

KNOWSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 2nd June 2020, held remotely via Zoom

Present: Cllr D Barrett, Cllr J Filmer-Bennett, Cllr R Howe, Cllr D Maidment, Cllr T Moore (Chairman), Cllr J Pomfret, Cllr J Stanbury

In attendance: W Sweet (Clerk), 2 x members of the public, C/Cllr J Yabsley, D/Cllr E Ley (part)

Before opening the meeting the Chairman outlined some procedures for the meeting; everyone was asked to mute themselves until called to speak and voting would be by show of hands or activating the thumbs icon. He announced that the meeting was being recorded for the purposes of assisting the clerk with writing up the minutes. The recording would not be published anywhere.

20/01 Apologies for absence – None

20/02 Declarations of Interest (re. matters appearing on this agenda) – None

20/03 Approve Minutes It was RESOLVED to accept the minutes of the meeting held on 25th February 2020, Cllr Moore proposed, Cllr Filmer-Bennett seconded, all agreed.

20/04 (a) It was RESOLVED to ratify decisions made via email on 24th March 2020 regarding powers delegated to the Clerk to make payments on behalf of the Council and to deal with legally required actions and responses – Cllr Moore proposed, Cllr Pomfret seconded, all agreed.

(b) It was CONFIRMED that when a planning application is received by the Council a remote Council meeting will be held to discuss it as discussions and decisions about a response to a planning application must always be made in a public forum and cannot be delegated.

20/05 Coronavirus

(i) **Update** – Due to the pandemic the Council had been unable to hold its usual Annual meeting in May when it would have confirmed/appointed councillors' roles. The Chairman said that all roles and responsibilities had been carried forward as it had been assumed that councillors would carry on in their existing roles. If any councillor was not happy with this, or their role, they were asked to raise it so it could go on the next meeting's agenda. All councillors indicated that they were happy to carry on in their current roles. The clerk said that the Knowstone website had recently been updated with councillors' roles and responsibilities and asked that all councillors have a look at it to make sure it was correct.

(ii) **Assistance** – The clerk gave a brief report. A number of parishioners had volunteered to help with shopping etc. if needed and a list of volunteers had been drawn up. Only one request for help had been received at the beginning of the lockdown. A lot of assistance was being given within the parish by neighbours and friends with no involvement from the Parish Council needed.

20/06 Public Questions (limited to 10 minutes) Standing Orders were suspended.

(a) A member of the public asked to speak under agenda item 11.

(b) A member of the public congratulated C/Cllr Yabsley for the repairs to the road from the Log Cabin to Rackenford but the road from the humped back bridge back to the Log Cabin is now getting bad as well. C/Cllr Yabsley noted the additional work needed. He reported that Highways had not been particularly active or prepared in getting socially distanced work organised. Tarmac has been a big issue as the process of making it is difficult to do in a socially distanced way. Some emergency work and additional work has been undertaken. He will pass on the thanks expressed to the Highways Department.

(c) A query had been raised by Wendy Vigus on behalf of Moors Management Association addressed to Cllr Filmer-Bennett and Cllr Moore about an incident in January when some fencing between Haresdown and the A361 had been damaged, asking whether the Council had been made aware of that incident by the Police and how she could find out more information about it. A cow had recently gone through the gap in the damaged fence onto the A361 and she had lodged an urgent request with DCC to repair the damage. They had undertaken to renew the fencing, which is not strong enough all along the moor, but it has not been done yet. C/Cllr Yabsley said that this was probably due to lack of available operatives during the pandemic. It was agreed that Cllr Filmer-Bennett would reply to Wendy Vigus' queries and copy in C/Cllr Yabsley and the local Highways Officer. He would also report the damage on DCC's reporting system.

Standing Orders were resumed.

20/07 It was RESOLVED to adopt the Addendum to Standing Orders to reflect temporary changes in meeting procedures during the COVID pandemic – previously circulated, Cllr Moore proposed, Cllr Filmer-Bennett

Approved

seconded, all agreed.

20/08 The Chairman had received a complaint from a parishioner regarding the non-removal of the old cabin at Sidemoor Picnic Area which is an eyesore as well as being potentially dangerous. Cllr Filmer-Bennett said that it is a DCC issue as it is their land. There is also the situation of two camper vans being parked there long term. It was **AGREED** that the Council writes a letter to Richard Sables at DCC Highways to formally request the removal of the abandoned vehicle from the Sidemoor Picnic Area, proposed Cllr Filmer-Bennett, seconded Cllr Moore, all agreed.

20/09 Police Update – A resident had raised the issue of an orange van that had been parked overnight on several occasions on Haresdown Moor during the lockdown. When reported to the Police by the Chairman they had taken no action but had sent several unhelpful emails. Cllr T Moore said that he felt that in hindsight the route should have been that he or a member of the Council asked the occupants of the vehicle to politely move and if they would not then to report it to the Police who might have taken more interest in the incident. He thought it might be useful in the future for a leaflet to be produced by the Moors Management Association clearly stating the position regarding overnight parking etc. on the Moor which could be given out in a similar situation. Disappointment in the police’s reaction was expressed by several councillors. Cllr Barrett felt that it should not be down to a councillor to tell a private individual to move on and that the police had side-stepped the problem. C/Cllr Yabsley said it would be totally appropriate for the Parish Council to write to the OPCC about the issue. It was **AGREED** that the Clerk would write a letter about this issue, on behalf of the Council to the Police & Crime Commissioner, which Cllr Moore would assist in drafting.

20/10 Finance

a) It was **RESOLVED** to ratify payments the following payments made since the last Council meeting on 26th February, proposed Cllr Moore, seconded Cllr Howe, all agreed.

W Sweet (Clerk’s pay)	£187.75
Website Development Ltd	£234.00 (incl VAT £39.00)
Wendy Vigus (website updating)	£51.00
DALC membership renewal	£56.62
Alison Marshall (internal audit fee)	£100.00
W Sweet (Clerk’s pay & expenses)	£278.53
Came & Company (insurance renewal)	£218.00
ZOOM annual subscription (50% discount)	£71.94 (incl VAT £11.99)
Richard Grant Memorials (Beaples Stone lettering)	£114.48 (incl VAT 19.08)
ICO renewal	£35.00 (via direct debit)

b) The receipt of £2,038.00 on 30.04.20 from NDC being first 50% of precept payment was **NOTED**.

c) To discuss payment of DALC’s invoice for five participants at the Planning Seminar on 16th March. Correspondence regarding this had been circulated and the clerk briefly outlined the situation that resulted in only two councillors attending the seminar. One councillor did not attend as he was unwell and two councillors did not attend as a direct result of following government instructions about not undertaking any non-essential social contact. Disappointment was expressed in DALC’s inflexible approach regarding their cancellation policy in these unusual circumstances and it was **RESOLVED** to pay for three participants, Cllr Moore proposed, Cllr Barrett seconded, all agreed.

d) It was **RESOLVED** to agree the accounts for year ending 31st March 2019 (previously circulated), proposed Cllr Howe, seconded Cllr Moore, all agreed.

e) It was **RESOLVED** to complete and submit Certificate of Exemption regarding this year’s External Audit, proposed Cllr Moore, seconded Cllr Filmer-Bennett, all agreed.

f) It was **RESOLVED** to agree Section 1 of the Annual Audit Return and for the Chairman to sign it at a later date when safe to do so, proposed Cllr Moore, seconded Cllr Howe, all agreed.

g) It was **RESOLVED** to agree Section 2 of the Annual Audit Return and for the Chairman to sign it at a later date when safe to do so, proposed Cllr Moore, seconded Cllr Pomfret, all agreed.

20/11 Beaples Stone area – to discuss and agree maintenance. Cllr Pomfret reported on his recent visit to the Beaples Stone area when he checked the work that Richard Grant Memorials had recently undertaken renewing the lettering on the information stone before the invoice was paid. He was dismayed at the state of site which has grass

growing on the gravel which covers the membrane, now 2 foot tall. The grass could be pulled up quite easily and would probably take one person about 4 hours to do. There would be the problem of disposing of the debris. The work could be done by volunteers or the Council could pay someone to do the work. A member of the public suggested that the Council could use the services of Bob and Matt Ridd who have been recently engaged to work in the churchyard and the Parish Hall car park and he could pass their contact details to Cllr Pomfret. They could clear the site and then maintain it at regular intervals. It was AGREED that Cllr Pomfret would obtain a quote from Matt Ridd which he would circulate to all councillors via email and a decision would be taken by email whether to proceed or not.

20/12 Planning

(i) **Report regarding alleged breach of planning reported to NDC Enforcement Department re. land at Crossside Hill.** Cllr Howe gave a brief update – a new entrance onto the road had been created, a stable built and stone track laid without planning permission. An NDC Enforcement office has visited the site but no action taken yet, as far as he was aware. Cllr Pomfret reported that in the last couple of weeks fencing had been installed creating 4 or 5 small areas with a pig house in each. Two other shelters were in the process of being constructed but it was not clear whether these were going to be permanent or moveable. D/Cllr Ley was asked to comment and he said that there is a problem with enforcement law itself as it is discretionary and also any action taken has to be in the public interest. The Enforcement department is completely separate to the Planning Department and any action will depend on what else they have got going on. If the owner has 5 or more hectares and the ground is being used for agricultural purposes there is nothing that can be done but if the land is being used for leisure or equestrian purposes then that would be a different matter. Cllr Ley said that if KPC had no joy with this matter in the next few weeks he would be happy to contact the Enforcement Case Officer. It was RESOLVED that the Council would write to the Enforcement Case Officer about the continuing work on the property and to ask what action was going to be taken as well as D/Cllr Ley having a word with the Officer on behalf of KPC, Cllr Howe proposed, Cllr Stanbury seconded, all agreed. D/Cllr Ley requested that the Clerk forwards the Case Number relating to this.

(ii) **Oaklands Poultry Farm** - Note outcome of appeal. Cllr Howe outlined what had happened since August 2019 when the appeal had first been submitted. The applicant has been unsuccessful in his appeal and will have to remove the buildings and concrete pads but NDC will have to pay some of his costs. Cllr Ley explained that this was because there had been insufficient evidence supplied by the Council, due to changes in Planning personnel, to back up the reasons for refusal relating to the affordable housing viability. Overall it had been a good result for local people and Cllr Howe and D/Cllr Ley were congratulated by the Chairman for their involvement in this matter. Going forward D/Cllr Ley felt that the big issue will be the enforcement situation as all small councils are suffering financial difficulty, due to the virus crisis, which may impact their action.

20/13 Business at the Chairman's discretion – none from the Chairman but he invited C/Cllr Yabsley and D/Cllr Ley to comment if they wished. C/Cllr Yabsley said that things had been quite constrained but he had had a couple of socially distanced meetings with Highways officers and more would be happening going forward. He is expecting more work to happen as there is a lot of work in the programme and money waiting to be spent but there had been problems with the tarmac and contractors not being prepared to go out to do the work and he hoped that would now change. He has received a lot of information – Cabinet Member briefings and he will see what he could forward to the Clerk for circulation to Parish Councillors. There is a lot going on but activity is mostly concentrating on the Coronavirus and recovery from it although ordinary work needs to get done as well. The District Council's predicted shortfall is £3.9m by August - it has received £1,018,000 from the Government which brings it back to £2.9m. It has about £1.3m in reserves. If it has to raid its allocated reserves capital funds then projects will stop. It is hoped that following recent lobbying of the local MP that there will be more help from Government. The planned re-opening of the council's car parks will help the financial situation. D/Cllr Ley said that in due course and when appropriate regarding the potential enforcement at Blackerton, East Anstey PC may be in need of some back up from KPC in the form of a letter. Regarding the District Council finances it has incurred additional expenses for example having to employ agency staff for refuse/recycling collections.

20/14 It was AGREED that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 30th June at 7.30 p.m. and thereafter revert to the usual pattern of monthly on the fourth Tuesday of the month.

The meeting closed at 20.24.