

Minutes of a Meeting of Elkstone Parish Council
8.00 p.m., Wednesday 13th January 2016, in Elkstone Village Hall

Present: Mssrs. Hobbs (Chair) Collins, Cooch, Luck, Muschamp; Mrs Eyre (Clerk)

1. Minutes of the previous Meeting (9th December 2015) were accepted and signed.

2. Matters arising: there were none.

3. Finance

3.1 RFO's Year to Date report of income and expenditure was received with thanks.

3.2 Precept to be set for 2016 – 7 – Mr. Cooch tabled a budget forecast, which included probably necessary increases in Council spending, and was considered in detail.

To accept budget forecast and set a precept of £4000.00 for 2016 - 17

Proposed: Mr. Luck; seconded: Mr. Collins; carried nem con.

Agreed: Clerk to place paragraph in Elkstone Newsletter inviting informal approaches for taking on Clerkship.

3.3 To consider renewal of CPRE membership, annual subscription of £36.00 due 6th January – Proposed: Mr.Cooch: seconded: Mr. Collins; carried nem con.

A cheque for £36.00 was written, signed and will be sent.

CPRE is also offering to send 'Fieldwork' by e-mail instead of hard copy, Councillors agreed e-mail would be preferable.

3.4 To consider a S.137 donation of £240.00 to EPCC for churchyard maintenance:

Proposed: Mr.Cooch: seconded: Mr.Muschamp; carried nem con.

A cheque for £240.00 was written, signed and will be hand-delivered.

3.5 To consider audit arrangements – Mr. Cooch spoke to this item, pointing out that if EPC decides to opt out of the new audit scheme, it would have to find, appoint and pay its own external auditor.

That EPC should not opt out of audit scheme:

Proposed: Mr.Cooch: seconded: Mr. Muschamp; carried nem con.

3.6 To consider choice of pension provider - Mr. Cooch spoke to this item, summarizing pros and cons of the three possible providers. Points of note were -

- Private sector providers of defined contribution schemes, such as Aviva, would be very expensive for a small council having at most two pensions to provide;

- the Local Government defined benefit scheme is also very expensive, with huge penalties were the council to pull out at a later date;

- NEST has a contribution of 1% in the first year, which will later rise to 3%, management and running costs of this scheme have been capped by Government.

The seminar which Mr. Cooch attended in November recommended approaching a pension provider to set up a scheme, against the possibility of need.

The staging date is 1st August, and 2nd January 2017 is the deadline for receipt by the Pension Regulator of a Declaration of Compliance.

To approach NEST:

Proposed: Mr.Cooch: seconded: Mr. Collins; carried nem con.

4. Possible Parish Housing Needs Survey

This was debated at length. Mr. Hobbs also took points from the floor.

Notwithstanding a Parish Council's proper function to have due regard to the needs of its parishioners, general areas of concern were –

-That the allotments should be saved as they are as a parish amenity, but this land has now been identified as an obvious place for a CDC-led build.

-That the results of a PHNS might open the floodgates to building rather than stemming any tide.

-That any affordable housing would have to be high density, and/or include market housing, in order to be viable.

Mr. Hobbs asked for a vote of Councillors in favour of asking GRCC to conduct a Parish Housing Needs Survey; there were no votes in favour, four votes against and one abstention.

No further action at this time.

5. Planning

5.1 Proposed new decking and porch, function room of The Green Dragon – Councillors had no objections.

6. Survey of EPC's physical assets – there is no change from last year.

7. Correspondence from the Parish – there was none.

8. Other correspondence – has been put into circulation.

9. Meetings

9.1 Meeting re A 419 road noise nuisance, Down Ampney, 29th January – this has been set up by District Councillor Hodgkinson, and Chairs of local Parish Councils invited; Mr Hobbs will attend.

9.2 PCSOs' NCG 9th March, Daglingworth (postponed from 4th Feb) - Mr. Collins will attend.

10. AOB

10.1 An issue of non-compliance with planning permission conditions at Westwood House was raised – to consider at the March meeting.

10.2 Clerk queried if Councillors who wanted their own copy of the 2017 Electoral Register had now applied for it. It appeared not, Clerk to res-forward relevant e-mail from CDC

11. Public Session – no further points were raised.

12. Date of Next Meeting - Wednesday 23rd March

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.15 pm.