

**Minutes of the Meeting of Tunstead and Sco-Ruston Parish Council held at the Horse & Groom
on Tuesday 18th June 2024 at 7:30pm.**

Present: Chris Oakes, Chairman
Rob Hetherington,
Gilly Foulds
Liz Powell
Julie North
Robert Cole
Jimmy Miller, Clerk

Also present: Nigel Dixon; Steve Blatch (NNDC); one member of the public

1 Public Forum –15 minutes for comments from members of the public

A member of the public stated that there was still flooding outside her house.

Cllr Oakes said that due to Steve Blatch attending the meeting to talk about the polling station being moved to Ashmanhaugh for the upcoming election, this item would be brought forward.

Cllr Oakes said he was concerned about the polling station being moved and the reasons why. Cllr Oakes said that the pub was asked to do the general election and then it all got changed at short notice..

Steve Blatch said that, as Returning Officer for the North Norfolk constituency, finding a polling station venue in Tunstead is challenging. He said that the pub had been used recently but was tight with regard to space in terms of privacy and disabled access. The feedback he'd received from electoral staff was that the pub is not conducive as a polling station in terms of disabled access, limited parking, and noise from the pub. He also stressed that the Horse & Groom is the only pub used in the constituency as a polling station.

Steve said that the pub was last used for elections in May of this year for the Police and Crime Commissioner election. He'd received similar concerns from the electoral staff about the pub and then at 5pm on Wednesday 22nd May the prime minister announced that a general election would take place on 4th July. On the Friday, the presiding officer at Tunstead said that they did not feel that the pub was an appropriate venue , especially given the number of voters expected at a general election. NNDC had to collect the data for the poll cards to be printed so that they could be with the printers by 5pm on Tuesday 28th May so that they would be dispatched on 6th June. The Monday was a bank holiday. During the weekend, consideration was given to alternative venues for the polling station. However, church was not considered appropriate as it doesn't have a car park and is also a long way from Market Street (1.7 miles from the pub). They then looked at alternative venues in neighbouring parishes and Ashmanhaugh was found to be the nearest venue (1.4 miles from the pub).

Cllr Oakes asked if Steve had seen the car parking at the Preston Rooms in Ashmanhaugh. He said that there was less car parking at the Preston Rooms compared to the pub and that the road outside was a single track meaning that it could not be used for parking.

Steve replied that there is additional car parking behind the Preston Rooms and that, as the venue will be exclusively used for elections on that day, there will be no competing uses. He said that there were 622 on the electoral register in Tunstead and that approximately 90 had requested postal votes, and at Ashmanhaugh there was about 120 on the electoral register.

Cllr Hetherington said that there were two issues previously identified with the pub as a polling station venue: (1) access to a microwave; (2) access to a kettle. He said that these were the only issues identified and that nobody mentioned anything else.

Steve said that the presiding officer who worked at Tunstead on 2nd May said that the space is too small, that access is difficult, and that there was a lot of noise from the pub on the day of the police and crime commissioner election

Cllr Foulds stated that a lot of the concerns which Steve Blatch had listed were surmountable.

Steve said that it wasn't an ideal situation using the Preston Rooms but he'd had to make a quick decision.

Cllr North said that he'd made the decision without any consultation.

Steve replied that this was because he'd had three days in which to make the decision. He said that, since the election in May, they were in the process of reviewing the polling stations when the prime minister called the election. Therefore they didn't have time to consult.

Steve said that the polling station cannot be changed for the upcoming election but a change of venue would be possible in the future. He also said that TPC would be consulted if, as a result of an interim review, it was considered necessary to change the venue of the polling station.

Steve said that he is happy to come back and discuss what needs to change for the pub to be used as a polling station in the future.

Cllr Dixon said she was concerned about how the situation has been handled.

Cllr Oakes said that he had visited the polling station in May at about 8:30pm and asked the presiding officer if everything was okay with the venue. He was not informed of any issues.

Nigel said that there were a raft of issues which he didn't want swept under the carpet. He questioned why the presiding officer didn't submit a report with some urgency regarding the polling station. He questioned, given that the only polling station in the constituency that has changed venue is Tunstead, why more urgency wasn't given to sorting any issues out quickly. Nigel said that the people of Tunstead deserve answers and he called for an investigation and a report into the change of polling station and Steve agreed that this would take place.

2 Report from Nigel Dixon, NNDC

As the first item took up so much time, Nigel decided not to give a report.

3 Report from Norfolk Constabulary

None.

4 To receive and approve apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Place and Coston.

5 Declarations of interest for items and applications for dispensations

None.

6 To approve minutes of 21st May 2024

Cllr Hetherington proposed approving the minutes; seconded by Cllr Powell; unanimous decision in favour.

7 To receive and note the Clerk's report

The Clerk's report was noted.

8) Planning

a) Applications received

PF/24/0989

11 Laurel Farm Barns, Market Street, Tunstead, Norwich, Norfolk, NR12 8QY
Erection of detached annexe

Cllr Hetherington proposed supporting the application subject to the annexe not being rented out and not being used as a separate independent dwelling; seconded by Cllr Powell; majority decision in favour with four councillors voting in favour and one voting against.

b) Applications received since 13th June 2024

None.

(c) Planning decisions

None

(d) Planning Decisions received since 13th June 2024

None

9 Correspondence – To consider and respond to the following correspondence:

Correspondence list to be issued

The correspondence list was noted.

10 Finance

a) To note Bank Reconciliation

b) To note Accounts

Cllr Foulds proposed that TPC accept the bank reconciliation and accounts; seconded by Cllr Cole. Unanimous decision in favour.

c) To approve items for payment:

Payee	Item	Amount
J. Miller	Salary for June 2024	£239.20
J. Miller	Home office June 2024	£10.00
J. Miller	Mileage (meeting June 2024)	£15.30

Cllr Foulds proposed that TPC approve the payments; seconded by Cllr North; unanimous decision in favour

11 To transfer funds from Santander account to Barclays account

Cllr Foulds proposed that TPC move their funds which are currently with Santander over to the Barclays savings account; seconded by Cllr Powell; unanimous decision in favour.

12 Grass cutting for Church

The Clerk was asked to raise the issue of damage to mementoes left at graves in the churchyard with the PPC.

Cllr Oakes spoke about TPC's contribution to the cost of grass cutting at the church. Cllr Foulds proposed that TPC pay £400 towards the grass cutting; seconded by Cllr Powell; unanimous decision in favour.

13 Removal of polling station from the Parish with no consultation

This was covered earlier.

14 SAM2 sign

Cllrs North and Coles both offered to help with the SAM2 signs.

15 Flooding

Cllr Foulds informed the meeting that the following days she had a meeting planned with the Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance, Anglian Water etc to discuss areas of flooding within the parish.

The Clerk was asked to report flooding on sections of the highway in Tunstead to NCC Highways.

16 Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Hetherington informed the meeting that the latest funding round for neighbourhood plans had opened again. Cllr Hetherington proposed bidding again for funding and accepting the CCP quote of £8,850 for work as detailed in the quote and submitting the quote for technical requirements as suggested by Locality and CCP; Cllr Oakes seconded; unanimous decision in favour.

Cllr Hetherington proposed allocating £350 in total for printing and delivery from Parish funds to be used if required; seconded by Cllr Oakes; unanimous decision in favour.

17 Agenda items for meeting in July 2024

Pavement grass cutting and footpaths
War memorial

Meeting closed at 9:28pm.

Date of next Parish Council meeting: 23rd July 2024