

Covington Virtual Parish Meeting 21st APRIL 2021

Chairman: Simon Luscombe
Clerk: Mrs S. P. Mathews OBE

CLERK'S NOTE

On 12th March 2021 the Country was still under a highly restrictive Government "lockdown regime" due to the continuing Covid-19 epidemic.

As in 2020 it was clear that the Parish Meeting to be held on 21st April 2021 to comply with the Annual Audit requirements could not take place.

The Virtual Meeting was arranged as follows.

1. On 21st March 2021 all 31 households on the residents' email list (covering 65 of the 78 residents on the electoral register) were emailed with a notice; an extended agenda; minutes of the previous meeting; minutes of three other meetings concerning planning; the Final Accounts and the Risk Assessment. Hard copies were delivered to the remaining 11 households.
2. Residents were asked to reply to the Clerk by 5th April 2021
3. On 3rd April 2021 the Clerk emailed the residents list and hand delivered to those not on the email list a reminder along with one or two supplementary items
4. We received 19 responses (this excludes the Clerk and the Chairman)
5. Emailed responses were taken as being from one member of the household unless otherwise stated.
6. This was a similar response to the previous virtual meetings and well within the required numbers for a quorate meeting.
7. Many responders offered to propose or second most of the items, all expressed agreement to all the items.
8. Apart from the items of election or appointment and those items concerning financial issues I have not shown individual proposers or seconders.

RESPONSES WERE RECEIVED FROM

Jonathan Baker, Michael Brown, Mo Brown, Richard Brown, Warren Brown, Glyn Clark, John Fells, Gill Holmes, Stephen Holmes, Linda Lockhart, John Lowe, Carole Ludford, Michael Mathews, Deirdre Peck, Simon Peck, Peter Sewell, Sue Sewell, Polly Sewell and Marilyn Turrell.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE. No resident declined to take part. One wondered if a Zoom meeting could be organised. The Clerk considered it would disenfranchise those without the necessary technology.

2. TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN of the Parish Meeting for the year April 2021 to April 2022

It was proposed by Marilyn Turrell, seconded by Jonathan Baker that Linda Lockhart be elected. There being many messages of support and no other nominations Linda Lockhart will serve as Chairman.

3. TO RECEIVE THE CHAIRMAN'S declaration of acceptance of office. This will be signed shortly.

4. TO APPOINT THE CLERK, the Proper Officer and the Responsible Finance Officer to the Parish Meeting

It was proposed by Deirdre Peck, seconded by Marilyn Turrell that Mrs Mathews be appointed. As there were many messages of support and no other nominations Mrs Mathews will serve in these roles.

5. TO APPOINT THE INDEPENDENT INTERNAL AUDITOR

It was Proposed by Michael Brown, seconded by Simon Peck that Charles Paull be appointed. As there were no other nominations and many messages of support Charles Paull will be appointed.

6. TO APPOINT THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Currently: Warren Brown (5yrs), Peter Sewell (5yrs), Fiona McCullagh-Fells (5yrs), Sarah Schofield (4yrs) Rex Bigger (3yrs) Linda Lockhart (3yrs), Simon Williams (2yrs)

PLEASE NOTE: If we follow the 4yr rule we would require FOUR new members. All members are prepared to continue to serve, and there were no alternative suggestions, these appointments would be left until a proper meeting can be held.

7. TO APPOINT OTHER REPRESENTATIVES/OFFICERS

- a. Parish Representative to the Amenities Committee. Currently: Sarah Schofield
- b. Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator. Currently Michael Mathews
- c. Tree Warden. Currently Mo Brown
- d. Footpath Warden. Currently Carole Ludford

As all are prepared to continue these appointments will be left until a proper meeting can be held

8. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS of any personal, prejudicial or predetermined interest in any of matter later on in the Agenda
Not relevant

9. TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES of the Parish Meeting held on 28th October 2020 and the Planning Sub Committee Meetings held on 26th November 2020 and 10th February 2021

All these are available on the Parish Website. All responders agreed to leave this until a proper meeting could be arranged.

10. TO APPROVE and SIGN the aforementioned Minutes

Agreed to leave until an appropriate meeting can be arranged

11. TO CONSIDER MATTERS ARISING from the Minutes

a) 28th October meeting

9.2 Motor Bike Noise – Action was taken -reports of police checks in Kimbolton were circulated on the Residents Email

9.4 Water/Ice in Cross Street. The Clerk, Michael Brown, Simon Williams and Peter Sewell are continuing to raise this issue regularly with The County

Councillor Ian Gardener and the relevant authorities.

b) 26th November Planning meeting – Tree Application Recommended Approval. LLA/NATS consultation – Response from Jonathan Djanogly MP was circulated on Residents’ email.

c) 10th February Planning meeting - Tree Application Recommended Approval
All responders agreed to leave this until a proper meeting could be arranged.

12. TO RECEIVE CORRESPONDENCE

Any relevant information has been forwarded by the Clerk to the Parish email

13. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:

a. **Planning Committee** – no Chairman appointed see previous item.

b. **Amenities Committee** – Jonathan Baker – report circulated by the Clerk; 13th April 2021.

With Covid I can hardly say that the Village Hall has thrived this year. However, we are solvent with the help of the village contribution, the Bonus Ball and our reserve. We now have a new draft proof back door in a tasteful shade of green and all the maintenance is up to date. I would like to thank Karen for all her many and various inputs over the years - she will be sorely missed. I must also thank Peter for all the many hours of grass cutting in the past and thank Robert McLaren for taking over the role.

Very much looking forward to our next Village event and hope it will be not too far away.
Jonathan Baker

c. **Neighbourhood Watch** – Michael Mathews – information is regularly circulated. He thanked Peter Sewell for replacing the NW signs.

d. Tree Warden – Mo Brown – report circulated by the Clerk; 13th April 2021.

Trees- I would just say that if anyone wants to do anything radical to any trees, that they get in touch with me first, or contact the District Council, just to ensure that they are OK to carry on. Trees do need trimming every so often so it should not be a problem, but it is worth checking first.

e. **Footpath Warden** – Carole Ludford’s Report circulated by the Clerk; 3rd April 2021

The last 18 months have been dominated by the Covid 19 lockdown. This has led to a significant increase in walkers from in and around our village using our footpaths. Whilst walkers have all enjoyed the rural countryside some, sadly, have left more than their footprints – both litter and dog excrement. The subject of dog excrement is not for discussion in the document but will be raised at the Parish Council meeting on 21st April. Many villagers have suggested solutions, all with their advantages and disadvantages. These include signage, poo bins and surveillance cameras.

On occasions, the farming season causes ‘temporary blockages’ on our footpaths but these are addressed by the relevant farmer when feasible or when advised of the problem.

It is with regret that the outstanding issue of ... *“an obstruction of bridleway in two places at Fairy’s Lodge Farm”* ... is still ongoing. Simon Williams has advised me that the issue remains with the council. Disappointingly, no progress has been made since first raised in May 2018. As footpath signs have now been reinstated it is now clear the route walkers can take.

In October 2020, there was serious damage to a footpath bridge adjacent to the B645 caused by a vehicle accident. The council was advised accordingly and walkers now have the benefit of a sturdy replacement. In November 2020, a resident advised me of an injury incurred due to a broken handrail on a footpath adjacent to the Gorse Road. Again, the council were informed and a sturdy replacement put in place. Both repairs were concluded prior to Christmas. Zaria Bettles (Public Rights of Way Officer) appreciated my thanks for the speedy action by the council.

14. TO CONSIDER RESOLUTION/RECOMMENDATIONS notified to the Parish Clerk
There were none

15. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE PARISH ANNUAL ACCOUNTS for the year 2020 – 2021 and to confirm the **Annual Governance Statement** as required under the Audit procedure

a. To confirm the **Annual Governance Statement** as required under the Audit procedure

The annual Governance Statement is available at the Clerk's address for inspection in detail. It covers 12 points confirming that the control objectives have been achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the Parish Meeting.

It was proposed by Richard Brown, seconded by Glyn Clarke and agreed by all responders to Confirm the Annual Governance Statement.

b. To receive and approve the **Parish Annual Accounts for the year 2020 – 2021**

The Final Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2021 were made available to all residents. These show income of £1300.00 and expenditure of £1,406.25. This includes an overpayment of the annual grant to the Amenities Committee. An error! with your approval we can allow for it as next year's grant. Without that payment we would have underspent our budget of £1,340.00 by £353.75. It was proposed by Richard Brown, seconded by Glyn Clarke and agreed by all responders to approve the Annual Accounts and that the overpayment to the Amenities Committee be taken as the 2022 grant.

c. To Certify the **gross income for the year did not exceed £25,000**

The proposal is as follows "This Meeting Certifies that during the year, or gross annual expenditure for the year, did not exceed £25,000"

This was proposed by Richard Brown, seconded by Glyn Clarke and agreed by all responders.

16. FINANCE.

a. To receive the **Current Balances**

The Current Balance is shown in the SUMMARY and RECONCILIATION Section of the Final Accounts. The balance at the Bank stands at £3,987.21. The Current Account holds the total of our funds.

It was proposed by Richard Brown, seconded by Glyn Clarke and agreed by all responders to receive the Current Balances.

b. To approve any **retrospective payments**

i). CAPALC £106.40

ii). Clerk for ink £79.97

iii) Amenities Committee 21/22 Grant £420.00 (Already paid)

It was proposed by Richard Brown, seconded by Glyn Clarke and agreed by all responders to approve the retrospective payments.

c. To approve the payment of any **outstanding accounts**

There are no outstanding accounts

d. To note **assets and risk assessment**

The assets are listed on the Final Accounts document

The Risk Assessment was attached to the original email and hard copies.

It was proposed by Richard Brown, seconded by Glyn Clarke and agreed by all responders to note the assets and risk assessment.

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a). Sadly, we now know Simon Luscombe and his family have left our village this month. He has been an excellent Chairman. Our newest residents in Cross Street expressed their thanks for his welcoming visit. I know he has tried to welcome all new villagers and to encourage them to join the village Email. Richard Brown has shared his and Mo's thoughts through the village email. We shall hopefully acknowledge all our thanks to him and his family at the first village gathering we can arrange

b). Litter Pick – Linda has shared (through the village email) the various emails she has sent and received on this matter. Several residents expressed their thanks to her for arranging this every year.

c). Village Social Gathering. I have sufficient messages of support to go ahead and plan this as soon as it is allowed. I shall of course come back to a meeting to gain authority to use Parish Meeting funds. I hope we shall be able to show our appreciation of all the "Luscombe family" at that event by inviting them to join us.

d) Dog Poo – In her Footpaths report Carole Ludford raised this issue noting she had received various suggestions including signage, poo bins and surveillance cameras. This has caused response from some residents recognising the problem but no consistency as to the solution. This will be an agenda item for our first permissible "face to face" meeting.

e) One enquiry asked why not have the meeting on Zoom – I replied Unlike a Parish Council where a dozen or so people are elected to represent the rest of the residents, all residents of the Parish are entitled to be notified and to attend or participate in the business of a meeting. We have over 20% of the residents not on our email system. I deliver all the paperwork to them, but they would not be able to take part in a Zoom meeting Also from a practical point of view it is difficult enough to manage a Book Group Zoom meeting with only 8 or 9 households taking part. The Zoom planning meeting which included the LLA item was not really balanced and did not entirely reflect all village opinion. Not everyone is practiced in Zoom and it is sometimes difficult to enable any sensible discussion. Lots of pauses or interruptions. If there was any item, I thought would be contentious I would try to make sure

it got a good airing somehow

Hopefully we may be able to hold an extraordinary meeting in the open in the summer to tidy up all the subjects left in abeyance.

The previous virtual meetings have been completed successfully and I am confident this one will do the same.

f) Jo & Rex Bigger will be taking over the management of the Village website and email from Simon Luscombe. We thank them most sincerely for this. If your email address changes please make sure they know. Also send anything to be added to the website to them.

g) Water/Ice on Keyston Road/Cross Street junction

Michael Brown wrote

Re water/ice, CCC jetted either side of leak approx. 14 weeks after initial report. I saw highway man Joe looking last week. He said they think Cross Street drain not connected in to new street drain. Once camera survey completed on whole of Cross Street, they would plan work. New financial year made it likely to happen. Joe is leaving this area though so hopefully it's done before he does.

h) the UK Cycle race in aid of Alzheimer's charities planned to travel through the village on 14th August this year will be travelling uphill so no speeding problem.

18. TO DETERMINE THE DATES of the next regular meetings

Wednesday 27th October 2021