

# WYCK RISSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

## Draft Minutes of Wyck Rissington Parish Council (WRPC) Meeting 24 May 2023

*The purpose of the meeting was to reconstitute the new Parish Council, thus those present were prospective, not actual, councillors.*

### **Present:**

Jeremy Trinder (JT) Acting Chair, Esther Burdett (EB), Brian Finnimore (BF), Simon Gorton (SG), Hilary Ponti (HP).

### **In attendance:**

Andrew Ransom (AR) Hon Clerk, Elizabeth Ransom (ER) Minute Taker and 2 other members of the public

### **1. Chairman's Opening Remarks**

JT explained that Standing Orders required him, as outgoing Chairman, to chair the meeting until a new Chairman could be elected. He welcomed Simon Gorton to his first meeting.

He noted that Andrew Fifield, a former WRPC member, had retired between meetings and thus not properly thanked for his long service to the Council. The meeting would wish to acknowledge Andrew's work, noting that he had never missed a PC meeting, and participants warmly agreed.

As a single issue meeting, to form the new Council, the usual business (eg Minutes of last meeting etc) would be taken at the June WRPC meeting.

### **2. Apologies for absence**

Robert Montague, Andrew Maclean and Mark McKenzie-Charrington had sent their apologies.

### **3. Appointment of Chairman and RFO**

JT asked for nominations for Chairman. None came forward. He then asked for nominations for RFO. None came forward.

AR asked to be allowed to explain why he was not now putting his name forward as RFO, given he had been expected to take over from BF. He stated that the obstruction he had experienced in trying to take on the role had convinced him that he would find it difficult to work effectively with BF. He added that it might in any case be better for a Council member (as is usual) to undertake this role.

BF repudiated the idea that he had been obstructive and explained that his reason for refusing to facilitate AR's access to the PC's bank accounts had been that GAPTC had advised him that AR, as neither a councillor nor an officer of the Council (because he was not an employee of the Council) could not be given access until authorised by vote by WRPC. He did not anticipate any difficulties in working with AR once that had happened and was happy for him to occupy the RFO role whilst not being a Council member.

EB stated that she needed to put the record straight. GAPTC had given the wrong advice concerning the status of an officer, and EB had firmly pointed out to them this error arising

from GAPTC's misunderstanding of the Local Government Act. Accordingly there should have been no impediments to AR's assumption of the RFO role.

BF said that, as he was not a lawyer, he had not been in a position to dispute GAPTC's advice and he wished he had learnt earlier of this misunderstanding.

#### **4. Acceptance of Office**

Brian Finnimore and Simon Gorton confirmed that they would be accepting office on the Parish Council.

Three prospective councillors declined to accept office.

JT reported that Robert Montague had written to him declining to accept office. He read the contents of his letter:

After a lot of consideration, I have decided to resign from the Wyck Rissington Parish Council with immediate effect.

Principally, I feel that the disharmony we are experiencing within the Council will not go away any time soon. You and my fellow Councillors know my position on current issues.

Since joining the PC under Tim, I have very much enjoyed trying to make a small contribution for the benefit of the village.

I totally supported your appointment when you agreed to become Chairman and your plan for a low cost, transparent council as well as the contribution you, Esther and Hilary have made so generously to fight planning issues should be much appreciated by all.

I will of course arrange for the contacts of the EA and the pond maintenance contractor to be made available to the PC. The pond maintenance contractor has already committed to look after the pond this year for the same cost as 2022.

Hilary Ponti and Esther Burdett also said they would not accept office.

As these resignations meant that the Parish Council was now inquorate, JT asked the Clerk to explain what would now happen.

#### **5 New Agenda Item – Actions following the Council being unable to function**

The next step is for the Clerk to inform CDC. On learning that the Parish Council lacks a Chairman, an RFO and is inquorate, the CDC will invite our local District Councillor, Andrew Maclean, join the Council on a temporary basis, so it can become quorate. From there, the Council will attempt to co-opt new members and return the Council to normal operation.

AR indicated that, whilst he would stay on until June 2023 to support these efforts, he would not stay on as Hon Clerk after that date.

Whilst the current status of the Council might be seen as a problem, AR's view was that it was an opportunity for a fresh start with new blood.

**6. Date of next meeting**

The Clerk will fix a date for both a Council meeting and an AGM to be held in June, following consultations with Andrew Maclean.