Chair), Lowson, McGee, Moffatt and Rees
In Attendance: M. Ireland, Clerk; Mr. Icke, The Vane Arms, 4 residents

1. **Public Forum:** Several residents of Astral Park wished to update the Parish Council on matters relating to Mandale Homes; Letters had been sent to Ward Councilors, the Mayor of Stockton and Alex Cunningham MP, and a petition, signed by all Astral Park residents, had been submitted to SBC 2 weeks ago, but to date no response had been received from anyone. Today an email had been received by Shareholders, from Hunters, the Property Management company employed to manage the estate, to the effect that the Annual management fee per household was to be reduced as Mandale Homes had agreed to continue maintaining the land to the east of the estate for the next five years. Hunters requested acceptance by Friday 17th, however the residents were neither willing to accept the proposal, nor to respond individually – the next meeting of the Directors would not be held until January. They wished to have the support of the Parish Council in raising their increasing frustration with the Borough Council, who appeared to have done nothing to force Mandale Homes to comply with the conditions laid out in the planning approval. The Chairman proposed that the Ward Councillor and Simon Grundy, SBC Planning Department, be invited to the next meeting and in the meantime, Mr. Grundy's advice be sought, as to how to respond to the email from Hunters. A resident agreed to forward a copy of the email to the Clerk, for her to forward to SBC and also to write to Michael Gove MP< Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. **Action:** Clerk to extend invitation to Mr. Grundy and Cllr Gardner and to seek advice as requested.
   Mr. Icke wished to know if there had been any further complaints received about this pub – the Chairman responded in the negative.

   All residents left the meeting at 7.05 pm

2. **Apologies:** Cllr Gillson – accepted.

3. **Declarations of Interest**: None declared.

4. **Minutes of 8th November 2022**: Cllr Davies proposed, with Cllr Moffatt seconding, the approval of the minutes of 8th November. All concurring, it was **resolved** to accept the minutes as a true record.

5. **Matters Arising**: (i) ***Dropped Kerbs*** – Cllr Moffatt reported that the final decision had been made and 14 dropped kerbs were needed in total; he produced a map with all identified, some in black some in red. There was then some discussion about affordability as, if there was to be sensory paving installed beside each of these, the cost would rise significantly. It was therefore **resolved** the Clerk should request SBC to install seven dropped kerbs with sensory paving in the first instance – these were identified on the accompanying map in black. If possible, in future years, the remaining seven would be considered. **Action**: Clerk to advise SBC as to where the dropped kerbs with sensory paving were to be installed, and agreed the amount to be contributed from

the Parish Council, to a maximum of £8,000. (ii) ***Church wall*** – The Clerk reported that Rev Claire had forwarded the costings she had received from her contractor for the repair to the wall, in the sum of just over £2,000. Cllr Rees proposed a contribution of £500 be made towards the costs, however the Chairman thought that, as the church had not actually requested a donation, it would better to wait for a few months to see how the wall survived the winter before making a decision. The issue was put to the vote with no support for Cllr Rees' proposal. It was therefore agreed to wait until the spring before making any decision. (iii) ***Land behind Astral Park*** – covered under Public Forum; (iv) ***Grindon Parish Hall Trusteeship*** – Cllr Mc Gee reported that she had given the matter considerable thought and had concluded she did not have the time to take on this further responsibility. It was therefore agreed the Clerk should inform Mr. Tait, Chairman of the Trustees, that the Parish Council would not be making a nomination this year. **Action:** Clerk to advise Mr. Tait. (v) ***Matters arising from Councillors' concerns raised at November meeting –*** The Clerk informed that all had been forwarded to either Care for Your Area or Thirteen group and she had received confirmation they has been received. **Action:** Clerk to inform Mr. Tait regarding Trusteeship.

6. **Policies Review:** The new/revised policies presented for approval at this meeting were those relating to personnel matters:
   Equalities & Diversity Policy; Dignity at Work – Bullying and Harassment Policy; Sickness & Absence Policy; Appraisal Procedure; Disciplinary Procedure; Grievance Procedure.
   All present agreed that they had read and understood the drafts and had no questions or concerns. The Chairman therefore proposed that all be approved, this was **unanimously agreed**. **Action:** Clerk to date all agreed policies and procedures.

7. **Maintenance Committee Report:** Cllr Moffatt had nothing to report.

8. **Social Activities Committee report:** Cllr McGee reported that that the visit to the village by Santa, had been arranged for Sunday 18th December at 11.30am at the Parish Hall. In the light of the flooding of his house, there was concern that Cllr Gillson would not be able to act as collector of Santa's gifts – Cllr McGee **agreed** to liaise with Cllr Gillson to ensure that the gifts would be collected. The next event was to be a wine tasing in February. Cllr Davies reported that she had spoken with the resident who normally organised presents for the Children at the Home, but she was unable to provide them from her own resources this year and was in process of making an application to the PC for funding for this. After a brief discussion, it was **resolved** to purchase a £25 Amazon Gift Voucher for each child, the Chairman to liaise with the Clerk on the number required. **Actions:** Cllr McGee to liaise with Cllr Gillson, Chairman to inform Clerk of number required and Clerk to purchase Gift Vouchers.

9. **Financial Reports –** the Clerk presented the statement of Financial Transactions and the Actual against Budget Report, which were **approved**.

Receipts		**Payments**	
		Grindon Parish Hall (Room Hire)	53.75
		D.M. Ireland (Clerk's expenses)	122.15
		Grindon Parish Hall (Room Hire)	35.00
		D.M. Ireland (salary Oct-Dec + back pay to 1.4.22)	770.52
		HMRC (PAYE)	122.40
TOTAL	**0.00**	**TOTAL**	**1,103.82**

Cllr Moffatt had previously alerted the Clerk to the lack of grit in the parish owned grit bins and she had therefore obtained costings from SBC for filling these – approx. £75 per bin. It was noted 11.1% that day. the 2 bins were not as large as the SBC bins and would therefore not cost as much. The Clerk was tasked with having the bins filled as soon as possible by SBC. **Action**: Clerk to request grit from SBC.

10. **Budget/Precept:** The Clerk presented data on the anticipated outturn at 31st March 2023, requesting Councillors consider whether she had made sufficient provision, given that inflation was rising at over 11%. All confirmed her figures were appropriate. The Clerk then explained it had been more challenging than usual to identify likely costs in 2023/24, given the uncertainty over the economic situation; however she had done her best and presented figures for the core costs of running the Parish Council, requesting Councillors consider whether her assumptions about each budget head were reasonable. All unanimously **agreed** both the reasoning and the figures. She then went on to provide notional figures for the village improvements Councillors had suggested at the November meeting, noting with caution that many suppliers were not prepared to give exact quotes at this time. After some discussion it was agreed to drop the idea of purchasing picnic tables and benches, as there was as yet nowhere for these to be placed; also dropped from consideration were the Christmas Lights for Durham Road and wildflowers. Retained were new planters and plants for them, new village signs, equipment for maintaining the planters and keeping the village tidy. Once the final figures had been reviewed and agreed, it was **resolved** to increase the Precept by only 4%, with the balance of expenditure being drawn from reserves. The total Precept required was thus £10,088, an increase of £388 on 22/23.

11. **Ward Councillor's Report:** None received.

12. **Correspondence:** (a) Email from ***British Red Cross*** advising of training available for adults and children – **noted**. (b) email from ***Wynyard Tree Services*** advising of the removal of the Cherry Tree that was causing problems with the Christmas Tree and had submitted a request to SBC for permission to prune the trees on the village green which have TPOs on them – **noted.**

13. **Planning:** Application for works on trees with TPOs on Thorpe Thewles village green. Strongly supported.

Cllr Lowson left the meeting at 8.30pm

14. **Items of Concern to Councillors:** No further issues were raised.

15. **Date of Next Meeting:** 6.30pm Tuesday 10th January 2023 at Grindon Parish Hall

Meeting closed at 8.45pm

Minutes Authorised By:

Minutes Seconded By:

Date: