

**Minutes of the Meeting of
LONGHOPE PARISH COUNCIL
held on Wednesday 16th October 2019**

PRESENT: Cllrs. M Phelps (Chair), L Isko, T Walmsley, R Noblett, A Toomey and G Nicholas

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr A Maliphant (Clerk) and twenty-nine local residents

1. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. S Collins
2. There were no declarations of interest
3. **Public Forum**

There was considerable heated and at times unruly discussion around the single item on the agenda. Points that were raised included:

- Concern that control returning to the parish council would mean no input from the village in managing the pavilion and recreation ground
- Concern whether the parish council had time to run the pavilion and recreation ground as well as manage its other business
- Expectation that the Recreation Ground Committee would have had another meeting to resolve internal differences
- Suggestion that with the resignation of all the trustees from the Committee, the correct procedure would have been to call an extraordinary general meeting
- Suggestion that local people should have been given the opportunity to come forward to take up the vacant places on the Committee
- A feeling that much of the recent issue had been about the bar licence and the football club's use of the bar to raise funds for the club
- Observation that the pavilion is a facility for the whole village, originally bought as a sports pavilion, but good to see it used for other activities
- Observation that control returning to the parish council had been discussed before, and also discussed as far back as 2003 by the Committee of the time
- Observation that the parish council has ultimate responsibility as owner of the pavilion and recreation ground, and has increasingly been providing funds both for building improvements and for running costs

4. To consider taking the pavilion and recreation ground back into direct management by the parish council

The clerk gave a short presentation on the history of the Committee, formed in 1947 to manage the recreation ground, and then achieving charitable status in 1972. He explained the overlaps between the parish council with eight members, two of whom are then appointed to the nine-person Committee, and of whom four are then elected as unpaid officers (chair, vice-chair, treasurer and secretary) at the AGM and registered with the Charity Commission as trustees.

The Committee rules had been revised in June 2019, and make it clear that any further regulations should reflect the principles of the standing orders and financial regulations of Longhope Parish Council. The absence of more detailed written regulations could be seen as a partial cause of the recent issues, not least as they could have provided more guidance around conflicts of interest.

The clerk had contacted the local licensing officer, and been advised that the parish council as building owner could not close down the premises licence, the licence could only be given up by the Committee. He had also contacted the Charity Commission, who had said that in terms of the charitable status, the only option in time of difficulty was not to close down the charity but for the parish council to become the trustees. Charity guidance on the Charity Commission website makes it clear that the assets of a charity cannot be used to raise funds for any other body than the charity itself.

In conclusion, the main options were either to allow the Committee to reconstitute itself, including agreeing rules of operation around the bar in light of the Charity Commission guidance, or for the parish council to become the trustees and manage the pavilion and recreation ground within the same rules.

Several points were made in discussion, including:

- LI and her fellow trustees and volunteers deserved a big vote of thanks for putting on so many great events and making the pavilion more known to villagers
- In terms of raising funds for kit for the football club, the parish council could be approached for a grant
- A feeling that the parish council and councillors had done so much recently to renovate the pavilion, and should take back control first then return to a management committee later
- A feeling that local people needed to be given the opportunity to come forward to reconstitute the Committee, and soon, so as not to lose current interest.

RN proposed that the Committee should set a new AGM date to reorganise itself, seconded by TW. After further discussion, there was a split vote within the six councillors present, and MP used his casting vote as chairman to allow the Committee to reorganise.

The press and public were excluded from the last agenda item due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted

Signed:.....Chairman. Date:.....