

**PLAISTOW AND IFOLD PARISH COUNCIL
CLERK'S REPORT
FOR MEETING ON TUESDAY 29th SEPTEMBER 2009**

2. Councillor Vacancy

Mrs Lorraine Goddard has been invited to attend this meeting. There are no other applications for the vacancy.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council consider filling the vacancy

5. Declarations of Interest by Members

Members may make any Declarations (personal or prejudicial) at this point of the meeting but they must, in any event, be declared before commencement of discussion of the relevant agenda item.

6. Chairman's Report

(a) Councillor Training

The following Councillors are reminded that places have been reserved for them on the Training Course at Wisborough Green on **Monday 12th October 2009 at 6.30pm** – Councillors Forwood, Gravestock, Kirby, Perrin and Wheeler).

(b) In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman requested the Clerk to seek information regarding the following –

(i) **Plaistow Post Office** concerning the breakdown of the machine at the Post Office which pays pensions and cash to Post Office users. Letters have been sent to the postmaster of Billingshurst Post Office, as having immediate responsibility, the head office of Post Office Ltd. in Old Street, London and District Councillor Andrews for any input he may have.

The current situation is that Post Office Ltd. have responded and is treating the letter as a complaint and state that a further response will be sent within 10 days of 16th September. District Councillor Andrews is making enquiries of various people, including Francis Maude MP, on behalf of the Parish Council. At the time of writing the Report, no other responses have been received.

- (ii) **Plaistow and Kirdford Primary School** concerning the extended building work time beyond the School summer holidays (it is understood that the works will not be completed until the end of November). Concerns are centred on the additional pressures to the already strained traffic situation. Letters have been sent to WSCC and County Councillor Duncton for his input. At the time of writing the Report, no responses have been received.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to note this section of the Report

8. Situation Report on previously reported matters

(a) Parish Action Plan and Village Design Statement

The Clerk has nothing to report

(b) Information regarding Dunsfold Park

The Clerk has nothing to report

(c) The Play Area on The Green, Plaistow

(i) Members are asked to note that the Council's grounds maintenance contractor has completed the work at the entrance gates.

(ii) Members are asked to note that at the time of preparing the Report, the works detailed in the recent RoSPA Report, together with obtaining a quotation for a new section of fence, is still outstanding.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to note this section of the Report

9. Finance

(a) Accounts for payment

A schedule of accounts for payment from 21st July 2009 to 29th September 2009, also detailing monies received, will be available at the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to approve payment of the accounts

(b) External Auditor's Report – 2008/2009 Accounts

The 2008/2009 accounts have been signed off by the External Auditor, Mazars LLP. There are “no matters giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met”. There are, however, four matters that do not affect that opinion, which the auditor wishes to draw to the attention of Council -

- (i) The Council should ensure that all of its risks are reviewed and Risk Register updated regularly (Risk Assessment to be reviewed in 2009/2010)
- (ii) The Financial Regulations should be reviewed and updated as necessary (last reviewed 2005)
- (iii) The level of Fidelity Guarantee should be reviewed to ensure it remains at an appropriate level
- (iv) The Asset valuation in Section 1, Box 9, should include all assets owned by the Council – currently only includes insured assets.

Response of the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer

- (i) Now that all the strands of Risk Assessment have been brought together in one document, the review process has been made easier. It is intended to bring the document to the Finance Committee for review at the third-quarter meeting to enable any amendments to be worked upon, for presentation to Council at the final quarter meeting.
- (ii) The Parish Council's current Financial Regulations are taken from the CIPFA Guide. There are no Model Financial Regulations available that the Clerk is aware of but this will be investigated, so that a review can be undertaken within this financial year.
- (iii) The level of Fidelity Guarantee has been increased, following the recent review of insurance arrangements
- (iv) This is now a new approach to quantifying the Council's assets. Previously, only insured values have been used. The auditor's comments have been noted and the total figure will be separated on the required Variances sheet, showing insured values; and other assets, including the nil value of land.

Members are asked to note that, as has happened in previous years, the auditor telephones the Clerk/ Responsible Financial Officer to advise of any comments that may be made. Members will recall that the Parish Council was randomly selected for a 5% spot check audit and a large amount of documentation was required to be provided. The auditor also commented (but not in writing) that he was extremely impressed with the calibre of documentation produced and the method of presentation.

The notice advertising the conclusion of the Audit has been posted on the notice boards.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to note the Report

(c) Community Reserve Fund – Afternoon Tea Clubs

Members are asked to note that the request for a grant by the Afternoon Tea Clubs has been withdrawn.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to note the Report

(d) Finance Committee – future meetings

Members are asked to note the Resolution of Council at the meeting on 23rd June 2009 with regard to future Committee meeting dates –

Monday 2nd November 2009

for (a) representations from Groups in support of further funding; (b) first draft Budget; and (c) second quarter Budget Monitoring

Tuesday 8th December 2009

for (a) second draft Budget and (b) discussions re Precept requirement for Recommendation to Council

Tuesday 9th February 2010

for third quarter Budget Monitoring

RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to note the Report

10. Members' individual Registers of Interest

Members will find enclosed with these papers, a copy of their Individual Register of Interests.

Members are asked to advise the Clerk **before the meeting**, as to which pages of their Register, if any require amendment, so that additional copies can be provided. Common changes that are required to be notified are change of address, land acquisition in the Parish, certain financial acquisitions and certain memberships.

The Clerk will be pleased to assist Members if there are any queries.

Members are advised that the Registers of Interest are a public document and all changes will be notified to the District Council's Monitoring Officer, who retains the Registers for public inspection, if required.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to review their individual Register and advise the Clerk of any changes

11. Meeting Diary to September 2010

Members will find enclosed a revised Meeting Diary for all meetings up to September 2010. When approved, the Diary will be posted on all Parish notice boards.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to approve the Meeting Diary to September 2010

12. The National Trust

(a) Lease for the Lower Green

The copy Licence for the Lower Green has been signed and witnessed and returned to the National Trust. Unfortunately, at the time of writing the Report, the fair copy has not been returned, as stated it would be by the Trust.

RECOMMENDATION

Members' views are sought

(b) Todhurst Event

Following the last Council meeting a letter was sent to Daniel Duthie asking what the current situation was regarding haymaking at Todhurst. Members are asked to note that a somewhat unfortunate message was left for the Clerk on her answer phone by a National Trust staff member, which was not responded to; followed by a reply from Daniel Duthie giving detailed explanation about why the event had not taken place.

The area has now been cut and the Clerk is not aware of any publicity being given to the event in the Parish, as there has been no further contact.

Also, a response has now been received from Daniel Duthie who comments that the 'noxious weed' referred to was yellow loosestrife is not noxious but it is invasive. He also stated that the meadow was sprayed prior to cutting and that it was the weather, rather than the weeds that led to the postponement.

He also commented that the area had been cleared of ragwort (“enough to fill a small seed sack but not really a significant amount”) and suggests confusion with common fleabane, which he will be ‘pleased to see more of this than in previous years’.

The intention is to bale the hay the following weekend (which has now passed).

In the light of these events and the difficulties, Members may wish to reconsider Council’s position regarding obtaining a lease for this area, from a higher level within the National Trust.

RECOMMENDATION
Members’ views are sought

13. BT Phone Boxes in the Parish

Members will recall that Council previously resolved that Council would not adopt the BT Telephone Box in Plaistow, either with or without the telephony equipment. This view was also supported by Plaistow Village Trust.

Members may know that a removal notice has now been placed in the telephone box by BT for its complete removal.

CDC, however, are objecting to a number of proposed removals on the following grounds –

- (a) **Mobile reception** – BT’s comments have been reviewed against information obtained from four main mobile phone providers – Vodafone, Orange, T-Mobile and O2
- (b) **Usage** – CDC comment that whilst BT’s information regarding actual usage has been helpful in determining the viability of individual kiosks, this has been reviews against parish populations to provide a more proportional rating.
- (c) **Heritage** – CDC are working with their Historic Buildings Advisor to identify where the retention of a working kiosk is significant to the character of a location, where a kiosk is a Listed Building, or where a Listing will now be pursued (Members will recall that the phone box opposite The Half Moon in Kirdford is a Listed Building). CDC are also mindful of the formation of the South Downs National Park and can foresee greater usage and value as a local landmark.

Based on this, CDC will be objecting to the removal of the phone box and Listed Building status is being pursued.

CDC is seeking any further Parish comments by **12th October 2009**.

Members are asked to note that CDC will not be objecting to the proposed removal of the phone box at Oak Tree Stores.

RECOMMENDATION

Members' views are sought

14. Coxes Pond, Plaistow

Members will recall that the possible pollution of Coxes Pond was raised at a previous meeting of the Planning Committee. Enquiries were made of Southern Water, CDC and the Environment Agency.

Following intervention by CDC, the Environment Agency visited the pond and samples were taken. The test results showed that there was no sewage pollution and no other obvious signs of pollution. The tests did show, however, that there was a low oxygen level and a high temperature. Despite the high temperatures up to and including the time that the samples were taken, the Environment Agency will continue to monitor the pond.

Would Members please inform the Clerk if they see anything unusual on the pond, especially including seeing dead fish and wildlife.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to note this section of the Report

15. South Downs National Park

This agenda item is at the request of Councillor Ribbens

16. Highway Matters

(a) Highway Matters previously reported

All matters previously raised have been reported.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to note this section of the Report

18. Date of next meeting -

Tuesday 24th November 2009 at Kelsey Hall, Ifold

Sue Kemp – Parish Clerk
20th September 2009