

Skelton Parish Council

Parish Clerk: c/o, 7 School Lane, Fulford, York YO10 4LU

 07842 889 146

clerk@skelton-york.gov.uk

www.skelton-york.gov.uk

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Skelton Parish Council held on Thursday 24 March 2022 at Skelton Village Hall at 19:30.

Present:

Councillors: Cllrs Watt (Chairman), C Linfoot, J Linfoot, Lansell, A Mansell, L Mansell, Stead and Watson

Members of the public: 3

Clerk : Karin de Vries

21/117 Chairman's welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

21/118 To receive apologies for absence and to approve reasons for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Gossow and the reasons for the absence were accepted.

21/119 To receive any declarations of interests and any requests for dispensation

The Chairman, Cllr Watt, declared an interest in item 21/128.

The Clerk reminded Councillors about the advice from the Monitoring Officer relating to item 21/128 that had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Monitoring Officer had advised that all parties to the Standards complaints had an interest in item 21/128. Cllr A Mansell argued that due to the motion of censure not being on the March agenda, he would not declare an interest. The Clerk reminded those present that in consultation with the Monitoring Officer the motion of censure would be on the April agenda. The Chairman advised councillors that it is a matter for individual councillors to decide whether they have an interest.

21/120 To confirm and sign the minutes of the Ordinary meeting of the Council held on 24th February 2022 as a true and correct record

It was RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the Ordinary meeting of Skelton Parish Council held on 24 February 2022 as a true and correct record. The Chairman signed the minutes.

21/121 To resolve to adjourn the meeting in order to hold the Open Forum to include:

1. To receive a police report for February 2022.

The police report was noted.

2. To receive a report from the Ward Councillors.

Apologies had been received from Cllr Hook.

3. To receive the litter picker's report.

The litter picker had made no comments.

4. To receive parishioners' questions.

A member of the public thanked the Council for expressing their sympathy and support after former Councillor Lumley passed away. They also raised concern about the potholes on Pasture Close. The Chairman said that the Council would raise this matter with Cllr Hook again.

Another member of the public stated that they were quite saddened to read the press coverage about the animosity between councillors. They reminded councillors that they represent the community as a whole and that they should work together for that purpose. Cllr Watson reported that she had been approached by the organisers of the Easter hunt with a request to provide some prizes. It was agreed that £30 would be contributed under the Clerk's delegated powers. Cllr Lansell requested that the email requesting volunteers for a

pilot ward regarding weed control within the ward could go on the next agenda. Cllr Watt responded that it was a shame that Cllr Hook was not at the meeting. It was agreed that it was best for the council not to be part of the trial and no resolution was needed.

Cllr Watt made a personal statement that he joined the Skelton Parish Council in 2002 and had been a councillor for Skelton since, except for a gap of two years. He had done it voluntarily, with no payments or rewards, but had had a pretty bad time since December 2019. He was sorry it had come to this. He said he was a man of principle and that he believes in standing up for what is right and proper and that was the reason why he had so much aggravation. He would not attend the confidential item but would follow whatever the council decided during that item. The clerk had informed him that the YLCA had advised that walking out of the meeting is not sufficient to tender a resignation as chairman, but that a formal written resignation to the clerk was needed and that this would have to be accepted by the Council. He reminded the Council that at the Annual Meeting in May, a Chairman for the forthcoming civic year would be elected. In the meantime, he was not certain that he would resign as Chairman.

A member of the public also raised that perhaps an election, rather than co-option, would allow the residents to elect those councillors who would have the trust of the village. They said that they had lived in the village since 1949 and that lots had changed by having representation from all areas of the village. The Chairman responded that the Council should advertise the role of councillors for the election in May 2023. Cllr A Mansell said that he was a man of integrity, and always had been, and that if a certain person had offered an apology for what they had said he would not have lodged the complaints.

Cllr Stead arrived at this time.

21/122 To receive information and decide necessary action on village and playground matters to include:-

1. To receive correspondence regarding damage to the bus shelter.

The Clerk had not received a response and was asked to send a reminder.

2. To consider an update from the working group for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations and to consider the purchase of a beacon

Cllr L Mansell said that two productive meetings had been held. The group had decided that the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations would be held on Sunday 5 June 2022. The Women's Institute would organise teas in the village hall and the Village Trust would organise a painting contest for young people. On the green, the working group would like to have a BBQ with a prosecco tent. The potential purchase of a beacon was discussed. Some concerns were raised about gas canisters but an alternative beacon had been sourced and discussed within the working group. Cllr A Mansell would send out further information. The Chairman added that there is a designated beacon lighting day and time. The Chairman explained that the Council had earmarked £2000 for the project but that the group had not been authorised by the Council to spend money. The beacon would have to be approved by the council. The group was asked whether there is a schedule of meetings. It was notified that the next meeting would be at the Village Hall on 5th April 2022.

3. To note an update for the planting a commemorative tree for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

After the investigation by Cllr C Linfoot, a Liquid Amber tree had been procured and had been planted by Cllr Watt and Cllr C Linfoot, and would be watered once a week by Cllr Watt. For the next meeting a plaque would be sourced.

4. To consider an update regarding a Community Speed Watch initiative

Cllr A Mansell had circulated an example of speed control signage and proposed that Skelton could have those installed at all 4 entrances to the village. No volunteers had come forward for the speed watch yet. He requested and received general consent to invite further volunteers through Facebook and Cllr Watson would add it to the website.

5. To receive an update regarding the Footbridge at Hurn's Dyke

The Chairman had been advised by the CYC that a new footbridge would be installed in late Spring.

6. To consider tree works and replacement tree planting around the pond

Cllr Stead reported that an arboriculturist could have a look at a sycamore tree close to the path. Councillors discussed alternatives to felling the tree, such as a reduction. Cllr A Mansell suggested that the money remaining from the pond group could be used to get some new trees. Cllr Linfoot reminded the Council that the remaining funding was agreed to be spent on a bench.

21/123 To receive a report from the Cemetery Advisory Panel and decide on any necessary action.

Cllr C Linfoot reported that the meeting had to be postponed and a new date had to be set.

21/124 Financial Matters and Governance

1. To receive the bank reconciliation and budget monitoring report as at 28 February 2022.

It was RESOLVED to approve the financial reports as at 28 February 2022.

2. The following receipts were noted:-

HMRC. VAT reclaims	[DC]	£ 5440.86
ICCM. Refund training Clerk	[DC]	£ 162.00
Cooperative. Reservation and Interment fees	[DC]	£ 800.00
Rotherham Ltd. Headstone fee	[DC]	£ 105.00
Interest		£ 0.64

3. To approve the following payments:-

a. Salaries, oncosts and mileage March	[BP]	£ 1493.56
b. Home working allowance clerk	[BP]	£ 26.00
c. Giffgaff monthly charges	[BP]	£ 6.00
d. D-Tail. Liquidamber tree	[BP]	£ 264.00
e. Defib Warehouse. Powerheart G5 AED battery	[BP]	£ 304.00

It was RESOLVED to approve the above invoices for payment.

21/125 Planning

- To consider a response to the following planning applications:-
 - 22/00469/FUL – 1 Fairfield Cottages. Single storey rear extension. No objections.
- To note details of planning applications decided by City of York Council and decide upon any necessary action:-
 - 22/00080/FUL – 14 Burtree Avenue. Single storey extensions to side and rear, conversion of garage to habitable space with hipped roof and installation of flue for wood burning stove. Approved.
- To consider other matters related to planning and decide upon any necessary action to include:-
 - Yorkshire GREEN Project Targeted Consultation: Section 42 of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended). It was RESOLVED not to comment.

21/126 To consider correspondence received and decide action where necessary to include:-

- The following emails from YLCA were noted:-
 - White Rose Updates, Law and Governance Bulletins and E-training bulletins.
 - YLCA York Branch Meetings.
 - NALC Legal Briefing LO1-22: Code of recommended practice on Local Authority Publicity (England) Publicity during the pre-election period.
 - National Joint Council for Local Government Services-Cost of living increase from 1 April 2021. The NJC for Local Government Services had agreed a 1.75 % increase from 1 April 2021.
 - YLCA Remote Conference 25 March 2022. Cllr Watson would attend.
 - Ukraine and Local Councils.
 - Civility and respect Project-Code of Conduct Letter to MPs.

- h. Smaller Councils Committee letter to smaller councils.
- 2. To emails from NALC were noted.
- 3. The emails from City of York were noted.

Cllr Watt left the meeting and the Vice-Chair, Cllr Watson, took the chair.

21/127 To consider the exclusion of the press and public due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960.
It was RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from item 21/128 due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960.

21/128 To note the decision notice from the Joint Standards Panel of the City of York Council and to consider a way forward.

A clerk's report regarding the decision notice from the Joint Standards Panel had been circulated to councillors prior to the meeting. The Panel had upheld the complaint that 'Councillor J Watt was disrespectful towards Councillor A Mansell during the meeting of 26th November 2020.' The decision notice recommended that Skelton Parish Council pass a motion of censure of Cllr Watt.

All other complaints were not upheld but despite this the panel had recommended that YLCA or an independent person should be appointed for a review of the Council's procedures and that all councillors and officers should attend training.

The clerk recommended as initial steps that the Council should investigate the cost of a review of the Skelton Parish Council procedures by YLCA, to request that YLCA offers Code of Conduct training to the whole Parish Council and to add the motion of censure to the April agenda.

After some further discussion, Cllrs A Mansell and Cllr L Mansell left the meeting.

Members expressed concern about the content of the Draft Minutes of the Joint Standards Panel Hearing. Councillors felt that the problem in Skelton is not a lack of good procedures but poor behaviour by individual councillors. The Council had to find a way forward to work together.

The following resolutions were made:

It was RESOLVED that Cllrs A Mansell, Cllr L Mansell and Cllr Watt should attend Code of Conduct training.

In order to assess the need for a review, it was RESOLVED that the Clerk would complete the required Health Check as a first step. A Members/Officers protocol was also circulated.

It was RESOLVED that the motion of censure would be added to the agenda of the next meeting.

The Clerk was asked to present to the Council an overview of time and cost incurred in relation to the complaints. It was RESOLVED that Councillors would be asked to keep their demands on the clerk's time limited.

21/129 To confirm that the Annual Parish Assembly will be held on Thursday 28th April 2022 at 19:00 followed by the Ordinary meeting of Skelton Parish Council at 19:30.

The Vice-Chairman, Cllr Watson closed the meeting at 21:25.