**ALBY WITH THWAITE PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 12 December 2017 at 7.30 pm**

**At Alby Horse Shoes Inn, Cromer Road, Erpingham, NR11 7E**

**Present:** Chairman Barry Fitzpatrick, Vice Chairman Will Cutts,

Councillors James Buchan, Christine Yeomans, Sheila Goodley and Alistair MacKinnon

Clerk Rosalyn Dawson

**4 Members of the public**

**1. Apologies for Absence:** Councillor Stephen Jordan

**2. Minutes of Parish Council Meeting on 19 September** were unanimously agreed.

**3. Matters arising:** None

**4. Declarations of interest for items on the Agenda:** Councillor Christine Yeomans declared an interest on the Planning Application PF/17/1758: Thwaite Barn, Thwaite Common and retired briefly from the meeting whilst Councillor made a decision.

**5(i) Statement of Accounts @ 30.11. 2017:**

Community a/c start balance: £3,689.39 @ 30.9.17

Income: Receipts = Nil

Expenditure: £ Nil

Community a/c current balance: £3,689.39

Premium a/c current balance: £252.22

**£3,941. 61 c/f**

Councillor James Buchen announced that he wished his name to be removed as a signatory. This matter was deferred to the next PC meeting.

**(ii) Clerk’s Salary and reimbursement of expenses:**

Salary (gross) **£357.00**; Stationery expense reimbursements **£41.93 plus £22.64** (carried forward from previous quarter)**.** Councillors agreed the costs and two cheques were raised, £357.00 for salary and £64.57 for stationery reimbursements.

**(iii) Report back on quotation for computer equipment (Softcraft)**

The Clerk reported back to Councillors. She had contacted Softcraft and spoke to the proprietor, explaining that Councillors were satisfied with the specification and cost of the computer and this had been agreed at the last meeting. However the cost of the Office 2016 Home and Business software at £185 and setting up the computer at £65 per hour (2 ½ hours plus VAT) were extra costs the Parish Council thought a little excessive bearing in mind the Parish Council’s financial position. This was sympathetically understood.

**(iv)** The Clerk presented the costs as follows:

Laptop: £620 + VAT of £124 = £744.00

Software: £185 + VAT of £37 = £222.00

Setup costs: 2 ½ hours at £65 + VAT = £195.00

**Total £1,161.00**

**(v) Word Press Training**

The Clerk reported back to the Council the details she had received via an email from Helen Carrier at NALC. The clerk expressed concern at the cost of the training at £55 per hour plus VAT (£66) especially since the training would be a remote exercise via the internet and not face-to-face tutorial. Councillors responded questioning other means of getting the Word Press Training for the website. It was suggested that a previous Councillor who had received the training steps in. However since the Councillor in question had retired through ill-health, it was not thought appropriate to approach him. The Councillors agreed in principle the training as other means were exhausted and two hours was considered appropriate.

**(vii) Funding from the Transparency Funding**

This item was brought forward on the Agenda since expenditure was being discussed. The Clerk informed Councillors that there was an earmarked figure of £439 in the accounts for the purchase of a computer and scanner. The previous clerk had applied to the Transparency Fund but she had subsequently retired and the computer and scanner had not been purchased. A Councillor had received Word Press training at a cost of £40 as part of the funding received. The Clerk reminded Councillors that the current system of using her own IT equipment - a desktop computer and scanner was not considered suitable procedure and that bespoke IT equipment (specifically for Parish Council administration) was required. The need for a laptop (portable IT equipment) was necessary on site if the Parish Council intended to publicly present Planning Applications during meetings.

The Chairman and Clerk had previously discussed applying for funding to assist with costs and asked Councillors for a decision on the following:

* That the residual figure of **£305** be applied for. {This is the difference between the already earmarked figure (£439)and a new laptop (£744)}.
* That the cost of 2 hours **(£132)** for website training be applied for.

Councillors unanimously agreed to apply for the funding outlined above from the Transparency Scheme.

**(vi) Pocket sized Good Councillor Guide**

Councillors agreed this funding and one Councillor requested ownership.

**6. Scheduling Parish Council Meetings annually**

The Clerk reported that she had offered Councillors either, 20th or 21st March 2018 and all Councillors are able to make either of these dates. The Clerk requested an interim meeting before the year end meeting to deal specifically with the Financial Regulations. The reaction was a little unresponsive but the Clerk explained that this was an item raised as priority in the Internal Audit Report and was reluctant to leave this matter unsettled at this point in the calendar. Councillors agreed and February 21st 2018 was agreed.

**7. Budgeting for 2018/19**

The Clerk presented a document to demonstrate how projected expenditure could affect the Councils bank balance. The Chairman said that the limited funds the Council possessed had suppressed their ability to do more in the community and this was clearly evident when seeking legal advice and Training. Computer equipment was required to be compliant with legislation and obtaining it with current available funds would prove a difficult challenge.

**8. Setting the Precept for the forthcoming year 2018/19**

Councillors recognised thedemands placed upon the Parish Council. Year 2017/18 was the first in fifteen years the Council had increased the Precept and this was only by £100 to £2,500. Having insufficient funds to operative effectively was proving too restrictive and the situation had gradually deteriorated. The Chairman proposed increasing the Precept to £3,000. Councillors agreed that this was a necessary and positive move and this was carried unanimously.

**9. Standing Orders (for decision)**

Councillors unanimously agreed the Standing Orders for adoption by the Parish Council.

**10. The Old Snooker Hall, Town Green, Alby with Thwaite**

The Chairman and Vice Chairman reported on this matter: Several members of the community were of the belief that the Parish Council had a vested interest in the premises and that they were meant for the benefit of the Parish. To try and establish ownership the Chairman and Vice Chairman approached available sources to gain information but each contact had drawn a negative response. Archive information held by the Clerk revealed some positive leads but they proved insufficient as evidence. The Chairman said the Parish Council had sent a letter to the Solicitors, Hayes & Storr to log the Parish Council’s perceived claims and this was presented at the Auction.

**11. Planning Applications:**

**PF/17/1337:** Installation of drainage tank, additional site cabin for a hand car wash (retrospective) at Alby Filling Station, Cromer Road, Erpingham.

There was no objection to this application.

**PF/17/1758:** Use of barn as annexe/holiday let (retrospective) at Thwaite Barn, Thwaite Common, Erpingham, NR11 7QG

There was no objection to this application.

**PF/17/1974:** Erection of outbuilding (retrospective) at Flint Cottage, Alby Hill, Alby, NR11 7PJ. This application was included on the Agenda although it was deemed invalid due to access. The application was not available to view on the Idoxpa Planning website. The Clerk contacted the Planning Officer and was advised that more information had been requested from the applicant and any revision will be forwarded to the PC for consultation and be available on the website.

**12. Donations:**

The Parish Council unanimously agreed the following donations:

Keeping in Touch magazine: £25

Aldborough Village Care: £50

Alby Parochial Church Council: £50

Thwaite Parochial Church Council: £50

Councillor James Buchan stated that donations to the Churches did help fund grass cutting of the graveyards. He considered that since the Church Room was no longer used for Parish Council meetings, this donation could cease. This was agreed.

**13. Co-option of Parish Councillor**

Alistair MacKinnon had presented the Parish Council with a written request for consideration to fill the vacancy on the Parish Council. Mr MacKinnon had previously shown an interest in becoming a Councillor. In private consultation, once the public had left the meeting, Councillors unanimously agreed to appoint Alistair MacKinnon.

**11. Public Participation:**

A member of the public queried a statement in the Standing Orders at item 3.6 and asked if the opportunity for public questions will be additional to the usual ‘Public Participation’. The Council could see no reason why the public should not have an opportunity to ask questions before the commencement of each meeting but open and lengthy discussion would be refrained until the end of each meeting as is current.

**12. Date and time of next meeting:**

**Wednesday 21 February at 7.30pm** was agreed.

The meeting closed at 21.45 hours

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