**DRAFT**

**PARISH COUNCIL OF BISHOP WILTON**

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council (PC) held on Monday 16th March 2020 at 19.30 hrs in the Bishop Wilton Village Hall**

The meeting was chaired by Cllrs Young and Sumpner. In the absence of a Clerk the meeting was recorded.

Present: Cllr Young, Wilson, Hall, Rigby, Rodmell and Sumpner. Eight members of the Public were in attendance.

**OPEN FORUM**

Cllr Young – wished everybody good evening and explained the unusual seating arrangement was due to the of the threat of coronavirus. He went on to say that the virus’s development would have an effect on future meetings. He opened the forum.

A resident spoke: making comment on the new Councillor she expressed concern that he had, in previous Open Forum, allegedly accused the whole council of corruption without producing any evidence (Note to clarify: all references to corruption here are not of financial irregularities but referencing the fact that Cllr Rigby, some of his friends and acquaintances were rejected for co-option by the PC without explanation.) and on another occasion that he had told the Clerk to shut up. She went on to say that in the best interests of the Parish she was not particularly happy being represented by such a councillor.

She wanted to direct a second question to Ward Councillor Rudd, he was not present: when a single nomination is put forward for election to council was the name made public? In this case had it been done so she would have objected.

A second member of the public intervened to put forward an explanation of the election process.

The Chair summarised the first speakers point saying that he thought what was being said was that if the candidate had been rejected by the PC previously due to making an accusation of corruption and then being rude to the Clerk should they be eligible to serve on the PC.

Cllr Rigby asked to speak regarding the accusations, saying he would like to get witnesses to the contrary and felt sufficiently strongly he would categorically swear on his daughter’s life he had not made such accusations.

Cllr Hall recalled that at a previous meeting she asked, the then Mr Paul Rigby, if he and others were accusing the PC of corruption and he answered in the affirmative. This was one reason she had previously resigned from the PC.

Cllr Rigby reaffirmed his willingness to bring witnesses to counter this statement.

Cllr Hall asked Cllr Rigby if he disputed that there was this unpleasantness going on.

Cllr Rigby agreed that there had been friction on a number of occasions.

Cllr Hall asked Councillor Rigby what he hoped to bring to the PC to reduce friction in the future.

Cllr Rigby replied that he would make a statement at the appropriate time.

Cllr Hall thought it was not right or justifiable that PC members were put under duress by unsupported accusations.

Cllr Rigby said it wasn’t for him to control others’ minds, members should make their own judgement, he would make his statement and was present at the PC to make a difference. He felt that if those present kept whipping up a frenzy no progress would be made.

The first member of the public who had spoken objected to the last phrase. She said she could not understand why an issue that appeared to have arisen from the cutting of the village greens last year was continuing to cause such acrimony (Note: this may or may not have been the original cause of disquiet).

Continuing she asked Cllr Rigby if, in an Open Forum, he had told the Clerk to shut up while she was presenting advise from ERNLLCA to the meeting.

Cllr Rigby then asked the ex-Parish Clerk, who was in the Open Forum, if he had told her to shut up. She replied that he had said, stop talking like that. To which Cllr Rigby shock his head.

Cllr Wilson confirmed he had heard what Cllr. Rigby had said to the Clerk on the first occasion.

Cllr Rigby stated he was not going to sit and listen to accusations but remained in his seat.

Allocated Forum time expired - Cllr Young closed the discussion.

**Meeting started at 19.40 hrs**

**1 Welcome and Apologies**

There were no apologies. Cllr Young welcomed Cllr Rigby to serve on the PC.

Cllr Rigby made a statement. He thanked the Clerk for her work behind the scenes and in preparing full documentation for the PC.

Saying he did not wish to dwell on the past but it was clear that the former Clerk and four councillors had not wished to co-opt him previously. He said he was present to serve parishioners. He was looking forward to working with the PC and building on the work already done and to promote openness and transparency. Laying stress on his previous achievements he pledged to do his-bit.

**2 Final payment of clerk’s salary**

This was made, cheque No. 000069 for £312.37.

Cllr Young paid tribute to the ex-Clerk saying her work was excellent, she had been the best Clerk he had worked with. She was prompt and efficient. He thought that her resignation was as a direct consequence of the new Cllrs previous behaviour (Note the PC clerk had resigned last year but had kindly agreed to assist the PC until the previous meeting).

Cllr Young said he had worked without a Clerk before and it had proved very difficult, almost impossible. With that in mind he resigned as Chairman and moved to elect a new chair.

Cllr Hall proposed that Cllr Sumpner chair, this was seconded by Cllr Wilson. The proposal was accepted - unanimous.

Cllr Young welcomed Cllr Sumpner to the Chair saying he hoped we could all work through this difficulty and find a Clerk as good as Samantha O’Connor. Reminding the meeting that business was being recorded he passed the Chair to Cllr Sumpner

Cllr. Sumpner moved for a Vice Chair. Cllr Rodmell was proposed by Cllr Hall and seconded by Cllr Wilson. Cllr Rodmell accepted and was elected unanimously.

The PC archive documents and keys were passed to Cllr Sumpner for safekeeping.

**3 Declarations of Interest**

None.

**4 Minutes from Previous Meeting**

Cllr Young advised the meeting of one change to these. This was made and the minutes signed as a true and accurate record. Cllrs Hall and Wilson to post copies on PC notice boards.

**5 Matters Arising**

Cllr Young advised Cllr Sumpner on the sequence of proceedings for which he was thanked.

Cllr Young, re pothole, ID item 135446, Clerk had sent relevant form back to ERYC.

Cllr Hall co-option: clerk has sent back the relevant forms back to ERYC.

ERYC has confirmed the potholes on Belthorpe Lane and Thistle Hill had been repaired but on PC inspection the work had been done badly.

Cllr Rudd to advise the PC on the response from Paul Tripp on the expanded highway issues.

School photos for the notice board: Cllr Young had received the draft from the graphics company and they were not of the required standard. He has returned them to graphic company for improvements.

Cllr Wilson said he now had a written quote from Peter Slater for the roundabout, £400 + vat. Passed to the Chair. Cllr Sumpner checked that as this work been approved previously. Peter Slater can be instructed to complete.

Internet Banking, Cllr Black had provided a progress report, he had advised the bank of signatories about ten day ago by email.

Cllr young said the street light by the vicarage was still not working – issue requires chasing.

Phone Box: Cllr Young reported, Steve Brigham has looked at the task and is in the process of submitting a quote, we need two more quotations for this work.

Cllr Young reported the request to move the bus stop benches back from the road has been passed to Cllr Rudd for ERYC action.

**17 Community Issues**

Cllr Young requested that Community Issues were brought forward, Cllrs Sumpner and Rodmell agreed.

Complaint about the condition of the village green outside 40 Main Street – Cllr Young had been to see the owner of the business and he has confirmed that he will make good the damage and put plastic reinforcing into the grass surface. He will also approach the pub to ask if his staff can park in the pub car park.

Vale Crescent Parking - Cllr Hall had not spoken further with the residents of Vale Crescent as she and the complainant had agreed that all that could be done had been done to ensure the refuse lorry could pass the parked cars.

Operation London Bridge – Previously agreed to pass on to the PCC, Cllr Young has spoken to the Vicar and she is more than happy to take that on.

**6 Accounts**

Current payments approved, Budget to be set for next year. Cllr Sumpner to move for next meeting.

**7 Correspondence**

Various emails have come from the ERYC and until the very last days our ex-clerk has been forwarding these to the PC.

A statement from Cllr Black was read out by Cllr young, “I have over the last few days considered my position as to my future commitment to the Parish Council. Over the past seven and a half years I have enjoyed working in a team that has been very successful in what it has achieved. Although from time to time there have been differences in views, they have not affected the working relationships within the team.

Sadly, in view of the unacceptable conduct by members of the public when the Parish Council was unjustly abused and the Parish Clerk in particular subjected to considerable vitriol, I am unable to accept that one of the key perpetrators will now sit among us. Do we pretend that nothing happened? I don’t think so. The original decision by the Parish Council in not to co-opt the individual concerned was vindicated by his subsequent behaviour during the open forums. This is not a sound foundation on which to build good working relationships. I therefore deeply regret that I must submit my resignation with immediate effect. I will also inform the Neighbourhood Watch organiser as well as the Pocklington and Market Weighton Crime Reduction Panel of my decision. I also wish to place on record my sincere thanks to Samantha for all her great work and the way in which she has conducted the affairs of the Parish. Kind regards, Trevor Black.”

Cllr Hall expressed thanks for Cllr Black previous work, this was supported by Cllrs Young and Rodmell.

Cllr Young stated that Cllr Black had worked tirelessly for the PC. He continued, saying he supported and endorsed every single one of Cllr Black’s words and could not have put it better himself. Especially as he thought that Cllr Rigby in his first meeting had basically accused members of the PC of not being truthful.

Cllr Rigby spoke, saying the comments were all about him but he wished it noted that there had been several more people in past open forum making comments critical of the PC. He was disappointed.

Cllr Young, had been disappointed at Cllr Rigby’s past behaviour which implied that PC members were liars.

Cllr Rigby denied that he had said this.

Cllr Wilson disagreed saying that in this meeting Cllr Rigby had told the PC members that they were all wrong in their assertions about his statements.

Cllr Young stated that he had served 13 ½ years eight as chairman and he had loved every minute but he was not prepared to work under the present conditions. He resigned from the PC.

Cllr Sumpner stated he was very sorry to hear of the resignation. He thanked Cllr Young for his service to the PC.

Cllr Hall said Cllr Young had been very much appreciated, there was general agreement.

Cllr Wilson addressed the chair seeking to make a statement.

Cllr Wilson: “I joined Bishop Wilton Parish Council in May 2016, which gives me nearly four years’ experience at this. I’m very proud of the work we have achieved as a team, quietly and efficiently, to the benefit of the whole Parish. This is partly due, in my opinion, to what was our greatest asset which was our Clerk Samantha O’Connor who performed her duties highly efficiently and who’s communication skills were exceptional. You’ll note that I use the past tense, was, this is because Samantha is no longer our Clerk and the reason she has resigned is because of the abuse that was delivered by a member of the public in the Open Forum of the Council over a period of months. Samantha indeed tells me that in the first meeting that that occurred she was visible shaking with nerves so much she could hardly hold her pen to take the minutes, and that is fact”. The ex-Clerk acknowledged this. “Doing her job of work, she felt so intimidated by a bully that she resigned. For that to happen is deplorable. The perpetrator now sits elected to the Council, I add on the Council despite the Council previously deciding not to co-opt him because of his previous intimidating behaviour. Alongside two other colleagues I refuse to sit alongside that individual because of the irreputable damage he has rained on the Council and for that reason, regrettably, I resign with immediate effect”.

Cllr Hall thanked Cllr Wilson for his work for the PC.

The council was wished well by retiring Cllrs Young, Wilson and they and the Ex-Clerk left the meeting.

Cllr Hall informed the Chair that she had a clash of meetings and wished to move on to her next appointment with Riding for The Disabled. Cllr Sumpner approved her departure.

Cllr Rigby attempted to engage Cllr Hall with a question about the developing COVID 19 situation as she was leaving the meeting but Cllr Hall was already departing.

Letter from ERYC Service Manager, Taskforce & Environmental Enforcement re Village Taskforce Walkabout day scheduled for 21st July 2020. Letter refers to Parish and requests an email confirming who the Parish representative will be along with telephone. Chair to respond. PC to identify issues to be reported.

Chair stated he would contact ERYC regarding the appointment of a new Clerk and he would approach the Bank to amend signatories to reflect the changes in PC members.

Cllr Rigby stated he could put a word out through Linked-In the professional social media page saying it was a modern way to advertise for work and jobs. He said he wondered if and he was happy to contact Simon’s team (it is assumed he is referring to ERYC Electoral Services) to see if something could be put on Linked and shared out to spread the word.

Cllr Rodmell said it was a possibility, he agreed, but his preference, in the first instance, would be to contact the Clerks of adjacent Parishes to see if one could take on an extra PC. If that was the case, he thought that would be the best thing for the PC.

Cllr. Sumpner thought that the best idea and would be to leave it with Cllr Rodmell’s suggestion for the time being.

Cllr Rigby said with his HR background he could spread the net.

Cllr Sumpner said he would contact ERYC on this as a Clerk who is familiar with their systems would be preferable.

Cllr Rodmell agreed.

**8 Ward Councillors Report**

There was no ward councillor present.

**9 Planning Applications**

It was agreed that no comment be made on applications 20/001419 PLF and 20/04777. Having been visited previously by councillors and discussed at the last meeting.

**10 Appointment of PC Representative for Village Hall Committee**

Their AGM date had been set, Cllr Sumpner would like to attend as PC rep. in the first instance. Cllr Rigby said he knew most of the people and he would be happy to take the position going forward. Cllr Sumpner said as the PC was looking for greater diversity it would be good to have a fresh face and he would take this on. There were no objections.

**11 Approval of Meeting Schedule for 2020/21**

This was accepted as printed subject likely changes or cancellations forced by COVID 19. It was not clear when or how the next meeting would take place.

Cllr Rigby suggested Skype or social media be used. Cllr Sumpner said initial communication from the Chair would be made using email.

Cllr Rodwell agreed but repeated we do need to adopt some way of communicating.

**12 Adoption of Co-option Guidance**

Chair referred to the guidance document presented at the previous meeting and invited Cllr Rigby’s thoughts on the subject of providing feedback.

Cllr. Rigby welcomed this saying it was his area of professional expertise. He had researched fellow HR Professionals across the UK for material. He also had a conversation that very morning with ERYC and said we were aligned with the practice guide. (Note Cllr had not been welcomed to the council until this evening and had not been asked by the PC to make Contact with ERYC).

Cllr Sumpner asked who Cllr Rigby spoke to at ERYC being, concerned that approaches to ERYC could be duplicated.

Cllr Rigby said he spoke to just a clerk and his enquiry was just about navigating to the right page. His question was had there been / is there an official document that is used or are they merely best practice.

Cllr. Rodmell agreed that we had to continue to look at this area when considering co-options.

After further discussion Cllr Rigby was asked to research and present a possible draft feedback guide to the next meeting to be looked at alongside the draft Co-option Guidance.

**13 Dog-fouling at Bishop Wilton School**

Cllrs reported further instances of dog fouling in Bishop Wilton, the Church steps, Main Street and the Beck among them. Cllr Rigby suggested specific dog-bins could be an answer. In the short-term word of mouth to remind dog owners of their duties and a notice in the Parish Pump will be tried. Dog Warden to be consulted. Cllr Rodmell to undertake this.

**14 Town and Parish Charted Survey**

With the loss of Clerk and councillors resignations it was not immediately obvious at what stage the PC was with this survey or what had been done regarding the village walkabout. Chair and Vice Chair to look at handover paperwork.

ERYC Village Taskforce Walkabout, Cllr Rigby made suggestion that more could be done by the Parish e.g. has had happened with beck cleaning. Cllr Rodmell spoke of the work carried out by rehabilitated offenders.

PC to identify issues that require addressing including outlying areas.

**15 Neighbourhood Watch**

Cllr Black had continued to circulate material up to this meeting but with his regrettable resignation Cllr Rodmell agreed to take on this role.

**16 Public Meeting: Village Green Initiative**

Date to be reconsidered given the national situation regarding coronavirus. The PC will pick-up on the good work done previously by lost Cllrs. Information and ideas still welcome.

**17 Community Issues**

Dealt with earlier.

**18 Date of Next Meeting**

The next date would include the Annual Parish Meeting 19.00 hrs. PC Meeting 19.30 on 20th April 2020. Chair to advise alternative in the likely event of COVID 19 shutdown.

**Meeting Closed –** 20.45 hrs.

Signed as a true and correct record\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_