



TIVETSHALL PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of Tivetshall Parish Council Meeting:
7:30 pm, Wednesday 13th November 2019, Tivetshall Village Hall**

Present: Rita Land (Chair), Alyson Read, John Powell, Rob Alleguen-Porter and Ros Hill (Clerk).
Cllr Martin Wilby (District Councillor), Cllr Bev Spratt (County Councillor)

Apologies: Cllr Clayton Hudson (District Councillor)

25 members of the public in attendance

Rita Land, Chair of the Parish Council welcomed everyone to the meeting and said how good it was to see so many people attending. Cllr Land thanked Jonathan Taylor, CEO Sapientia Education Trust (SET) and Helen Adshead, Chair of Governors for attending. Cllr Land explained that the meeting is a PC meeting and as such there is a formal agenda to follow, which allows for discussion of the Consultation Relating to Tivetshall Primary School during item 5.2 and members of the public were asked to wait and ask questions after Jonathan Taylor and Helen Adshead had spoken. It was explained that the PC intended to record the items relating to the school to assist with minute taking.

1. TO CONSIDER ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none.

2. TO CONSIDER ANY APPLICATIONS FOR CO-OPTION

There were none.

3. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA AND CONSIDER REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

There were none.

4. MINUTES

4.1 To approve the minutes of the 9th October Parish Council meeting

The minutes were accepted and signed as accurate.

4.2 Matters arising from the 9th October minutes

There were none.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION –

5.1 Reports from District and County Councillors

Cllr Spratt said he was disappointed about the proposed closure of Tivetshall school and said that any emails received by him have been forwarded to John Fisher of NCC schools. Cllr Spratt said he was only congratulating the school a few months ago on a good Ofsted, he went on to say that the school is the heart of the village where children attend various village functions and events. Perhaps numbers can be increased to save the school.

Cllr Wilby reiterated his disappointment about the proposed school closure, he said that Tivetshall school is at the heart of the village, the school is a good school and in a central location within the village. Cllr Wilby expressed that he was disappointed it had been allowed for numbers to decline, he said that Mark Carlyle was a good Headteacher with a good reputation.

5.2 Parishioners Forum

5.2.1 Jonathan Taylor (JT), CEO of Sapientia Education Trust (SET) – Consultation Regarding Tivetshall Primary School

The CEO thanked Cllr Land for the invitation to attend. The CEO said he was pleased that several people had attended the meeting at the school earlier in the consultation process. He explained that minutes can form

part of the consultation and although the deadline for submissions was 5pm on 15th November the minutes of this PC meeting would be accepted after that. The CEO reiterated that no decision has been made about the school at this stage. The consultation process and public comments has provided valuable background and further areas to be explored.

The CEO explained the decision making process – once the consultation period ends there will be consultation with the Governing Body and then a review by the Trust Board of Trustees. There is a meeting planned on 9th December to review all documentation. It was noted that the Election period may impact. If the trustees are minded to accept the proposal (to amalgamate Tivetshall and Burston schools with the closure of Tivetshall), then it will go to the Regional School Commissioning Team, Headteacher Board for review. A recommendation will then be made on the proposal by the Headteacher Board. The CEO stated that the closure of a school has to go to ministerial committee as well as there is a legal process that has to be followed. If trustees decided not to proceed with the proposal, then that result would be known quite quickly. The CEO said he regretted the uncertainty. He stated that the consultation document talks of a closure date for Tivetshall School of May 2020, although he said it was likely to be later than that date for practical reasons. The CEO explained that the Consultation Document focused on three main areas – education standards, finance and numbers of children at the school.

The CEO explained that numbers of pupils have dropped at Tivetshall from approximately 30 to 17, with 16 being the lowest at Tivetshall.

In relation to education the CEO stated that a school with very small numbers was very challenging, but it was stated that there were some advantages to small schools. However, teaching mixed age classes, potentially just two classes made that more of a challenge. It was stated that SET were delighted to secure the appointment of Mark Carlyle (MC) as Executive Headteacher. The same challenge regarding two classes was highlighted as also being an issue at Burston. MC view is that 15/16 pupils in a mixed age class is preferable from educational perspective.

The CEO then explained the financial backdrop. School funding has become very tight and even tighter in recent years. School funding operates on pupil numbers from the school census submitted in the October for the next September, this means Tivetshall will be funded for 17 pupils next year (2020/21). At best that would mean one teacher being employed for Tivetshall school, which would not be conducive for education.

The CEO explained that the projected numbers coming through from the Local Authority for the next 2/3 years indicates a maximum of 5 children expected to join the school. Other factors to consider, such as housing growth but there are no guarantees and may not result in an increase in school pupil numbers. A loss of £35k funding is being faced next year for Tivetshall, but it was stated that Burston school is viable going forward based on 29 pupils.

The CEO stated that the proposal is that if amalgamation takes place then it will result in the closure of Tivetshall school, so the hope is that Tivetshall pupils would transfer to Burston, making that school more sustainable.

It was stated that the capacity at Tivetshall school is 49 and at Burston 70 pupils, so Burston has capacity for the pupils from both schools.

Recruitment of teachers to mixed age classes is very challenging and the vacancy at Tivetshall could not be filled. Part of the challenge was the geography and the small number on roll plus mixed age teaching.

The CEO reiterated that he was attending the meeting to listen and reiterated that a decision has not been made as yet.

5.2.2 Governing Body, Tivetshall Primary School – school’s perspective on consultation

The Chair of the Governing Body (GB) reiterated that this is a consultation and they have to follow a certain route to undertake a consultation. She encouraged parishioners to put pen to paper and make their views known and have their voices heard so that Governors are not basing their decision on assumptions, but on views. It was stated that the GB want to see both schools grow. Since the publicity about the school’s future there have been one more pupil at Tivetshall and five more at Burston. It had come to light that one parent didn’t know that the school at Tivetshall was still open. The plan is to come up with a creative way to move forward.

The Chair of Governors said that Mark Carlyle sent his apologies and wanted to clarify that he wishes to see both schools grow.

5.2.3 Opportunity for parishioners to put questions to SET/School Governors

Cllr Land invited members of the public to make their views known or to put questions to the CEO of SET and the Chair of Governors.

Parishioner Question - If the schools were to amalgamate would transport be provided to Burston and has consideration been given to the cost of that?

CEO Response – the understanding is that if the amalgamation goes ahead the standard NCC School Transport conditions would apply, the duty would be on the Local Authority but the Trust would support. The cost of this will be taken into consideration as part of consultation.

Cllr Spratt asked if SET had spoken to John Fisher, the Childrens' Services portfolio holder at Norfolk County Council. *The CEO confirmed the Trust had formally informed PC*

A parishioner asked for a show of hands as to how many people wanted to see the school remain open. There was a unanimous show of hands to keep the school open.

Parishioner Comment - if the amalgamation went ahead consideration of the closure of Burston and to keep Tivetshall open was mentioned at a previous meeting, but what has been said now contradicts that.

CEO Response – it was stated that it was correct that there was the possibility that Tivetshall could be kept open and Burston closed. This will be considered.

Parishioner expressed a feeling that SET was now back tracking.

Parishioner Question – A new Headteacher was appointed at the start of the Spring Term and it has been stated that finance is the major problem. Is it correct that the trust could go to certain bodies to obtain funding to support the school and increase numbers? Could you explain if that is possible?

CEO Response – understanding that the Education Funding Skills Agency can provide emergency funding to schools. Trustees might look at that as an option in this situation. Interesting on the wider point but quality of education and pupil numbers were stated as important. Numbers of children in the community who may attend the school in the future were needed and local on the ground information may help. The Trust view is that in the region of 30 children would make Tivetshall financially viable. Trust would consider this as an option.

Parishioner Comment – it was cited that there are two local schools which are close to capacity, it was possible that the school might attract pupils from these schools. Had the HT been given a remit to increase pupil numbers?

CEO Response – during the appointment of the Headteacher securing additional pupil numbers to the school formed part of the discussions.

Cllr Spratt Comment – it was disappointing that Tivetshall school, with a good Ofsted and a good Headteacher is now losing pupils.

CEO Response – evidence shows that approx. 50% of catchment children do not opt for Tivetshall school.

GB Comment – having had 12 yrs involvement with Tivetshall school, findings indicated that if you can get parents through the door to see the school then most likely that they will choose the school. Toddler group has grown to 26 toddlers, although numbers vary.

Parishioner Comment - the toddler group was started to encourage people to bring their children to the school.

Cllr Spratt question – if finance could be obtained for a short period of time could that be used to increase the school's attendance?

CEO Response – may be able to use reserves from across the Trust to support Tivetshall school in the very short term, but that would be a Board of Trustees decision.

Cllr Spratt comment – to give the school another year to say 2021 would give the school a chance to increase numbers.

Parishioner Comment – a submission has been made to SET, including a link which identifies where an Academy Trust has given a loan to one of its school to enable a recovery plan to be put in place. Each pupil brings in approximately £4.5k per annum, so if another 8 or 9 pupils could be brought in it would enable the school to have an opportunity. Thought needs to be given on how to grow the school and market the school. There is a vision in the community to retain the school. The school has a very good Ofsted, offers outdoor learning and the soon to be installed superfast broadband will also add value to the education and social experience. It was recognised that there were a number of issues but a breathing space of two years would allow the village to formulate a plan.

CEO Response – acknowledged that was a point made very well and will be taken into consideration.

Cllr Spratt commented that he would like to be kept updated on developments relating to the school.

Cllr Read – asked Cllr Spratt when and what he had known about the proposed closure of the school.
Cllr Spratt response - he did not know as early as he should have done, but as soon as he became aware he immediately spoke to John Fisher. Cllr Spratt was not informed by SET, but didn't want to cast blame as it may have been his mistake. Cllr Spratt stated that he would do everything he could to support Tivetshall school.
Cllr Read comment – confused about the process, at present the consultation is open, then it goes to trustees, then to the Board of Trustees and then to the Regional Schools Commissioner. It feels a bit like that the report is being written by the authors of the proposal rather than the community having the opportunity to have some input.

CEO Response - The consultation report will reflect all of the consultation including the minutes from the two school meetings which had a very good turnout. The CEO stated that he would like to include minutes from this PC meeting and these will be accepted after the deadline for responses, as the meeting was held during the consultation process. Consultation report will reflect everything received by SET. The CEO said he had no issue with the report being in the public domain and being made available to the community for review, but does not know whether this will be possible.

GB Comment – decisions have to be open and transparent. FOI request would probably be the route to obtain copies of the report sent to the Headteacher Board for scrutiny.

Cllr Read asked if the community would get to see the report before it goes to the Regional Schools Commissioner.

CEO Response - personal view is that he doesn't have a problem with sharing it, but doesn't know whether this would be possible.

GB Comment – process had to start with public consultation but view was that decisions have to be open and transparent.

The CEO confirmed that the process is very structured and has to start with Public Consultation.

Parishioner Question – it was agreed by everyone that the school is a fantastic facility. What has the trust done in terms of increasing numbers since it took on the school?

CEO Response - Since taking on the school there have been two different Headteachers in post at Tivetshall, when Carol Green was in post numbers were higher and it wasn't until her pending retirement that numbers started to drop away. Last year the Trust entered into engagement with the community in Diss area to promote both Tivetshall and Burston schools via toddler groups and an event at The Park Hotel in Diss. There was not a great response to that.

Parishioner Comment – that event was very last minute and not right for the parish and there was no advertising of these events.

CEO Response – wished to counter that comment as there had been editorial in the Diss Express and an interview on Park Radio to promote the event. Whether that was the right strategy is unclear. In addition, MC has done work locally to encourage parents to bring children into the school. The CEO confirmed that SET is open to ideas from the community.

Parishioner Question – how many of the current children at Tivetshall are within the catchment area?

CEO Response was that he did not have the figures to hand.

GB Comment – figures show that approximately 60% of children at the school are within the catchment area, because parents are looking for a smaller school environment or personal circumstances may have changed.

Parishioner Comment – disappointed that this aspect of the school has not been tabled this evening.

CEO Response – take that point. It was clarified that there is a focus in the consultation document on the benefit of small schools and the CEO apologised if that hasn't come across this evening. He reiterated that the Trust is committed to small schools and that it was clear that there are advantages of small schools, it was a matter of parental choice.

Parishioner Comment – the consultation paper also talks about poor education standards at Tivetshall School, would the CEO like to address that point and amend that?

CEO Response – MC addressed that point at the Parent's meeting. One had to be careful with small numbers. The Trust carries out its own quality assurance in the school, they have twice visited Tivetshall and some concerns have been raised. That data is in the public domain. It was confirmed that the latest Ofsted report was good (2015).

Parishioner Comment – why was the results of the Ofsted inspection not in the Proposal Document?

CEO Response – this data is in the public domain and there was no reason for not including that. The CEO explained that the next Ofsted inspection is likely to be in the next academic year as it usually takes place in the 3rd year after becoming an academy.

Cllr Spratt clarified what he would do, he will speak to Richard Bacon. Cllr Spratt felt the main aim of people at the meeting was to buy time for the school, confident that in a couple of years we can pull things round.

Parishioner Question– Performance of pupils at the school has been good in the past and produced some confident pupils who have gone on to achieve, why then has underperformance been honed in on?

CEO Response – said he would take that point, the data is as it is and open to interpretation and there for scrutiny. When numbers are small then data has to be taken carefully. The Department for Education recommendation is that where the pupil cohort is under five, then the performance data is not taken into account. We have spent time in Tivetshall school and we know good things go on in the school. Own background as a secondary teacher.

GB Comment – both her and MC are the children’s voice. A questionnaire has been designed for the children to complete and talk about the school and their feelings about their experience of the school, this has been done so their voice is heard as part of the consultation. It was explained that ex pupils can write in and express their views and encouraged them to write in response to the consultation.

Parishioner Comment – it was felt that it was untimely to announce the proposed amalgamation and closure of Tivetshall at a time when parents are considering school admissions for their children.

GB Comment – it was explained that this is a long process and in the summer term there were 23 children, but it was known the school would be losing Year 6 group, but then in September figures went down further. The GB decided they needed to speak to the local community to understand views about the school and the process to go through was to hold a public consultation. There was never a good time, but having an opportunity to hear the views of the public and have that conversation is a good thing. Any publicity can be good publicity and the advice to parents is to still apply to the school.

Parishioner Comment – it was ironic that this is the only village in South Norfolk with a village school close to a village green, a playing field, in the centre of the village and on a quiet road. It was felt that the toddler group is key to the future and making the school grow again. Is the Trust behind the toddler group or is it seen as a side issue?

CEO Response – Confirmed that yes the Trust, GB and MC have been behind this and yes Set is behind it as well. Of course we are behind it.

GB Comment – it was clarified that the toddler group has to come through the local GB and that is where the support is from, it would be unusual to go to the Trust for support.

CEO Response – the CEO reiterated that support which is delegated to the local GB, it was acknowledged that a toddler group is potentially the life blood of any school.

Parishioner Comment – work with the toddler group by the leader is fantastic, and the school could grow that within the village. It was clear from the 1st meeting that there are two key ways to grow a school; word of mouth from parents to encourage parents to bring children and the flavour of a competitive market, needs to be recognised. Are we going out to the toddler groups, nurseries, not just the once but building relationships with pre-schools (such as Gissing), to market the school in these areas. It is not rocket science, its a grass roots message. The view is that a plan is needed to build the school and get the message out to parents, The work done in Diss was appreciated but that doesn’t work, however there is evidence that we can make this work.

CEO Response was that there were points well made this evening and these will be minuted. The Headteacher recruitment process included discussions about engagement with the community and building pupil numbers. MC has a good track record on this, which he did well at Scole.

Parishioner Comment – it was felt that not given long enough to achieve the increase in pupil numbers and that SET need to consider the length of time it would take.

CEO Response – stated that it’s difficult to know if MC has had enough time to date to build the school up.

It was confirmed that a due diligence documentation process was undertaken at the time of academisation, although pupil numbers were higher at that time.

Parishioner Comment – there is a problem recruiting teachers to the vacancy at Tivetshall, was that a financial consideration?

GB Comment – no it’s a Norfolk wide problem and also Suffolk where it has been hard to recruit teachers for the last 4 to 5 years. There have been incentives in the past to attract teachers to Norfolk. The difficulty in recruiting teachers is not specific to Tivetshall or South Norfolk. Experience has shown that an advert for a teacher on a rural school may get 2/3 applicants.

CEO Response –with regard to primary recruitment for Trust schools it is found to be harder to recruit to the smaller schools than the larger schools. Recent recruitment at Ghost Hill and Taverham schools have had no issues, but at Old Buckenham it was harder. At Rocklands and Surlingham it was harder as well.

Cllr Land brought the public participation to an end and thanked everyone for attending and taking part, she asked the CEO from SET and the Chair of Governors to stay for item 7.1. It was explained that members of the public were welcome to stay for the PC response regarding the cons doc and observe for the remainder of business on the agenda but if they wished to leave they could and were asked to leave quickly and quietly. All members of the public left the meeting at that point.

7. TO CONSIDER PC RESPONSE TO SET CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

7.1 Questions from Council to SET/Governing Body

Cllr Land expressed her disappointment that there had been no communication to the PC regarding the consultation prior to it being made public. Also little engagement from the school and it was felt the Headteacher had not been very forthcoming, despite trying to make contact a few times. PC may have been able to help support school if they'd been more aware of the situation.

GB/CEO Response - Consultation document had to be issued to everyone at the same. GB thought that a report had been provided for the Annual Parish Meeting.

The Clerk clarified that an invitation had been sent to the Head@ email address inviting the Headteacher to attend and/or submit a report for the Annual Parish Meeting, but no response was received.

Cllr Land explained that the PC represents the parishioners in the village who look to the PC for support and to know what's going on.

Cllr Read put to the CEO that the Trust was predominantly involved with secondary schools until 2017. Cllr Read asked about the Director of Primary Improvement post and it was noted that an appointment to the post was made in September 2017 and then again in September 2019, the CEO was asked if there were gaps between the post holders. Cllr Read also asked if it was fair to expect the new postholder to pick up the role and deal improving education within two months.

GB Response – Role of Primary Improvement was a concern of Tivetshall GB and after meeting the CEO at Seething Primary the role of Primary Improvement Director was created. It was explained that the role of the post is to challenge the Headteacher and improve standards of core education in the school.

CEO Response – it was confirmed that there was no gap between postholders (Kelly Stokes) acted as Mentor for Tivetshall's Headteacher and she is now a Headteacher at another school in the Trust. The role includes being the Primary lead for educational standards and strategy. It was explained that it is the role of the GB to promote the school.

Cllr Read reiterated that the postholder needed more time to improve the educational standards in the school. It was noted that the postholder had previously worked in very different environments, surely it was reasonable to allow time to adjust.

GB response – It was stated that the postholder is still getting to know the school. Postholder has been an Ofsted Inspector and the GB thinks she has the right personal qualities and educational abilities for the role, which will be good for Tivetshall. The GB were said to be excited to be working with her.

CEO Comment – it was noted that she had also worked in Cambridgeshire and it was explained that lots of strategies have been put in place for Tivetshall school.

Chair of GB Comment – educationally the strategies are superior compared to previous years, as these cost money and financially it was hard before becoming an academy. The support from the Trust has meant that school staff have continued to benefit from training.

CEO Comment - the Trust undertakes liaison with the schools within the Trust but not community engagement.

Cllr Alleguen-Porter asked what evidence there was that pupils from Tivetshall will go to Burston? He also asked that if numbers dropped there then Burston could be in the same position as Tivetshall in a few years time.

GB Response – it was confirmed there was no evidence apart from some anecdotal evidence that the majority of parents who have been asked have indicated they will move their children to Burston.

Cllr Land commented that the amalgamation would mean a change to a school with a lower Ofsted rating and asked if parents would want their children to go to that school.

GB Response – those parents know Burston school and staff through joint activities, plus it is still a small school.

CEO Response – it was stated that standards have improved at Burston and once more the CEO reiterated the need to be careful with data from small numbers. Burston has recruited pupils quite well and there are now 34 children at Burston, word of mouth has worked.

Cllr Read asked how the Supply Teacher at Tivetshall had been acquired and whether it was through an agency with finders fees.

GB Response – it was stated that the supply teacher had been obtained through the school’s normal supply agency (QTS). The supply teacher has been through training via the trust and is paid the market rate.

Cllr Read asked who provides the meals and property maintenance for the school.

CEO Response – catering is by Norse and meals come from Old Buckenham Primary. Property Maintenance is provided by the Trust (central team estates manager).

Cllr Land thanked the CEO and Chair of Governors for attending.

The Chair of Governors said that the other governors sent their apologies.

It was agreed to suspend Standing Order 3X to allow the meeting to extend beyond 2 hours.

The meeting was briefly adjourned from 9.20 to 9.30pm.

7.2 To determine PC response to SET Consultation Document

Councillors unanimously agreed that the PC is supportive of the school and wholeheartedly supports parents and wants to see the school remain open. Adequate time needed to put a recovery plan in place for the school, to increase attendance and educational standards.

Negative comments made re Tivetshall school – recruitment of teacher – not clear that this is a county wide issue.

8. REPORT FROM CLERK AND COUNCILLORS

The Clerk apologies for not circulating the Clerk’s report prior to the meeting and presented councillors with copy of the report. Cllr Alleguen-Porter requested that the SAM data be reviewed in January.

9. TO CONSIDER QUOTE FOR VILLAGE GATEWAYS AND APPLICATION FOR PARISH PARTNERSHIP FUNDING

A quote had been received from Norfolk Highways to erect three village gateways, two at either end of the village on the B1134 and one on Rectory Road, approx 150m from the junction with the A140. It was outlined that the purpose of the gateways is to raise awareness of road users that they are entering a village, in the hope that it will encourage careful driving and appropriate speeds. It is hoped that having a gateway toward the top of Rectory Road will raise awareness of the fact that there is a 40mph speed limit before the 30mph limit is reached, this will benefit those living in the 40mph limit and make it safer for children and adults getting off buses and walking that stretch of road.

The total cost to include supply and installation of the gateways and signage is estimated as £7399.47, so the Parish Council share at 50% would be £3699.74, with a refund of the VAT which would further reduce the actual cost to the PC. The quotation allows for a contingency as a firm quotation had not yet been received from Glasdon. Council decided to proceed with the application. Clerk to submit application to Parish Partnership Team by deadline of 6th December.

10. TO RECEIVE PARISH PRECEPT SETTING PROCESS FOR 2020/21

Councillors received the Precept Process document from SNC and it was noted that the deadline for submitting the proposed precept was 19th January 2019, so a final decision would have to be made regarding the precept at the January PC meeting. The Clerk explained that this needed to be considered as part of the budget preparation for 2020/21.

11. TO DETERMINE RESPONSIBILITY FOR SETTING UP OF PARISH CHRISTMAS TREE AND LIGHTS

Cllr Land proposed that this is undertaken by the Village Hall Management Committee and the PC with support from parishioners. Cllr Alleguen-Porter to try to get volunteers for the morning of Sunday 1st December. The Clerk will arrange delivery a day or two before. Cllr Alleguen-Porter to measure diameter of hole so that The Clerk can ask the supplier to trim the trunk to size.

12. HIGHWAYS, FOOTPATHS AND MAINTENANCE MATTERS

Cllr Read reported that a parishioner had brought to her attention the problem of overhanging vegetation obstructing footpaths. It was agreed the Clerk would post on Facebook and include in CockCrow.

Cllr Powell gave a brief update on the survey of road signs he is undertaking to identify repairs or replacements required. It was agreed this would be considered at the January PC meeting. The Clerk did

comment that the Highways engineer had agreed that the posts on the 30mph sign on Rectory Road needed to be replaced as these were rusted through.

The Clerk asked if Council wished her to obtain quotes for the maintenance contracts ready for consideration in January. Council agreed and asked the Clerk to request quotes from Norse and J Crerar for consideration at January 2020 meeting.

The Clerk informed council that the sign post from Lodge Road was now in the PC possession. Cllr Alleguen-Porter to review and progress work to get it painted. The Clerk brought to Council's attention that some hedge planting had taken place on Lodge Road in the proximity of where the signpost originally stood.

13. TO CONSIDER PC RESPONSE TO NCC DIVISIONS CONSULTATION

Council agreed that their preference would be for the status quo to be maintained with regards to NCC divisions. Clerk to respond to consultation.

14. TO CONSIDER PC RESPONSE TO NORFOLK FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE CONSULTATION PROPOSALS

It was agreed that the response from PC would be that the amalgamation of the Fire and Rescue Service with the East Anglian Ambulance Trust would not be of benefit to the public (proposal 3). Clerk to respond to consultation.

15. TO CONSIDER PC RESPONSE TO SOUTH NORFOLK COUNCIL ROUGH SLEEPER SURVEY

It was agreed to submit a nil return. Clerk to respond.

16. TO CONSIDER PC RESPONSE TO EQUINOR SCOPING REPORT RELATING OFFSHORE WINDFARMS INFRASTRUCTURE

Council felt that more information was needed and agreed that councillors would investigate further and respond to the Clerk with any comments for submission.

17. TO CONSIDER NEXT STEPS RELATING TO DEVELOPMENT OF NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Cllr Powell reported on meeting and discussion with representatives of Starston PC. It was proposed that an emergency plan be developed and a survey undertaken of parishioners. The intention is that this will data will be used to inform the neighbourhood plan. The proposal is that the survey is undertaken by councillors going door to door and having conversations with parishioners.

The name of a consultant has been recommended by Starston PC to help with the Neighbourhood Plan and the PC can apply for £9k of funding plus another £6k of funding, this is something the consultant will do. It was proposed to go out with a survey for the emergency plan, possibly using Survey monkey. Cllrs Powell and Read to lead on this. Approved by Council.

18. TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

Councillors received notification that PFK Littlejohn Ltd had been appointed as the external auditor for Council and that further information would follow regarding the procedure council would have to follow (being a new council this is likely to be different to previous years).

19. TO NOTE CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

19.1 The invitation from the Mayor of Diss to a Carol concert was noted.

19.2 Correspondence from parishioner relating to Church Lane was noted. Clerk to respond and pick up actions as agreed by the previous council.

19.3 The contents of the NALC Bulletin were noted.

20. FINANCE

20.1 The balance of accounts and bank reconciliation for November was received and approved.

20.2 The proposed budget figures for 2020/21 were presented by The Clerk and will be brought to the January meeting to be finalised.

20.3 Council received confirmation of the second precept payment of £4900 received into bank.

20.4 No payments had been made since 9th October 2019.

20.5 The following payments were approved:

20.5.1. Clerk's monthly gross salary for period 01/11/19 to 30/11/19 of £321.75 plus additional hours £154.88, total £476.63

- 20.5.2.Clerk's reimbursement of expenses (office supplies) - £9.98
- 20.5.3.Clerk's reimbursement of mileage expenses - £20.25
- 20.5.4.Handyman's monthly gross salary for period 01/11/2019 to 30/11/19 of £87.99 (see item 21)
- 20.5.5.James Crerar, maintenance contract 3rrd quarter - £702.50
- 20.5.6.Mileage expenses reimbursement to Cllr Powell, attendance at Wereham - £45.45
- 20.5.7.Councillor expenses for new padlock for pavilion, Cllr Land - £12.99
- 20.5.8.Tivetshall Village Hall hire charges - £97.50
- 20.5.9.Royal British Legion, donation for Poppy Appeal Wreaths - £100
- 20.5.10.Norfolk Parish Training & Support, Keeping Up to Date Seminar - £48.00

21. STAFFING MATTERS (CONSIDER EXCLUDING THE PUBLIC)

All members of the public had left the meeting. The Clerk explained that she had only just received the timesheets prior to the meeting and the Handyman had explained that due to bad weather and changes in personal circumstances he had not been able to complete his full contracted hours in November. He has asked if his hours could be adjusted down for November to prevent the potential situation of being overpaid. Council agreed to this request and reiterated that as part of the recruitment process they had made it clear that some weeks there would not be any work during the winter months. Clerk to adjust hours and confirm new amount and instruct the payroll provider. It was noted that the amount to be paid would be less than that listed at 20.5.4

22. TO RECEIVE ANY URGENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION AND CARRY FORWARD TO THE NEXT MEETING

23. TO AGREE THE DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

The date of the next meeting was agreed as Wednesday, 15th January 2020 at 7.30pm

Meeting closed at 11:05pm

