Grindon and Thorpe Thewles Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 8th November 2022 at 6.30pm in Grindon Parish Hall, Thorpe Thewles.

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

1. **Public Forum:** A resident had informed Councillors that vehicles have been cutting over the grass on the A177 just west of TESCO, and a serious accident almost occurred today. **Action:** Clerk to inform SBC
2. **Apologies:** None received

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

4. **Minutes of 11th October 2022**: Cllr Moffat proposed, with Cllr McGee seconding, the approval of the minutes of 11th October. All concurring, it was **resolved** to accept the minutes as a true record.

5. **Matters Arising**: (i) ***The Vane Arms*** – The Clerk reported the Licensing Committee had met that day and awarded the amended licence subject to conditions; it was up to the Landlord to uphold these. (ii) ***Village Duck Pond*** – a response had been received from SBC, indicating a lack of support for a duck pond on the site proposed. Councillors agreed unanimously not to progress this, as all felt the site to be inappropriate, though if a more suitable location could be identified in the future, they were willing to consider it. (iii) ***Dropped Kerbs*** – Cllrs Gillson and Moffatt had agreed seven locations where dropped kerbs were a priority. After some discussion, it was agreed to contribute to the funding of 14 dropped kerbs around the village, excluding the two in North Close identified by the Borough Council. The one diagonally opposite the Hamilton Russell Arms, was felt to be dangerous, being on a blind bend, however the final decision on this was delegated to Cllrs Gillson and Rees, and to be made by 22nd November, after which the Clerk would inform SBC. Councillors also wished them to be suitable for people with restricted sight. **Action:** Cllrs Gillson and Rees to make final decision and inform Clerk, who would then inform SBC. (iv) ***Refurbished posts and notice boards*** – though already agreed, as the work had not yet started on the refurbishment of the Notice Boards, and these now appeared to require far more work than originally envisaged, Cllr Gillson proposed this element of the work be dropped and the two wooden notice boards be replaced with aluminum ones, which would require very little if any, maintenance. He had previously circulated Council members with an example and, all being in agreement, it was **resolved** to purchase two aluminum Notice Boards immediately. **Action:** Clerk to purchase aluminum notice boards. (v) ***Trees*** – The Clerk informed that the contractor had provided all the necessary documentation and would start the tree works in December, weather permitting. The tree behind the Christmas Tree would also be pruned back, allowing the Christmas Tree to stand clear. (vi) ***Speed Limit*** – The Clerk noted the response of SBC in which it was stated that the signs were to be moved by the developer in the near future; Cllr McGee informed the work had already been completed, though one sign was not visible due to trees. Cllr Moffatt reported vehicles being driven along this section of Durham Road at speeds in excess of 70MPH, which was corroborated by Cllr McGee. (vii) ***Event Management*** – Cllr Gillson reported back on

the meeting with the SBC Officer held at the Play Park. All in all, it seems that it would be quite difficult to organise any events at the Play Park that required any structures, such as marquees or gazebos. (viii) ***Church Trees*** – Rev Claire had informed that a neighbour had offered to pay for the trees abutting her land to be pruned, though Cllr Moffatt noted this did not include the trees over the public footpath or field behind the church. Rev Claire had also stated the wall was safe for the time being. Whilst Councillors agreed it was safe, they felt it unsightly, and detracted from the village. It was **agreed** the Clerk should enquire of Rev. Claire the cost of repair**.** (ix) ***Land behind Astral Park*** - the Clerk had spoken with Simon Grundy and later received an email from him in which he stated essentially no progress had been made as yet; the Council was awaiting a response from Mandale Homes. Cllr Moffatt reported a grass cutting contractor had mowed the field, in the process destroying 13 blades on his machine due to the rubble and other debris on the ground. After a brief discussion it was **agreed** the Council should write to Simon Grundy, all SBC Councillors and the MP expressing concern that the land was being left so long in a dangerous state. Cllr McGee would put the same information on the Village Facebook page, in the hope that other villagers would also write to complain.
Actions: Cllrs Gillson and Rees to make final decision on dropped kerbs and inform the Clerk; Cllr McGee to put information about the land behind Astral Park on village Facebook page, requesting villagers write to SBC etc complaining about the state of it; Clerk to inform the residents who proposed a village duck pond of the decision not to progress, to inform SBC of dropped kerbs decision, to inform SBC of hidden speed sign and excess speeding on Durham Road, to request cost of church wall repair from Rev Claire and to write to Simon Grundy, all SBC Councillors and MP about the land behind Astral Park.

6. **Policies Review:** The Clerk had undertaken a review of all Parish Council policies and procedures, had identified several that needed updating and drafted many new ones. These had been provided to every Councillor in a Councillor File; all would be discussed over the next few meetings and, if agreed, adopted. Those presented for approval at this meeting were: **Standing Orders, Code of Conduct, Financial Regulations, Expenses Policy, Financial Transactions procedure and Grants and Donations Policy.** 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 Gillson stated he had nothing to report.

8. **Social Activities Committee report:** Cllr Gillson reported that that the Murder Mystery Night had been cancelled due to lack of interest. The Christmas Fair was being organised by and for the benefit of Grindon Parish Hall. A visit to the village by Santa, was being arranged for Sunday 18th December at 11.30am at the Parish Hall. Mince Pies and Mulled wine would be available for adults, and parents were invited to drop off wrapped presents for their child(ren) a week in advance. Cllr Rees requested the former Residents Association officers be asked if they would wish to participate, and perhaps have the presents dropped off to them. Cllr Gillson agreed to this. The Chairman asked whether a resident had requested help with collecting gifts for the Children's Home, Cllr Gillson responding in the negative, the Chairman agreed to contact the resident concerned to see if she would like help from the SAC. Cllr Gillson further report several events were being developed for the New Year, including a Wine tasting in February, a possible St. Patrick's Day event in March and the annual Easter Egg Hunt in April, and thought was already being given to celebrating the Coronation in May.

9. **Financial Reports –** the Clerk presented the statement of Financial Transactions and the Actual against Budget Report, which were **approved**. The Clerk informed that the Government had recently approved an NJC pay settlement for all Local Authority staff for the year 2022-23. This would mean a £1.00 per hour increase in the current Clerk's salary. Councillors **unanimously agreed** to pay the Clerk the new rate, backdated to 1 April 2022. The Clerk thanked them.

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

11. **Budget Proposals:** The Clerk requested that Councillors identify what they would wish to see the Council provide for residents in the year 2023-24, in order that she might cost these, and thus be able to provide a range of options before the decision on the Precept for 2023/4 was agreed. The following were identified:
    - 2 x Flowerbasket/planter stands
    - Watering equipment (rolling water barrel & syphon pump)
    - Plants, bulbs, compost
    - 2 x benches
    - 4 x historical village signs
    - LED Christmas Lights for length of Durham Road/Wynyard Road through the village
    - St. James' Churchyard maintenance
    - Wildflowers
    - Battery-powered heavy-duty Strimmer.

12. **Correspondence:** (a) Email from Chairman of Grindon Parish Hall requesting a PC representative to the Board of Trustees. Cllr McGee agreed to consider; (b) Invitation from the Mayor of Stockton to the Remembrance day Service on 13th November – noted; (c) Invitation from the Mayor of Stockton to one of the two days of Christmas Carols. 10.00am 1st or 2nd December - Clerk to attend if possible.

Cllr Lowson and Mr. Icke left the meeting at 8.05pm

13. **Planning:** No applications received.

14. **Items of Concern to Councillors:**
    Cllr Davies raised concern about the footpath from Thorpe Paddock – currently cyclists had nothing to prevent them from riding straight into the road off the footpath once it is open, especially concerning for child cyclists – she felt a metal barrier was needed to slow cyclists here.
    Cllr Moffatt reported at least 2 street lights were off between the Hamilton Russell Arms and the end of the village near Thorpe Paddock. He also noted the light near the Vane Arms car park on the village green was not working and that care for Your Area had still not filled in the pothole previously reported in North Close.
    Cllr Rees reported the crumbling wall outside the Thirteen houses was not yet fixed.

15. **Date of Next Meeting:** 6.30pm Tuesday 13th December 2022 at Grindon Parish Hall

Meeting closed at 8.25pm

Minutes Authorised By:

Minutes Seconded By:

Date: