**Minutes of the Letwell Parish Council, held on the 29th of July 2023 at Letwell Village Hall, Barker Hades Road. Letwell.**

**Members Present.**

Cllr M Sharpe

Cllr J Straw

Cllr D Biggins

**Staff-** Parish Clerk- Rebecca Thompson.

**Public Session**

L.A Asked if the Council are aware of the broken blocks on the right hand side of Ramper Road. The Council members said that although they have seen them they do not have any further details.

Discussion was has around the lottery results, the Clerk agreed to put the results on the website and inside the bus shelter.  Council members confirmed that they had decided some time ago that they would like the draw filming and done this way and have no plans to change.

The Clerk read out questions she has received from MH and also questions from the Letwell Community Centre. For Questions and Answers please see **Appendix 1**

**Council meeting.**

1. **To receive and approve any apologies for absence.**

           Cllr M Bell

1. **To receive any declarations of interest not already declared under the Council’s Code of Conduct or Members Register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.**

             None

1. **To approve the previous minuets of the meeting held on 31st May 2023.**

            Minutes for the meeting held on the 31st of May 2023 have been circulated to all members, Cllr D Biggins proposed them to be a true and accurate record. Cllr M Sharpe seconded the motion. All agreed.

**4.To discuss any matters arising from the said minutes. For information only.**

None

**5. To discuss any matters for the upcoming Village Fair.**

LA mentioned that they are short of snails for the snail race, and asked if anyone has any then please let her know as they are 10 short.

**6.To receive an update regarding the pond.**

The clerk reported that she had contacted the environment agaency as request and they referred her back to RMBC.

The ecologist at RMBC has agreed to make a visit and will be in touch to arrange a date with Cllr Sharpe in the next few weeks. The Clerk added that she has arranged to collect a pair of bonded ducks but will hold off collecting them until the pond has been looked at.

**6.To discuss and consider any action in relation to the causal vacancy for a Parish Council.**

Item moved to item 8.

**7.To approve the following outgoing payments.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **M. Horn- Reimbursement for plants, planter and materials**  | **£165.21**  |
| **Cleaner**  | **£48.00**  |
| **Salary 24 hours @ £11.25**  | **£270**  |
| **EDF**  | **£20**  |

Payments approved by all. Motion proposed by Cllr D Biggins, Seconded by Cllr J Straw.

**8.To consider any Items to be discussed in the absence of press and public.**

Members discussed the 2 applications received for co-option.

**9.To exchange any information and members reports.**

Cllr M Sharpe reported that there is a minor repair needed on the corner of the village hall at the rear of the building. It requires a tall ladder, Eric the window cleaner has offered to have a look. All agreed for him to do so.

**10.To confirm the date and time, and potential items, for the next meeting.**

20th July at 7:30pm

NB- Amendment- The Clerk recalled a previously arranged engagement on the 20th. Members instead agreed to hold an extra ordinary meeting on the 19th of July to approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Return and consider the co option of a new Cllr.

A new date for the Ordinary Council meeting will be arranged.

Meeting Closed at 9:15pm

**Appendix 1.**

Questions received from Martin Horn. Answers in Green text.

**1.Why have the Parish Council decided questions must be sent 3 days before the meeting?**

Cllr Straw explained that that is so that the Clerk and Councillors can ensure that an answer can be given rather than risk deferring the question.

**2.When and how did the Parish Council decide this?**

The Clerk confirmed that the Council decided this last year.

**3.How much money did the Parish Council fundraising events raise in the last financial year?**

The Clerk advised that the accounts have not yet been returned by the auditor, she went on to say that once the Council have approved the Annual Governance Accountability Return a public rights notice will be published allowing members of the Council to inspect the accounts by appointment with herself.

**4.What Parish Council items can be discussed in a private meeting?**

The members answered that although there is no set rule on this, the usual things involve staffing matters, tenders for contracts, legal issues.

**5.What happens if the Parish Council Clerk resigns?**

The Clerk answered that although she has no plans to resign, the normal procedure would be that the Council advertise for another Clerk. A Council needs a Clerk as they are the only proper officer of the Council and in this case also the Responsible Finance Officer, as an interim a Parish councillor can step in as clerk but only for one year and unpaid.

**6.What was the last item that each Councillor asked to be added to a Parish Council agenda?**

The Clerk answered that this is difficult to answer without going through all previous minutes, she added that it is only the Clerk and Chairman that can finalise the agenda.

**7.Can I have a list of unauthorised spending for the last 2 years, including the value, what it was for and who spent the money?**

**See Answer to Q3.**

**Questions received from Vicky Bennett.**

1. **What is the process for the casual vacancy?It's not really clear from the notice which mentions an election.**

The Clerk confirmed that as it is not an election year the vacancy is a casual vacancy , this means that people wishing to join the Council write to Council with a summary about themselves. If less than 10 people have requested an election the election office will contact the Clerk then the Council may co opt a member or if they feel there is no suitable candidate the vacancy will remain open.

1. **Is this a relatively new procedure? If not, why has this process not been followed in the past 18 years that I have lived here?**

The clerk advised that she cannot answer this as she has only been in post 2 years. Cllr Sharpe added that he does not know why it has been done differently in Letwell.

1. **In the open question session, is it ok to ask a question relating to a question that has already been asked , even if it hasn't been submitted by email three days before hand.**

Yes.

1. **The grass on the green triangle at the bottom of Church Lane was cut by the council recently. However other parts of the village were not done at the same time. What is the schedule for grass cutting? Which areas and frequency etc.**

The Clerk handed out the current grass cutting schedule for RMBC and advised that it is out of the remit of the Parish Council and advised members of the public to contact RMBC if they have issues.

1. **For the LCG part of the meeting - do their questions need to be emailed in 3 days before?**

The Clerk advised that it would be best practice to do so in order to give time foe an answer to be sought.