

Roecliffe and Westwick Parish Council

Minutes of meeting held December 18th. 2017 at 1700hrs.

1. Members Present: Cllrs. D Siswick, J. Newberry, Scott Green, Joyce Reeve, Stuart Varley, Diana Bishop.

Also Present: County Cllr. Robert Windass, and six members of the public.

2. Apologies were noted form Cllr. Jim Bolland.
3. There were no declarations of interest
4. It was unanimously resolved to adopt the minutes of the meeting held on 27th. November 2017 as a true record.
5. The County Councillor's report: An application for a motorway service station at Kirby Hill is no longer expected.

There is now a feeling that the negotiations around the possible sugar beet processing plant on the A168 have broken down. Two areas of difficulty are the cost of the land and the cost of the energy.

6. The clerk's report concerned a Freedom of Information enquiry to NYCC regarding the transactions associated with the procurement of the land for the sugar beet factory. The FOI reply is appended (App. 1).
7. 7.1 Payments to: Farm & Land Securities (Grass cutting).
Clerk David Taylor (Wages and expenses).
Euraudit (Payroll).
R&W Neighbourhood Plan (Barclays Acc) (Grant for consultant).

7.2&3 The proposed budget was discussed, in particular the requirement to provide adequately for the Village Green and the Common maintenance. This discussion was opened to the public for general contribution. The budget was unanimously approved and is appended (App. 2).

7.4 John Mitchell kindly offered to act as internal auditor. He was thanked for his services in this capacity.

7.5 Cllr. Varley is to investigate our present grass cutting regime, and suggest options for future management,, further to some adverse comments from Villagers this year.

7.6 The Maintenance Grant from Harrogate for grass cutting has itself been cut this year, to zero.

8. 8.1 The groundworks necessary to bring the Common back to a safe and attractive condition are currently under review by Cllrs. Green and Newberry, who will propose a regime for higher quality maintenance.

8.2 The next round of tree work on the Village Green is planned to take place on Jan 3/4th. The contractor is responsible for all safety aspects; it is not expected that any roads will be closed for this work. Any wood suitable for domestic burning will be available to villagers, the surplus being removed from site.

8.3 The Parish Clerk resigned his duties on November 30th, effective immediately. These duties are presently being temporarily undertaken by Cllr. Siswick.

9. County Cllr. Windass informs that the signs have now been ordered and will be erected before the end of the financial year.
10. Application: 17/03856/FUL (Church Garth) is approved. 17/04945and6/FUL have been received. A “no objection” return has been made.
11. The proposal to hold a bonfire celebration commemorating the Centenary of the Armistice was unanimously carried. A site on the Common was proposed. A suggestion was made that this celebration would be of interest to the Village Fund committee.
12. The proposal to recognize the two War Graves in the Cemetary by means of a plaque was unanimously carried. The War Graves Commission is to be contacted.
13. The need to advertise for a new clerk was discussed. It was decided to do this through the YLCA website, as well as our own notice boards, Morrison’s job vacancy board, and a Facebook page, suggested by Cllr. Bishop in whose hands this matter left.
14. Neighbourhood Plan Update: Cllr. Siswick reported that a consultant had now been appointed whose role was to guide the steering committee to the end of the process, whereby the plan will be put to a referendum of the entire adult village population. A list of current requirements has been received from the consultant but has not yet been fully examined. A further NP meeting is proposed in the New Year.
15. Cllr. Siswick informes that he had been approached a few times in regard to the possibility of turning off the village street lighting system for a period through the middle of the night. This would be a contribution towards conservation. It was noted that the street lights were not widespread sufficiently now that one could venture out at night without a torch. The proposal was carried unanimously.
16. The date and time of the next meeting is 9th. April, 2018; this will be the annual Parish Assembly; start time 1900hrs.

These minutes are DRAFT MINUTES until approved at the next PC Meeting.

Dave Siswick, Chairman Roecliffe and Westwick Parish Council.

Appendix 1

From: Jon Holden [<mailto:Jon.Holden@northyorks.gov.uk>] **Sent:** 08 December 2017 09:06
To: roecliffe.westwick.parish.council@gmail.com **Subject:** Freedom of Information Request N3179

Dear Mr Taylor

I refer to the FOI request submitted on 1 November and would confirm the following: -

1. Who Initiated negotiations for the sale of the land?

The County Council was approached by Northern Sugar in respect of a possible acquisition of the site

2. When was the decision taken by NYCC to sell the land to Northern Sugar?

An in principle decision in respect of the sale of the site was taken by the County Council's Executive on 4 July 2017 following a consideration of a private report. This decision was subject to a further delegated approval by the Corporate Director of Strategic Resources following the conclusion of discussions about the terms of the sale.

3. Who made this decision; for example, was it an executive decision, was it taken a committee or by the full Council?

As above (2).

4. What consultation and or advice was taken to ascertain the sale price of the land?

A deal has yet to be agreed in respect of the site. External advice was sought to inform the County Council's valuation of the land. This advice is, however, exempt from disclosure as the County Council considers it to be commercially sensitive information.

Section 43 (2) of the Freedom of information Act 2000 exempts information from disclosure if disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it). In this case the Council believes that disclosing this information would undermine the Council's negotiating power when reaching an agreement as to the final sale price. This exemption is subject to the public interest test and therefore can only be applied if the it is in the public interest to withhold the information. As the Council is considering buying the land with public funds then it has a duty to protect those

funds. Whilst the Council appreciates that there is a strong public interest in the release of information regarding Council spending, it believes that in this case the greater public interest lies in withholding the information in order to protect the commercial interests of the Council.

Having considered the public interest, the Council's decision is therefore to withhold the information.

Please find attached the Council's appeals procedure for your information.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Regards

Jon Holden

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County Council

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