



Minutes of the Meeting of Costessey Town Council held on Tuesday 12 November 2019 at 7pm at the Costessey Centre, Longwater Lane, Costessey, NR8 5AH

PRESENT: Cllrs T Laidlaw (Chairman), J Amis (Vice-Chair), M Bedford, G Blundell, D Burrill, F Carter (arrived late), G Dole, T East, L Glover (arrived late), S Hannant, G Jones, S Jones, J Knights, J Newby, P O'Connor; D Sarson (Locum Clerk).

There were no members of the public or press in attendance.

TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES

578/19: Apologies were received from Cllr J Flowerdew, C Mahn and S Long (other commitments). Apologies were also received from the Town Clerk Hilary Elias. No apology was received from Cllr I Alam.

TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

579/19:

Minute No.	Councillors Name	Personal/ Other interest	Pecuniary	Reason
582/19	Cllrs T Laidlaw & D Burrill	✓ ✓		The Councillors are members of South Norfolk Council's Development Management Committee. They advised they would listen to the views of Costessey Town Council but would remain open to further information or views prior to voting on an application at DMC.
582/19	Cllr Bedford	✓		With respect of application reference 2019/2140, the councillor is involved with the Boys' Brigade who hire the church and use the shed which is the subject of the application and declared a non-pecuniary interest.
582/19	Cllr Laidlaw	✓		With respect of application reference 2019/2140, the councillor has agreed funding for the shed from his district council members' ward fund and declared a non-pecuniary interest.
582/19	Cllr O'Connor	✓		With respect of application reference 2019/2191, the councillor lives in the same street and declared a non-pecuniary interest.

TO ADJOURN THE MEETING FOR 15 MINUTES' PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

580/19: The members of the public in attendance did not wish to speak on any matters to be discussed on the agenda so the meeting was not adjourned.

581/19: Councillor Glover entered the meeting at 7.10pm

TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS, AND RECEIVE INFORMATION ON APPEALS & OTHER PLANNING MATTERS

582/19: a) Planning applications for consideration:

- i) 2019/2139: Dr A Rattan - Beech Cottage, Townhouse Road, NR8 5BS - Conversion of outbuildings to annexe, including extensions and alterations to main dwelling – by 25 Nov 2019. This application appears to be acceptable subject to a survey for bats and other endangered species - **APPROVE**
- ii) 2019/2140: Mr P Burnett - Baptist Church Hall, The Street, NR8 5DB - Removal of old shed and erection of new - by 21 November 2019. This application appears to be acceptable – **APPROVE** (Councillors Bedford and Laidlaw abstained)
- iii) 2019/2163: Mr & Mrs Minns - 7 Highlow Road, NR5 0HP - Garage conversion with pitched roof and new bay windows to front of dwelling - by 21 November 2019. This application appears to be acceptable – **APPROVE**
- iv) 2019/2182: Pets at Home - Unit B Alex Moorhouse Way, NR5 0JT - Proposed advertisements – by 22 November This application appears to be acceptable – **APPROVE**
- v) 2019/2191: Sparkes, 54 Gunton Lane, NR5 0AG - Erection of a single storey front and rear extension - by 25 November 2019. This application appears to be acceptable – **APPROVE** (Councillor O'Connor abstained)

583/19: THE DATE OF THE NEXT FULL COUNCIL MEETING was confirmed as **TUESDAY 26 November 2019 at 7pm in the Costessey Centre, NR8 5AH**

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

584/19: Councillors considered whether to pass a resolution to exclude the press and public from the meeting under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960.

It was RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from the meeting under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 on the grounds that it is not in the public interest to disclose discussion on the items below

THE FOLLOWING ITEM WAS HEARD IN CONFIDENCE / BELOW THE LINE

585/19: It was noted that the complaints which Council were to consider at this meeting have been withdrawn within the last two hours. However, it is still proposed that this meeting review the process for managing complaints against staff and the Council's disciplinary and grievance policies to ensure appropriate procedures are in place in case of future complaints being received.

586/19: Copies of the guidance received from Personnel Advice & Solutions Ltd were tabled and councillors were given time to read the information

587/19: Councillor Carter entered the meeting at 7.35pm

588/19: The situation where a Full Council meeting was required to be called to consider these complaints against officers (now withdrawn), is because the Finance, Budget and Staffing committee (F, B & S) does not have formal delegated authority and therefore the decision-making powers to handle staff disciplinary matters. On professional advice, therefore, this meeting was called to set procedures in motion. The written recommendations from the HR advisor were tabled at the meeting.

589/19: It was recommended that the Council give consideration to giving full delegated power to the F, B & S Committee and to also consider setting up a Staffing Sub-Committee to delegate all staffing matters to.

590/19: The email withdrawing the complaint requested that all reference to the complaint be deleted from all files both in hard copy and electronically, but it was noted that the Council could be in breach of legal requirements to maintain employee files and needs further investigation. It was also noted that the tone of the communication was in breach of the newly adopted Member/Officer policy.

591/19: Discussion was held about the need to manage staffing matters in such a way that the fewest number of councillors as possible are aware of the detail so that hearing and appeal panels made up of councillors with no prior knowledge can be set up.

It was proposed by Cllr G Jones, seconded by Cllr Carter and unanimously RESOLVED to give delegated authority to the F, B & S committee to handle all matters relating to staffing.

592/19: It was noted that there appears to be some conflict between the disciplinary and grievance procedures specified in staff employment contracts and the adopted policies of the council and there are some policies the council does not have which are considered necessary.

It was RESOLVED to request that the Policies Review Working Group (PRWG) review specific employment policies including whistle blowing, vexatious behaviour, and review the grievance and disciplinary policies in relation to employment contracts and report directly to the F, B & S committee on these matters.

593/19: It was noted that stress is a key issue that CTC as an employer must risk assess and that a review of staff stress and welfare needs to be undertaken. It was further noted that stress is an issue also affecting councillors.

a) **It was RESOLVED to refer the matter of stress management to the F, B & S committee.**

b) **It was RESOLVED to refer the exploration of developing a councillors' mental health policy and a well-being chart for councillors and staff to understand how they are feeling, to the PRWG and invite Cllrs Carter and Newby to attend for these matters given their expertise.**

594/19: Discussion was held about the benefits of giving delegated powers to all committees in order to improve efficiency, make better use of time at Full Council meetings and speed up the decision-making process.

It was RESOLVED that a review of delegated powers to committees be carried out by the PRWG.

595/19: It was noted that the Policies Review Working Group now had an extended remit and would require ongoing support beyond that already contracted.

Cllr O'Connor proposed and it was RESOLVED that Deborah Sarson, as an experienced and independent contributor, be engaged to continue in the role of providing clerking support to the PRWG until such time as the work for the group is completed.

The meeting ended at 9.06pm

Chairman:

Date: