

RINGLAND PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council
held in Ringland Village Hall on Thursday 30th September at 7.30pm

WELCOME

Apologies were made for the last minute changes to the agenda and meeting date.

1. **Apologies** – Jill Baker – Sophie Baker
2. **Declarations of Interest and Dispensations** - None
3. **Approval of minutes of the meeting held on 29th July 2021** – These were by signed by Nick Adams as a true copy.
4. **Matters arising** – There were four matters arising all relating to the village hall. See Village Hall matters below.
5. **Police communications – NA**
None received. NA advised residents to be more security conscious following a recent burglary in the Village.
6. **Correspondence from County & District Councillors – Lindy C**
No written correspondence received. Mr Bulman and Mr Peck to be invited to future meetings. – **AH** to ensure they are given advance notice of the dates.
7. **Planning applications and Enforcement Notice**
 - One application 20211455 - Breck Barn Cottage – There were no objections.
8. One Enforcement Notice 2011ENF125 - Peggy's Pastures
9. **Finance**
 - The bank reconciliation as at 15th September 2021 was approved.
 - The Schedules of Receipts and Payments were approved.
10. **Parish correspondence/administration** - action and/or response to:-
 - A47 North Tuddenham to Easton dualling & NWL - RPC Suggestions – Correspondence with Jerome Mayhew MP and Local liaison group update – **NA**.
See appendix B
 - The appointment of the new Parish Clerk and RFO was announced. It was agreed that the Parish Clerk should be account signatory. **AH** and **LC**
 - A simpler agenda format was proposed by **NA** and seconded by **Lindy C** both will work with **AH** to determine the future format.
 - The offer of a commemorative plaque celebrating the resilience of our community during the Covid pandemic was discussed. Opinions were divided. It was decided that the residents would be asked to vote on whether or not they wanted the plaque. **AH** to e-mail residents.

11. Commons Management Matters

- The Environmental Stewardship Scheme expires 31/1/2022 and will need to be re-applied for. Key issues are bracken control, the rotational clearance of scrub and a risk assessment of trees. – see full report at **Appendix A**. **SA** and **NA** will carry out an initial assessment. **NA** will contact a local farmer who has volunteered to help with bracken clearing. **SA** will set up a schedule of inspections and record keeping programme
- Fly tipping report - **SA** and **NA** will clear the rubbish.
- Chris Cooper was volunteered to survey the boundary between the Sheep Dip and Peggy's pastures to determine if they are encroaching on Common Land - **LouC**

Grass cutting on Church Common and the Ringland Hills

- Local landowner Ian Alstons' people have done a good job of cutting the grass on Church common but this does not include Ringland Hills because of the difficulty in getting the grass cutter there. **NA/SA** to consider options for cutting this area.
- Graham Kidd will be retiring from cutting the grass within the village boundaries next year and a replacement will be required. **AH** to send an e-mail to residents asking for volunteers. Ideally 3 volunteers are required to spread the load.
- New lawnmower storage is also required **NA** will explore the cost of a container that can be put at the back of the Village Hall. **AH** to include a request for secure storage in the email looking for volunteers.

12. Highways and Parking Matters

- **Bridge Railings** Repair of bridge railings - **NA** has been in correspondence with the Broadland District Council MP, Jerome Mayhew, as a result The Council Highways Dept have indicated they intend to replace the railings before Christmas 2021.
- **Speed signs update** – **Lou C** The cameras have been repaired and fitted. Contributions to the cost have been received from Weston Longville and East Tuddenham Parish Councils. Honingham Parish Council have also agreed to contribute. **Lou C** to liaise with Jordy (Clerk at Honingham PC) to clarify who is responsible for organising the sign rota etc. Note that the repair was not authorised by Ringland PC but was done anyway, who did authorise it? **Lou C** to arrange for erection of the signs
- **Re-painting of the slow sign and Junction Lines** This is required on the road outside Philip Spinks' house. **NA** has written to the Highways Department and requested a response.
- **River Green parking update** – **MT** Resident Neal Spinks has put forward an alternative plan to put parking spaces where the recycling banks are currently

situated. This idea will give 8 spaces at a cost of approximately £5,000.00. This new scheme is a cheaper and better solution than that previously rejected at the last parish council meeting. County Councillor Greg Peck is supportive of the idea and may be able to secure funding if the existing grant cannot be transferred. **NA** proposed that **MT** liaise with the Highways Dept to see if the new concept is acceptable and whether the existing grant can be transferred to the new scheme. **SA** will assist with regard to the use of the common lands.

13. Village Hall Matters

- **Driveway – MT** - Completion of the driveway has been delayed due to unexpected problems with the drains. Work will recommence on 5th October. The need to purchase 2 heavy duty manhole covers for the septic tank and soakaway will add to the original cost estimate
- **Village Hall Hire cost:** Local residents Margaret and Louise George had prepared a paper with recommendations to increase Hire Charges based on the rates charged by halls of a similar size. The new rates are attached in **Appendix C**. Proposed by **NA** and Seconded by **Lindy C**. It was agreed that there would be discretionary special rates for Government/Public Body use.
- **MT** mentioned updating the village hall website will need updating. Margaret George will liaise with **SB** the objective being a separate website closely linked to the parish council site with a common look and feel. *From matters arising.*
- **MT** advised that the fire exit door had been open during a visit to the Village Hall. The crash bar will open the door but to close the door the knob under the bar needs to be turned to the “locked” position. **NA** will prepare a notice to put on the door. *From matters arising.*
- It was noted that the Insurance Certificate displayed on the notice board is out of date. **AH** will replace with current certificate. *From matters arising*
- It is necessary to have the electrics upgraded. **NA** has obtained a quote of £320.00
- And it was agreed that the work will go ahead. **NA**. *From matters arising*
- **Change to Village Hall Postal Address - Lindy C**. A post box has been fitted at the village hall with the agreement of Royal Mail. The box will be checked on a regular basis by **NA**
- **Re-instating the village hall committee – Lou C**. It was agreed that a committee would be set up to deal with all Village hall related Matters. **Lou C** to liaise with Margaret and Louise George

14. General Parish Matters

- **Recycling Revenue – AH** to apply for the bottle recycling refund and provide cost and revenue figures for a discussion about the viability of maintaining the service at the next meeting.
- **Parish Council Website – SB** - unavailable to update on progress.

15. Public Participation - questions and comments from the public.

- The garage sale was discussed and thanks given to both Lucy and Margaret for their efforts It was considered that for future events more promotion is required. – **Village Hall Committee to action**
- Two new Events are planned a Craft Fayre in late November (Lucy Purt to organise) and a Church Christmas Bazaar (Margaret George to organise). – **Village Hall Committee to action**
- The £10,000 Covid grant and the parish finances were discussed. A sensible level of Reserves will be kept for emergency use but the council should not shy away from spending where needed to benefit the Community.
- It was agreed that an additional Bank Account would be opened for the reserves **Lindy C.**
- Margaret and Louise George were thanked for all their hard work in bringing the village hall up to date.
- There was a discussion about the cost of obtaining Commercial Waste Bins. An additional charge will be made for Hirers who do not take away their rubbish.

16. Byelaws Working Group – NA

No action has been taken since the previous meeting. **NA** and **SA** will look into the creation of a working group.

17. Environmental Policy – LindyC/LouC

No action has been taken since the previous meeting.

18. Exchange of Information and any other business.

- 1 Million Trees for Norfolk – **SA** will explore the options available.
- Community bursaries and sports grants – **NA** made councillors and public aware of the grants. An advisory e-mail was sent to residents in September
- Invitation to bid for Parish Partnership – **MT** will action.
- **Offshore Windfarm Project** – A Perfect Storm - **NA** proposed that Ringland Council support this project and it was agreed unanimously.

- **Offshore windfarm Project** – Vattenfall Community Benefit Fund – The Council will not be taking any action.
- **Transport for Norwich/Electric Vehicle Strategy** – The placement of the charger and who carries the cost of the electricity to be investigated. - **NA**
- **Time Machine – Roving Theatre Company Enquiry** - The decision was made to go ahead with this event – **NA**

19. Time and venue of next council meeting - Monday 15th November at 7.30 p.m.

Andrea Hendrick..... Dated 4/10/2021

Clerk to Clerk to the Council & Responsible Financial Officer

email: parishclerk@ringlandparishcouncil.com Tel 01603 881640

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Appendix A

RINGLAND PARISH COUNCIL

Commons Management – report for Parish Council meeting 30/09/2021

Contents

1. Environmental Stewardship Scheme
2. Inspection of Common Land

1.Environmental stewardship scheme

The current payment scheme ceases on 31/01/2022 and a new claim needs to be made. I haven't yet registered for the Rural Payments Service as I wish to use the official Parish Councillor email address.

Maintenance activities required under the scheme include ongoing bracken control and maintenance of successional areas and scrub. The Church Common management provides details on how this should be done, but we should have a rolling programme of clearing part of the scrub each year to provide an increase in the number of habitats

- More detailed survey/comparison to maps in the scheme agreement is required – it is anticipated that will result in the need to take action to control bracken and undertake some scrub clearance

2.Inspection of Common Land

Potential Parish Council Liability Risks

For areas of the common land where access is permitted under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act) is very clear about liability to the public:

“Your liability to the public

Unless you set out to create a risk, or are reckless about whether a risk is created, you're not liable for any injury caused by:

- *any natural feature of the landscape including any tree, shrub, plant, river or stream*
- *any ditch or pond, whether natural or not*
- *people passing over, under or through a wall, fence or gate, except if they're making proper use of a gate or stile”*

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-access-land-management-rights-and-responsibilities#your-liability-to-the-public>

With regards trees that are adjacent to public highway or rights of way, it appears from basic research that there is a duty to take reasonable care:

“As such, the law does not require a landowner to engage an expert unless and until reasonable inspection by the standards of that knowledge discloses or should disclose that the tree might be unsafe. So, there is a clear duty on a landowner to inspect its own trees, but it is not required to instruct an expert until it believes there may be a danger.”

<http://insurance.dwf.co.uk/news-updates/2017/11/local-authorities-and-roadside-trees-insurers-of-nature/>

In the case of *Cavanagh v Witley Parish Council* – where a Parish Council owned tree fell onto a road and caused serious injury to a driver of a passing vehicle, the Parish Council had operated a management system of three yearly tree inspections, with the tree concerned being inspected a competent tree inspector. However, the Council lost the case, appealed and lost again on appeal. The trial judge had noted:

"I suspect that there was none that had more potential for causing harm than this lime tree. What was required here was a distinction. If the vast majority of the tree stock had been inspected (as it could well have been) on a much more infrequent basis...a proper and more rigorous system of inspection could have been instigated in respect of the small number of trees which merited special care; trees which were large, heavy, old/mature, and in places where they could cause serious damage."

<https://www.weightmans.com/insights/cavanagh-v-witley-parish-council-court-of-appeal/>

It follows that the greatest liability risk to the Parish Council is from trees on council owned land adjacent to public roads and public rights of way - See Appendix A for maps of risk areas (roads highlighted in yellow and footpaths marked as red lines on the maps).

I have carried out an initial visual inspection, but would add the caveat that I am not a 'competent tree inspector'. I have identified the following potential issues:

Honingham Lane – visual inspection 30/08/2021

- Church Common – small dead standing tree (opposite Ringland Estate farm entrance)

Weston Road – visual inspection 30/08/2021

- Church Common – dead branches overhanging road (near to the Church), tree with large broken branch hanging down (close to gate onto Common), Oak tree with large branch approx. 14m long at a very shallow angle across road also adjacent dead branches (south side of Weston Road, far end of Common)

Costessey Lane – visual inspection 25/09/2021

- Sheep Dip – no trees with obvious issues
- Ringland Hills – tree with dead branch overhanging road (near to edge of Common Land/footpath no.8)
- Hare Wash – dead standing tree adjacent to road

Ringland Road – visual inspection 25/09/2021

- Ringland Hills – number of dead trees alongside Ringland Road, near to steepest section of the road

Sandy Lane – visual inspection 25/09/2021

- Ringland Hills – no trees with obvious issues

Ringland footpaths no.8 and no.9 – visual inspection 25/09/2021

- Ringland Hills – two dead standing trees close to paths (one near pit, Costessey Lane end and one close to junction of both paths)

Ringland footpath no.5 – visual inspection 28/09/2021

- Low Common – no trees with obvious issues

Ringland footpath no.2 – visual inspection 28/09/2021

- Low Common – one dead standing tree close to the northern edge of the Common

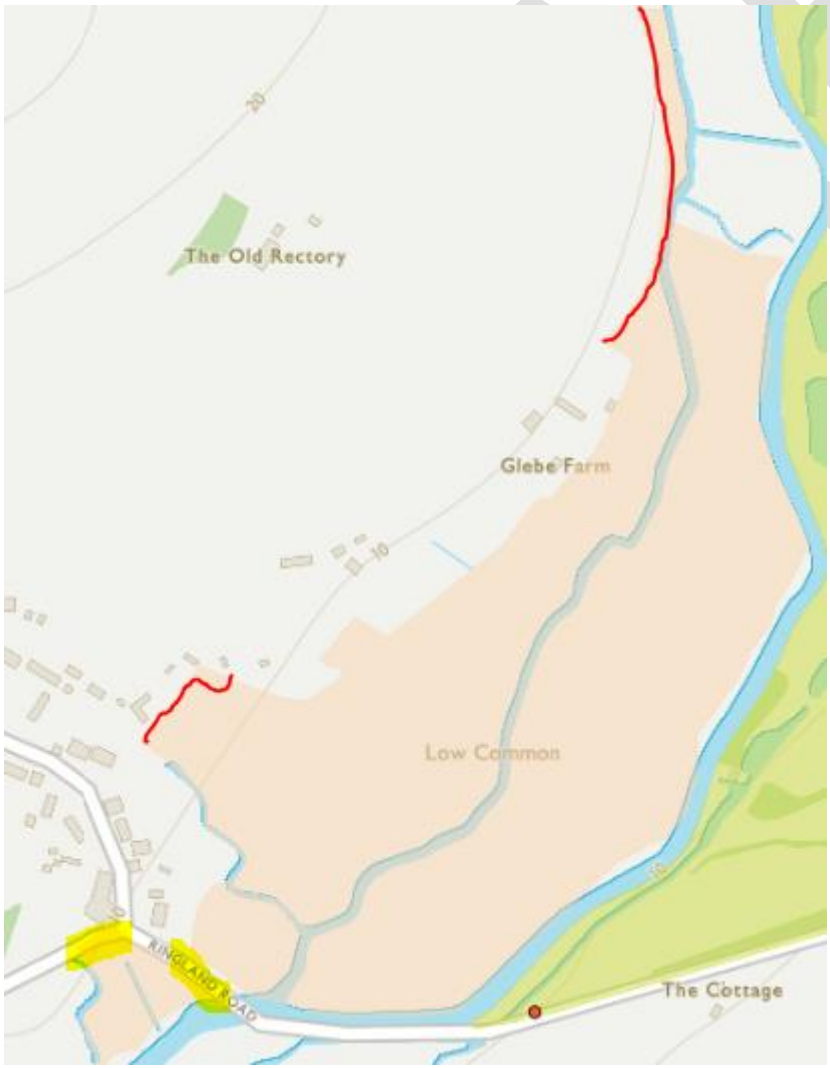
Other issues identified

- Fly tipping on Ringland Hills. There are several large accumulations near to the parking area and along Sandy Lane. I have reported the fly tipping along Sandy Lane to Broadland District Council (Sandy Lane being a 'Norfolk County Council Maintained Unsurfaced Road') on 25/09/2021. I haven't checked to see if any of this has been removed. BDC may take the view that this is privately owned land and therefore not their responsibility, leaving us with the problem of disposing of this.
- Himalayan Balsam growing on the Sheep Dip. There is quite an extensive growth close to the river. It appears that we aren't required to clear this, but it is good practice to remove it. The Royal Horticultural Society note that the most appropriate method of control is pulling or cutting the plants before they flower and set seed (they flower between June and October). Unlike Japanese knotweed, they can be easily pulled up by hand – a community activity for next spring?

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=480>

- Sheep Dip – possible encroachment onto common land. In addition to some fencing panels that appear to have been left by Peggy’s Pasture on the Common Land, the fence doesn’t appear to follow the Common Land boundary at junction with Costessey Lane (this hasn’t been surveyed) – extract from definitive map below





Appendix C

Village hall Hire Costs

Minimum hire charge is 2 hours.

Parishioners/Parish organisations and Charities £10.00 per hour

Non parishioners and outside organisations £15.00 per hour

All day functions (parishioners) £70.00

All day functions (non parishioners) £100.00

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