

HUNTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Huntington Parish Council held on Wednesday 19th April 2023
at 7.00pm.**

PRESENT:	Councillor D. Geogheghan-Breen (DB) – Chairman, Councillor D. Smith (DS), Councillor J Badenhorst (JB), Councillor J. Willis (JW), Councillor K. Orrell (KO), Councillor S. Jobling (SJ), Councillor M. Duncanson (MD) 44 members of the public, two Police Officers and Lorraine Frankland (LF) - Parish Clerk/RFO
APOLOGIES:	Councillor G. Shann (GS), Councillor D. Jobling (DJ), Councillor A. Hawxby (AH), and Cemetery Clerk
CIRCULATION:	To attendees, apologies and other all members of the Parish Council
MINUTES PREPARED BY:	Lorraine Frankland
DATE (Draft):	19/04/2023
DATE TO BE APPROVED:	17/04/2024

ITEM		ACTION
1.	<p><u>To Note Apologies for Absence;</u> Councillor G. Shann (GS); absent due to A/L Councillor D. Jobling (DJ) and Councillor A. Hawxby (AH); absent due to illness Cemetery Clerk; absent due to fear for personal safety <u>It was resolved</u> to approve all apologies and reasons for absence.</p>	
2.	<p><u>To Approve Minutes of The Annual Parish Meeting of 20/04/2022</u> Minutes approved as a true and accurate record of said meeting, signed and dated by Chairman.</p>	
3.	<p><u>Chairman's Report:</u> <i>Diane Geogheghan-Breen - Chair - April 2023</i> I must firstly start by thanking our former RFO Gill who left us in January 2023. Gill has been involved with Huntington Parish Council in many capacities over the years and we wish her well. As always the Parish Council has had very busy year and we are glad life has returned to something near normal after Covid. Our Gardening scheme continues to benefit our residents who are unable to manage the upkeep of their garden numbers have fallen slightly so we are in the process of re advertising the scheme. We were able to run our Gala again on what was the hottest day of the year it was well attended sadly the firm due to provide the children s rides let us down on the day, but this did not stop everyone enjoying themselves thanks to the Gala committee for excellent organisation. We plan another Gala in July 2023 and thanks to the Sports Club for there continued support. We continue to receive planning applications many are not controversial however we are still waiting for the Secretary of State to determine the appeal from Barratts to build</p>	

300 homes on New Lane which was refused by CYC on the grounds the land is green belt this application was submitted in 2021 and we are expecting a decision in May 2023.

Redrow also appealed the non-determination of planning for 970 houses off North Lane after a public enquiry this was approved by the Secretary of State. We now await more detailed plans from Redrow.

Our 3 halls remained fully utilised by the community with many groups using the halls for a variety of activities from Pilates to Italian classes.

We were also successful in applying for funding for new play equipment on Orchard Park and plan on putting some picnic tables on the land near the Hall.

We are now in a position to improve the Play Park at Garth Road with new drains and replacing some of the equipment hopefully this will complete during 2023.

We continued to make grants to local groups including Huntington Rovers for new sports equipment and the Girl Guides at St Andrews Church we also paid for new carpets at the Sports Club. If you are a local group looking for funding please get in touch.

Potholes all over Huntington have been reported to us and we continue report to CYC.

Cemetery Committee has met regularly throughout the year we are now in a position to start the extension and are in the process of receiving tenders.

We recommended to Parish Council that we needed to enforce rule 10 due to complaints from the public regarding encroachment onto nearby plots by fences/ lights/coving which are not allowed . This recommendation was approved.

Finally, I would like to thank Lorraine our Clerk for her hard work and personal support to myself throughout the year.

Thanks also to our Burial Clerk, thanks to councillors who are not standing again this year for their hard work on behalf of our community.

A final thankyou to Parish councillors who work so hard and give up time to make Huntington a better place .

Diane Geogheghan-Breen Chair April 2023

4. **RFO REPORT – HUNTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL 2022-2023**

The Precept of £131507 remained the same as for 2021/22, particularly as the Council carried forward an underspend from the previous year due to the effects of the pandemic.

As HPC records the finances on a receipts and payments basis, all transactions have to be recorded as they actually come in and out of the account. The Double Taxation payment received from City of York for 2022/23 reached the HPC Bank account before the year end on 31 March 2023.

There is a ring-fenced amount of £28,400 in receipts for improvements to Garth Road Playground, plus £15,000 agreed from HPC. However, drainage work needs to be carried out before any of the equipment can be replaced.

The Gardening Scheme continued to run, and however there has sadly been a drop in numbers, creating an underspend in the year. The scheme is intended to be from the start of April to the end of October, but, due to certain weather conditions, over-ran again towards the end.

After Gill left as RFO at the end of January, HPC continues to have three employees – Lorraine as Clerk and RFO and John Cliffe and Lindsay Ball to look after the Orchard Park play area and park – one working four days and the other three - John also works for HPC on three days as the Street Cleaner. The Cemetery Clerk is in the process of being TUPE to the Parish Council. All legislation as regards employment is noted and pay rates are reviewed annually for John and Lindsay – the Cemetery Clerk and Parish Clerk/RFO pay rates are dictated by NALC

The Parish Council continues to fund a Citizens' Advice Bureau Outreach Service at Huntington Community Centre. HPC has also provided funding the Huntington Rovers Football Club.

The Parish insurance cover is reviewed annually in depth. Unfortunately, a claim was made following an accident on the zip wire at Orchard Park, has meant that we are tied to our current providers until 2025. Although the outcome has yet to be finalised, this will result in an increase in the premium for 2023/2024. The cemetery Insurance will need adding to the policy from the end of April.

There has been an issue with the reclaiming of the VAT this year, as a result of the Oct-Dec claim being logged as July-Sept which caused the HMRC VAT system to stall as it appeared that; HPC had two different claims for the same quarter. This has now been resolved.

Invoices to be presented for payment, bank reconciliations and the up-to-date financial situation continue to be circulated to Councillors monthly. James Mackman resigned as Internal Auditor in January and both his Audit and the External Audit with PKF Littlejohn were successfully completed last year. A new Internal Auditor was appointed at short notice Safia Kauser, and an interim inspection has raised several recommendations, which HPC has agreed to implement.

There have been system delays in the handover from the outgoing RFO and Myself, this has unfortunately not been helped by the handover beginning on 01/03/23, towards the end of this financial year.

I would like to thank Naurin for her continued support, together with Di as Chair and all other Councillors for their help and advice.

Lorraine Frankland – Responsible Finance Officer – April 2022.

5. **Questions Raised by Members of Huntington Parish**

DB read two emails broadly in support of the enforcement of rule 10, one asked that their comments be recorded in the minutes:

"I would like to express my support of the implementation of Rule 10 of the Cemetery rules and am happy for this to be minuted in today's meeting.

I would note my husband is buried in the cemetery and I have purchased my own grave space next to his and therefore have a personal interest in this discussion.

The poor condition of grave ornaments and mementos for loved ones has expanded exponentially over the last 10 years.

Currently it resembles a fun fair - but one where relatives do not remove broken ornaments etc and often their mementos encroach on others grave spaces. The one to the rear of my own 'empty space' has recently experienced this and the stones etc will need to be moved when I am interned.

All of the above said I think the issue could have been handled more sensitively.

I feel there is a training need for the groundsman and their immediate manager around expectations of behaviour and customer service.

I think it would have been helpful for some relatives if the committee had tried to reach out to the current owners of the plots in addition to the notices and possibly an official notification in the Huntington FB group to ensure as wide as possible communication campaign ahead of the implementation.

And referring to the training need - perhaps it would have been possible to remove items in a better way so that the committee and groundsman would not be accused of 'desecrating' graves when this was not the intention.

I very much acknowledge the sensitivities for individuals and that communication is extremely difficult in these situations and I continue to support the implementation of Rule 10.

This rule has been in place for many years and individuals purchasing plots are made aware of it and have taken the view to ignore it.

The issue has grown because people have seen the smaller tributes and now feel bigger is better and not all people visit and tidy the grave regularly enough to keep them tidy and clear broken items.

I would appreciate if this email were acknowledged and the minutes of the meeting".

DB-then opened the meeting for questions:

NF-asked what had prompted the decision to implement rule 10?

DB-said the Cemetery Clerk had two written complaints and had been approached by several people whilst at the cemetery, about the state of some graves in relation to rule 10, and also it was becoming more difficult to maintain around graves

LP-asked can you give the exact dates of these complains?

DB-was not able to provide this information to the meeting

CY-has a baby and four family members at the cemetery, why hasn't the gardener been prosecuted for desecrating the graves?

He has no regards for members of the public.

He cleans his vehicle outside the garage at the cemetery whilst members of the public are walking past to visit loved ones

CF-Brought the gardeners behaviour to the attention of a committee member, doesn't agree with the sign in the car park

JB-was upset and didn't take in the rules supplied by the undertaker when purchasing the plot at a time of bereavement

DB read rule 10

IF-believes this work has been done because the gardener wants to mow in a straight line, the gardener has no guard on the strimmer. When you are at the grave he strims right up to mourners

SR-It would appear that this process was started by hear-say and a decision to enforce rule 10 was made. Over 40 years since the rule was foamed the approach to grieving has changed substantially. Clearly the view of way forward has been done particularly badly, would it not have been wiser to come up with a different way forward?

DB- Agreed that things may have changed over time, however 90% of the graves fit within rule10

Unknown-was told that they could lay chippings by the previous gardener who told them the ground was so wet they would struggle to get grass to grow. Why can't you get rid of rule10?

DB- people have suggested that however that would lead to miss management Those present asked for rule10 to be amended

JB-believed there had been minimal attempts to contact families, the work had begun without any engagement with the public

IF-claims he hasn't received a copy of the rules

CF- placed the chippings because it was boggy at the grave

Unknown-the gardener is destroying the path into the extension by dumping grass clippings on it, he also dumped the kerbing stones in the bin

SP-the gardener dumped all the tributes on top of my husband's head stone in a heap, which was very upsetting

PH- I would like to start by saying that I hope all the points in my email, that I sent on behalf of everyone here, will be addressed at this meeting.

For the next couple of minutes of my allotted time I would like to specifically address the Cemetery Committee, who I believe are Charlie Hillman, Gerald Shann, Julie Shann, Malcolm Duncanson and Alan Hawxby. As you know I reported the desecration of 23 graves to North Yorkshire Police.

They agreed that desecration of the plots is a crime but because notice was posted on the notice board and website warning people, then no crime had been committed. They confirmed that if I had gone into the cemetery and had done exactly the same thing to the plots, that I would have been arrested and charged.

I would now like to read out the names of the deceased whose plots were desecrated on Saturday:

23 names read

Apologies if any of the names of the deceased are incorrect. It was very difficult to find the through the soil and personal effects piled on top of them. I would also like mention MEF who has had a muddy planter placed on his grave covering his name in mud. That's MEF - aged 8.

There were other plots that had been spoilt but not to the point of desecration.

I would also like to show the cemetery committee some before and after photographs of the plot of VDR who was born asleep in August 2003 and has been resting in peace in his plot for nearly 20 years.

Finally, I would like to ask all of the Parish Council if they think that they have been negligent by not enforcing law 10 for the past 39 years and therefore allowing this situation to have happened?

Thank you for listening.

NC-It was stated quite clearly that; children's graves would not be touched!

DB- and they shouldn't have been, I apologise

LB-we chose the cemetery because it looks like it does - until Monday

JP-chose the cemetery because it was so lovely, we didn't know about this when we checked on the website and emailed the clerk, please can you make it more obvious.

We often remove dead flowers from graves when it appears they are not going to be removed by loved ones

MR-how long has this been posted on the website?

DB-Last November

AK-Is the gardener a member of the cemetery committee? Rule10 should be applied to reflect the modern way of grieving

DE-If the grave doesn't have a plinth or headstone will flower be thrown away? I have complained about the gardener to the Cemetery Clerk why wasn't this dealt with?

DB-Asked those present to refrain from cleaning the graves until Saturday so that Parish Councillors could visit and see for themselves what had been done to the graves

Meeting closed at 8.16pm

DRAFT