

## **DRAFT MINUTES FOR APPROVAL**

### **Minutes of a meeting of Scarning Parish Council held in the Village Hall on 27 September 2010.**

Present Mr A Glister, Mrs W Brown, Mr N Eagle, Mr C Farnham,  
Mr J McSkimming, Ms J Magrath, Mr M Steward.  
In attendance Mr N Hartley  
Six members of the public

#### 1. Welcome and apologies for Absence

The chairman noted that all councillors were at the meeting.

#### 2. Declarations of Interest

Mr Glister declared a personal interest in all items on the agenda and a prejudicial interest in item 5, as he is a churchwarden and item 6 regarding the grant application from the Bowls Clubs, as he is a member of the Bowls Club.

Mr Steward declared a prejudicial interest in item 5 as his wife is a member of Scarning PCC. Two of his uncles, who are also members of Scarning PCC, attended the meeting on behalf of the PCC.

#### 3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2010 were confirmed and signed.

#### 4. Matters Arising

None.

#### Public Participation

The meeting was closed for public participation.

#### 5. Maintenance of the closed part of the churchyard

The clerk read the following. The Parish Council makes an annual grant to Scarning Parochial Church Council to maintain the closed part of the churchyard. This year the amount was £2,000. In 2009, it was £1,900. In 2008, it was £1,700. In 2007, it was £1,500. In 2006, it

was £1,300. The letter which accompanies each cheque clearly states that the money is for the maintenance of the closed part of the churchyard.

The accounts of the Parish Council are subject to audit, both internally and externally. In order to complete the audit trail, I wrote to the Secretary of Scarning PCC on 28 May 2010 requesting copies of the invoices paid by the PCC in respect of the maintenance of the closed part of the churchyard. In response, I received two invoices for grass cutting for May and October 2009, totaling £1,072.

I wrote a second letter to the PCC dated 24 June 2010 asking whether the grass cutting invoices covered the whole churchyard or just the closed part of the churchyard. I also asked if there were any other maintenance costs invoiced in respect of the closed part of the churchyard.

I raised the matter at the Parish Council meeting on 19 July. The Parish Council, having listened to a representative of the PCC agreed that it would assess the position at the end of the current financial year, ie 31 March 2011, as the exact amount spent by the PCC on the maintenance of the closed part of the churchyard was not clear.

Former Parish Councillor, Les Spillman, who did not attend the meeting on 19 July, objected to the council's decision on the basis that, in his opinion, the matter should be resolved now. In his opinion the balance of any monies should be returned and future payments only made on the receipt of relevant invoices. He noted that as the Parish Council is dealing with taxpayers' money the council is charged with ensuring that the funds are correctly allocated and correctly used and not used for any other purpose. He also pointed out that the Parish Council needs to ensure that this year's payment is not a one off and that past payments should be reviewed with the PCC and any overpaid monies returned to the Parish Council.

Mr Spillman resigned from the Parish Council and has lodged a complaint regarding this issue with the Standards Board. I contacted an officer at the Standards Board seeking advice. The response was that the Council should reconsider its decision taken at the meeting on 19 July.

The matter was raised again at the Parish Council meeting on 20 September and it was agreed to hold another meeting. The day after the meeting I wrote to the Secretary of Scarning PCC informing them of this decision and requesting copies of any additional relevant invoices for 2009. I also asked for an idea of the grass cutting costs for this year. I have received no response.

The Parish Council has made all its payments in respect of the maintenance of the closed part of the churchyard in good faith; but in view of the anomalies I would propose that at the very least the Parish Council should request repayment of £828 in respect of the payment made in 2009. It should also request the immediate repayment of all those monies for this year for which there are no invoices. In this respect, the PCC should be asked to produce its invoices to May 2010 and October 2010. The Parish Council should then deduct the total amount from the £2,000 grant and request the repayment of the balance. If, by the end of the financial year ( ie 31 March 2011 ) the PCC produces additional relevant invoices that relate solely to the

maintenance of the closed part of the churchyard then the Parish Council should of course pay these.

Mr R Steward spoke on behalf of Scarning Parochial Church Council ( copy attached ).

The Parish Council agreed that the monies that have not been spent in respect of the maintenance of the closed part of the churchyard should be returned. In 2010, the PCC has to date paid one bill in respect of grass cutting. There will be a second bill to pay. The clerk will liaise with the treasurer of the PCC.

## 6. Grant Applications

The clerk noted that the pre school had spent £1,141.88 on the swing for which the Parish Council had previously given it a grant of £2,000. As the full grant had not been spent, the balance should be taken into consideration in respect of the pre school's application. If no grant was made, the balance of the funds should be returned to the Parish Council.

The council considered three Grant Applications.

Scarning Primary School applied for £1,558.75 to supply and install a purpose built bird hide, which will be open not only to pupils of the school, but to residents of Scarning.

Scarning Pre School applied for £5,000 to improve its outdoor play area.

Scarning Bowls Club applied for £4,030 to erect a verandah on the Bowls Club pavilion.

Mr Glister left the room when the Bowls Club application was discussed.

It was agreed to allocate the following:-

Scarning Primary School, £1,500.

Scarning Pre School, £1,000 ( this figure taking into account the unused balance regarding the previous grant.).

Scarning Bowls Club, £2,500 ( on the basis that the verandah is available for the use of the whole community ).

## Letter to the Standards Board

With regard to the complaint over payments in respect of the closed part of the churchyard, it was proposed and agreed that the clerk should write to the Standards Board on behalf of the Parish Council regarding what members feel is a slight to their integrity.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 8.30pm.