

# WYCK RISSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL ON 14<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2021

AT 6.00 PM AT THE VILLAGE HALL

**Present:** Members – Tim Simon (TS), Brian Finnimore (BF), Andrew Fifield (AF), Robert Montague (RM), Louise Fifield (Clerk), GCC Councillor Mark MacKenzie-Charrington. Esther Trinder and 3 residents.

**Apologies:** were received from Hilary Ponti and Andrew and Elizabeth Ransom

## 1. Election of Chairman and Responsible Financial Officer

AF proposed TS as Chairman, RM seconded the proposal, AF proposed BF as Responsible Financial Officer and RM seconded the proposal. Both were carried unanimously. AF thanked both TS and BF for their unstinting work over the past year. TS also thanked the other members of the council, especially HP for hosting the Zoom meetings during the pandemic, and LF for her work as clerk.

## 2. Co-option of new councillor:

We are only allowed 5 Parish Councillors but are allowed to co-opt a further Councillor with a special responsibility, in this case for legal issues. The meeting welcomed Esther Trinder. She reminded the meeting that her assistance on legal matters would be in a lay capacity .

## 3. Appointment of new Parish Clerk as from the December 2021 meeting

LF, after 12 years will be standing down. TS thanked LF for all her efforts and having been willing to do this for so long on minimal pay. With the new appointment it will be necessary to pay a clerk a salary as is now common practice and put the new clerk on a similar rate as all our surrounding parishes, who use the NALC agreed hourly rate according to experience. TS circulated a document with Local Parish Council comparisons to confirm that the estimated wages and expenses were in line with our neighbouring parishes. Following recent zoom meetings with Lower Slaughter re objections to the proposed car charging station we met Hazel McKinna who is the Clerk to Lower Slaughter PC, and subsequently discovered that she was interested in applying. She lives not far away, has impressive experience, has completed the required training and seems ideally suited to the position. At our estimated 108 hours a year, she would earn less than she does at Lower Slaughter PC who have more meetings and more hours work. It is proposed that she takes over at the December meeting and LF would work with her until the end of March, hopefully thus reducing the extra hours needed to 'learn the ropes'. Hazel's appointment was ratified based on her current NALC scale 15 pay of £12.24 per hour plus £6 per week home working allowance. These rates are reviewed annually. . LF will draft a contract and job description based on the NALC recommended format . ET offered to review this and will comment before sending it to Hazel.

LF would continue with the village mailing list using it as a 'village noticeboard', either in its current format (an email list) or initiate a WhatsApp group or more probably, both.

There had been a late expression of possible interest from a resident, who does not have the relevant experience and would need to carry out the required training courses. The job has grown substantially in the 12 years since LF began, with many more legal requirements. Following discussion it had been agreed that this interest should be kept for possible future discussion if for any reason the current proposal should not proceed.

## 4. Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2020

The minutes of the meeting were approved and signed.

## 5. Financial Report (BF)

BF had previously circulated the financial information: He highlighted the reduction in reserves, which would further drop in the current financial year. Expenses are close to the budgeted figure. Last year,

the principal (unusual) expense was for the kerbstones and drain covers. A resident, recently on the VH committee told the meeting that it had come to light that the Village Hall were now in a position to pay their agreed contribution to the kerb stones. Previously it had been felt that due to the pandemic and their subsequent loss of income that it would be difficult for them to afford this, but they were successful in gaining a substantial CDC grant which has changed their financial position. After discussion It was agreed by a majority decision, that TS would make another approach to the VH committee in hopes that they may make a contribution.

There followed a discussion about the reserves – at what level they should ideally be kept. Other Parishes use a multiplier, using a set percentage. TS reminded the meeting that a few years previously there had been the trees issue of bleeding canker. It could have wiped out a considerable amount of our reserves had it been found that many trees were affected. The trees have proved more resilient than expected but we could still need to fell and replace more than the odd one or two that has so far proved necessary. In the last 10 years our reserves have been between £5,000 and £10,000. The general advice is to hold 3 – 12 months of normal expenditure as a reserve which would mean between £1,500 and £6,000.

There are potential savings to be made in the coming months with pond, trees and website expenses but to offset this there will be the additional cost of the new Clerk as from December. There may need to be a further raise in the precept but this will be decided at the December meeting. Therefore in the coming months prudence must be exercised.

## **6. Annual Audit – appointment of internal auditor**

Andrew and Elizabeth Ransom have given fantastic service, giving their time free of charge for audit and risk review – this has been much appreciated and many thanks are given to them both for their work over several years. TS has been in touch with a retired local accountant David Pugh who has agreed to do the audit for this year only. He does not expect payment but is given a few bottles of wine by the nearby PC which he audits. We should budget £50-£100 for this. If there is any accountant living in the village who would like to take this on in future years that would be much appreciated..

Post meeting note – An EGM will take place at 6pm on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> June in the Village Hall to review and approve the 2020/21 Annual Governance and Accountability Return .