

# *Skelton Parish Council*

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Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Skelton Parish Council held on Thursday 28 April 2022 at Skelton Village Hall at 19:30.

## **Present:**

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

Ward Councillor: Cllr Hook

Members of the public: 4

Clerk : Karin de Vries

## **21/130 Chairman's welcome**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. He expressed that he wished that the Council could proceed with normal business.

## **21/131 To receive apologies for absence and to approve reasons for absence**

No apologies were received.

## **21/132 To receive any declarations of interests and any requests for dispensation.**

The clerk reiterated the advice that she had sent out prior to the meeting in relation to item 21/135, 21/136.4, 21/141.1 and 21/143. She reminded councillors that the Monitoring Officer had written that parties to the complaint were advised to consider whether they had an interest in agenda item 21/135, and to declare that interest and to not propose, second or otherwise vote on the Motion of Censure. The Clerk had circulated the Code of Conduct and reminded councillors of the Nolan Principles.

The Chairman added that the clerk had also passed on the advice from the Monitoring Officer that for confidential items at the end of the meeting any person with an interest should declare that interest and leave the room and for any items in the public domain, any person with an interest should declare that interest and not vote on that item.

Cllr Watt declared an interest in item 21/135 and said he would speak but not vote on any motion moved for this agenda item and he also declared an interest in item 21/142 and 21/ 143 and would leave the meeting at this point.

Cllr Adrian Mansell stated that he would not declare an interest because the Clerk's opinion was an interpretation of the Monitoring Officer's email due to the Monitoring Officer having used the words 'I think' and 'may'.

He read out parts of the Code of Conduct and stated that as a councillor he would vote impartially and in the interest of the community. He stated that he had a duty to continue to vote and that he insisted on his right to vote due to the Council merely being asked to apply a sanction by the hearing panel.

Cllr Watt reiterated the advice from the Monitoring Officer that what mattered for establishing an interest was what a reasonable resident would think about their actions.

## **21/133 To confirm and sign the minutes of the Ordinary meeting of the Council held on 24<sup>th</sup> March 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 March 2022 as a true and correct record. The Chairman signed the minutes.

**21/134 To resolve to adjourn the meeting in order to hold the Open Forum to include:**

1. To receive a police report for March 2022.  
The police had attended a recent incident in the village and other minor incidents were noted.
2. To receive a report from the Ward Councillors.  
The Chairman, Cllr Watt, requested that the ward councillor Cllr Anne Hook would seek some advice on an abusive cold caller in the village. Cllr Hook offered to find out more about cold calling zones and how cold calling could be minimised. Cllr Hook also referred to additional repairs to the pavement outside Orchard View as the works had not been carried out to specification.  
In addition, she had reported potholes on Pasture Close and Burtree Avenue. A member of the public raised the lack of mowing on the corner of St Giles, opposite the surgery. Cllr Hook explained that due to staff problems the City of York grass cutting this year was really late.
3. To receive the litter picker's report.  
The litter picker had reported that branches had been left behind houses of The Dell on the A19. Cllr Hook promised to report this.
4. To receive parishioners' questions.  
No questions were raised and the Chairman closed the open forum.

**21/135 To consider a motion of censure that Councillor J Watt has acted in a disrespectful manner to Councillor A Mansell and has declined to offer an apology.**

After a long discussion, Councillor A Mansell moved and Cllr L Mansell seconded a motion of censure that Councillor J Watt had acted in a disrespectful manner to Councillor A Mansell and had declined to offer an apology.

It was RESOLVED to pass the motion of censure that Councillor J Watt had acted in a disrespectful manner to Councillor A Mansell and had declined to offer an apology.

Cllr Watt handed the clerk a resignation letter as councillor and chairman and left the room.

After the letter of resignation was accepted, it was moved by Cllr A Mansell and seconded by Cllr C Linfoot that Cllr Watson, took the chair.

Cllr Watson apologised to the members of the public at the meeting.

**21/136 To receive information and decide necessary action on village and playground matters to include:-**

1. **To consider an update from the working group for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebration, to include:-**
  - a. **To consider advice received from YLCA.**  
The Clerk reiterated advice received from YLCA and made a recommendation for all expenditure above £500 to be considered by the Council and for the working group to keep a ledger of any other expenditure incurred below this amount that should be reported to the council at regular intervals. She also recommended that terms of reference for the Queen's Platinum Working Group be adopted.  
Cllr Watson thanked Cllr L and A Mansell for their ceaseless work on the Platinum Jubilee working group. Cllr L Mansell gave an overview of the preparations. Cllr A Mansell requested advice in relation to how the payment to the band could be accounted for. The Clerk would investigate this matter. Some discussion took place on how to deal with stock for the beer tent. The content of the terms of reference were discussed and an amendment to membership proposed. The installation of planters was discussed. Cllr Stead arrived at this point.

The Council RESOLVED that any expenditure by the Queen's Platinum Jubilee working group over £500 would be considered by full council or in accordance with the Delegation Scheme. It was RESOLVED that any expenditure under £500 would be accounted for in a ledger with receipts and invoices subject to an overall limit of expenditure of the budgeted sum of £2000 and that this ledger would be presented to the Council at Council meetings and at regular intervals between meetings.

It was RESOLVED to approve the terms of reference, subject to the Women's Institute added to the participating organisations in paragraph 3.

**b. To consider a temporary event license.**

It was RESOLVED that Cllr A Mansell would apply for a temporary event license at a cost of £21.

Cllr Gossow asked whether a police presence and risk assessments were needed. Cllr L Mansell responded that a local resident would carry out risk assessments and would be the nominated first aider. Cllr A Mansell said he would advise the police that the event would take place.

**c. To consider the purchase of a beacon.**

The clerk circulated the quotation that had been received that afternoon. Cllr L Mansell stated that it was the intention to light the beacon at the dedicated time on Thursday 2 June as well as on Sunday 5 June during the day of celebrations. The clerk reminded Council that an invoice addressed to Skelton Parish Council would be needed for any amount over £500 as per the resolution under a, and that the works should be instructed by the Clerk and payment should be made by the Council in accordance with the Financial Regs. After some discussion relating to the details, it was RESOLVED to approve the purchase of a laser cut beacon for £470 plus a heraldic shield for £85 as well as telegraph pole for £95.

**d. To consider amending the grass cutting schedule to accommodate the Jubilee celebrations.**

The Clerk was asked to get in touch with the grass cutting contractor to amend the grass cutting schedule in preparation for the Jubilee celebrations.

A detailed discussion about the preparations for the celebrations took place.

**2. To consider sponsorship of a Platinum Jubilee Booklet.**

A local resident had kindly organised an updated reprint of a 2012 Platinum Jubilee Booklet. It was RESOLVED to approve payment of £159 for the Platinum Jubilee Booklet.

**3. To consider the purchase of a plaque for the memorial tree.**

Cllr C Linfoot discussed progress on this matter and it was discussed whether the beacon provider could also manufacture the plaque. The purchase of the plaque was deferred until further information and quotations were available.

**4. To note correspondence from the Skelton Citizens involved Policing Problem Solving Project regarding their successful bid to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for £18,000.**

Cllr Watson said that she had resigned from the pilot project. Cllrs L and A Mansell said that they had stepped down but continued to receive regular updates. Cllr L Mansell said that she had to leave the pilot group when she joined Skelton Parish Council. The Clerk advised that there is no ban on joining community or pilot groups but that being a member of a group, might be advised to declare an interest if relevant. Cllr Stead, although nominated, had never taken up a role as representative for the Council. Cllr A Mansell conveyed to the Council that he had been informed that the pilot group now had the full amount for the fencing due to the contractor giving a discount of £5000. He reminded councillors that the pilot was experimental and the first in the country. Cllr Hook remarked that she had put forward the layby to be added to the City of York litter picking schedule.

5. **To note that the vandalised bus shelter along the A19 has been repaired.**  
Councillors expressed their appreciation for the City of York repairing the bus shelter.
6. **To note the successful Easter egg hunt event**  
Cllr Watson relayed that the Easter egg hunt had been successful and Skelton Parish Council had been thanked for contributing. She expressed that perhaps the Council could do more donations like this in future.
7. **To consider an update regarding a Community Speed Watch initiative.**  
Cllr A Mansell had submitted the Community Speed Watch form but had not received a response yet. The Clerk would follow up after the meeting.
8. **To receive an update regarding the Footbridge at Hurn's Dyke.**  
No update had been received.
9. **To consider tree works and replacement tree planting around the pond**  
Cllr Stead discussed that he intended to contact a tree surgeon to inspect one of the trees. After some discussion, it was agreed that this would be deferred to the autumn. He had also sourced a red oak to be planted where a chestnut tree had recently been felled. He raised that a mini-island in the corner of the pond could provide a safe place for ducks to nest.
10. **To consider correspondence from Sleightholm regarding the effect of inflation on the grass cutting costs**  
Due to the cost of petrol and the increase of inflation it was RESOLVED to agree to the proposed inflationary increase. The Clerk would request that the main path to the cemetery extension is treated against weeds.

## 21/137 Financial Matters and Governance

1. **To receive the bank reconciliation and budget monitoring report as at 31 March 2022.**  
The Clerk provided information about the year-end financial position. The year end balances come to £37,686.36 which is an increase of £5685.13 in comparison to the start of the year. The increase was mainly due to the receipts of £41,632 that exceeded the budget with £8186.38 as well as a VAT reclaim of £5440.86. The increased receipts were mainly due to two grants for the viper swing as well as an increase in the double taxation award. Due to this unbudgeted extra income, the capital expenditure for the viper swing had not reduced the bank balances. It was RESOLVED to approve the financial reports as at 31 March 2022.

2. **The following receipts were noted:-**

HMRC. Double taxation	[DC]	£ 10382.30
Northern Power. Wayleave		£ 6.90

3. **To confirm the following payments of invoices:-**

a. Scottish Water	[DD]	£ 7.88
b. YLCA. Subs 22/23	[BP]	£ 454.00
c. Sleightholm. Regrading verge on the Green	[BP]	£ 108.00
d. YLCA. Webinar	[BP]	£ 40.00

It was RESOLVED to confirm the payment of the above invoices.

4. **To approve the following payments:-**

a. Sleightholm Landscaping. Grass cutting	[BP]	£ 1305.60
b. Salaries, oncosts and mileage April	[BP]	£1009.59
c. Home working allowance clerk	[BP]	£ 26.00
d. Giffgaff monthly charges	[BP]	£ 6.00
e. Zoom Renewal	[DD]	£ 143.88
f. Cllr Watson. Easter Egg donation	[BP]	£ 30.00
g. City of York. Cemetery waste charges	[DD]	£ 36.40
h. City of York. NNDR	[DD]	£ 58.16
i. ICCM. Membership	[BP]	£ 95.00
j. ICCM. Webinar Cemetery Management and Compliance	[BP]	£ 162.00

A question was raised in relation to the Zoom charges. Cllr Watson suggested adding a credit card for the council on the next agenda. It was RESOLVED to approve the above invoices for payment.

**5. To note correspondence from PKF Littlejohn regarding their appointment as external auditor for Skelton for 21/22.**

The appointment of PKF Littlejohn for the external audit for 21/22 was noted.

**6. To appoint an internal auditor for the year 21/22.** It was RESOLVED to appoint Rachel Pearson, Account-Ant, for the year end internal audit for 21/22 for £125 plus VAT.

**7. To set a date for a Finance Panel meeting.**

The Clerk would send out invitations for the panel meeting to be held in May.

**8. To review the grant application policy and to adopt terms of reference**

It was RESOLVED to adopt the reviewed grant application policy and the terms of reference.

All Members of the Public left the meeting.

**21/138 Planning**

1. To consider a response to the following planning applications:-
  - a. 22/00444/FUL – 11 Brecksfields. 1no. dormer to side and 1no. dormer to rear.  
No objections.
  - b. 22/00795/TCA – March Cottage 3 Church View. Crown reduce 1no. Holly Tree in a Conservation Area. No objections.
  - c. 22/00727/FUL – 75 Sycamore Close. Two storey side extension, single storey front and rear extensions and detached garage to side. No comments.
2. To note details of planning applications decided by City of York Council and decide upon any necessary action:-
  - a. 22/00197/FUL – 15 Burtree Avenue. Two storey extension to side and single storey extensions to front and rear. Approved.
3. To consider other matters related to planning and decide upon any necessary action to include:-  
None

**21/139 To consider correspondence received and decide action where necessary to include:-**

1. The following emails from YLCA were noted:-
  - a. White Rose Updates, Law and Governance and E-training bulletins.  
Cllr Watson recommended the YLCA training to the Council.
  - b. Practitioners' guide 2022.
2. The emails from NALC were noted.
3. To receive emails from City of York. None were received.

**21/140 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.**

No vote was held to exclude the press and public due to the fact that the Members of the Public had already left the room.

**21/141 To receive a report from the Cemetery Advisory Panel and decide on any necessary action.**

1. **To consider a request for replacement plaques and to establish a procedure for future cases**  
An application for replacement plaques for two Memorial Garden plots had been received some time ago and the clerk had not been able to establish who the owner of the exclusive rights of burial was and she had sought advice from ICCM. She had found that the applicant had paid for the original plaques. Cllr C Linfoot recommended that consent was granted for the replacement plaques. It was RESOLVED to agree to the replacement plaques.

**2. To consider a request for a memorial ashes plot in the cemetery extension.**

The Cemetery Advisory Panel would hold a site visit to consider a location for a new ashes garden in the cemetery extension as well as extending the existing memorial garden.

**3. To consider the reimbursement of a plot reservation fee**

It was RESOLVED to reimburse the plot reservation plot for Mollie Kaiser. The clerk referred to difficulties accessing the lower shelf of the filing cabinet. Cllr Stead offered to solve the issue.

It was RESOLVED to suspend Standing Order 3x in order to continue the meeting.

**21/142 Staff matters**

**1. To consider the clerk's workload and overtime**

The clerk had circulated an overview of overtime incurred. Over the past months, she had to deal with exceptional work, including dealing with the outcome of the Joint Standards Hearing Panel, cemetery matters and the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. She reminded councillors that a Local Council is a statutory body, that the clerk works at the instruction of the Council as a whole and that no individual councillor has delegated power to instruct tasks or works. She requested that any demands on her time would be kept to a minimum over the coming months due to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, the year-end accounts and the annual procedures for the Annual Meeting.

Cllr Watson expressed the hope that the clerk could now concentrate on village matters.

The clerk left the meeting for consideration of this item.

It was RESOLVED to approve overtime payment until March of 25 hours and for April of 40 hours. It was RESOLVED that Councillors would limit their demands on the clerk's time to urgent matters only.

**21/143 To consider any matter relating to the decision notice from the Joint Standards Panel of the City of York Council**

The clerk reiterated the advice from the Hearing Panel that Councillors should all attend Code of conduct training and that the LGA Model Code of Conduct had new provisions in addition to the previous Code of Conduct.

Since November 2020, the Clerk had spent at least 147 hours on matters related to the complaints, including dealing with a vote of no confidence, multiple FOI requests, a plethora of emails and providing information to investigating officers. Approximately half of this was accommodated within the clerk's normal hours by cutting back on her normal tasks. The time spent on this had meant that some Annual Plan projects for 20/21 and 21/22 had not been achieved.

Under delegated powers, on behalf of the Council, approved by those who had attended item 21/128 of the March meeting, the Clerk had written to the Chairman of the Joint Standards Panel, to defer approval of the minutes of the Joint standards Panel held on 8 March 2022 due to some inaccuracies in the minutes and the Decision Notice. It was RESOLVED that a follow up to this correspondence would be sent.

The Clerk and Cllr Watson had been offered a meeting with Sheena Spence of the YLCA about the content of the Decision Notice.

**21/144 To confirm the date and time of the next meeting.**

It was confirmed that the Annual Meeting of Skelton Parish Council would be held on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2022 at 19:00 followed by the Ordinary meeting of Skelton Parish Council at 19:30.

The Chair closed the meeting at 21: 51.