



Minutes of the Meeting of North Hinksey Parish Council held at 8pm on Thursday 15th October 2020 via video conference

Those Present: Cllr D Kay (Chairman), Cllrs P Allen, A Bastin, L Berrett, D Blase, C Church, M Dowie, A Dykes, G Fairclough, A MacKeith, C Potter, A Rankin

In attendance: Sharon Henley (Clerk), County Councillor Judy Roberts

Members of Public: 2

20/74: Apologies for Absence: Cllr Judi Bolder, District Councillors Emily Smith and Debby Hallett

20/75: Declarations of Interest in Items on the Agenda: Cllr Dowie declared an interest in the Allotments (agenda item 20/83 (11)) as an allotment tenant.

20/76: Approval of Draft Minutes

1. Parish Council Meeting on 10th September 2020: Cllr Dowie requested a named Vote: Proposed by Cllr Kay, Seconded by Cllr Fairclough, Cllrs Bastin, Berrett, Blasé, Church, Dykes, MacKeith, Potter and Rankin voted in favour, Cllr Dowie voted against and Cllr Allen abstained so the minutes were approved.
2. Recreation & Amenities Committee Meeting 10th September 2020: Approval was Proposed by Cllr Kay, Seconded by Cllr Bastin and unanimously agreed by Committee members.
3. Environment & Wellbeing Committee Meeting 17th September 2020: Cllr Dowie requested a named vote. Cllr Kay Proposed, Cllr Fairclough Seconded, Cllr Dowie voted against and all other Committee members were in favour so the minutes were approved.
4. Communications Committee Meeting 17th September 2020: Approval was proposed by Cllr Kay, Seconded by Cllr Berrett and all Committee members voted in favour.
5. Allotments Committee Meeting 24th September 2020: Cllr Dowie requested a named vote. Cllr Kay Proposed approval, Seconded by Cllr MacKeith with those Councillors and Cllr Fairclough voting in favour. Cllr Dowie voted against, so the minutes were approved.

20/77: Matters raised by Member of the Public: There were none.

20/78: Questions raised by Councillors: A question was raised by Cllr Kay for Cllr Dowie and the question and response have been summarised at Appendix A.

20/79: Reports from County & District Councillors: Cllr Roberts had circulated her monthly report and highlighted that it was hoped that the library would open this month, pending the wi-fi connection in order to comply with Covid-safe measures.

20/80: Review of Actions

19/98 Burial Facilities: CARRIED OVER

19/158 (1) Councillors to be added as a cheque signatory: **IN PROGRESS**

(7) **Neighbourhood Plan** letters to the Vale & Govt by Cllr Kay: **ACTIONED**

20/66 Cllrs MacKeith, Dowie and Bastin to attend OCC meeting on 17th Sept where parking and yellow lines will be discussed. **ACTIONED**

20/69 Clerk to write to Thames Water and Env Agency **ACTIONED**

20/70:

1. Website. Cllr Berrett & Kay to add text to images: **ACTIONED** LB to liaise with Kitson on (b) **ACTIONED**
2. School lease. Clerk & Cllr Potter to liaise with School to finalise lease. Clerk & Cllr Kay to sign lease **ACTIONED**
3. Scout Hut lease. Clerk to write to Knights and 4th Ox Scout Group: **ACTIONED**
4. Tree Survey. Clerk to obtain further quotes and arrange for urgent works: **Contractor instructed for urgent works. Further quotes requested for 12 month items.**
7. Council Policies – clerk to make agreed amendments to the Complaints Handling Policy and the Habitual or Vexatious Complaints Policy and publish: **ACTIONED**
8. Clerk to submit comments on planning consultations a & b: **ACTIONED**
10. Clerk to contact Conduent with details of parking issues: **ACTIONED**
12. Clerk & DK to liaise with Prime Site Media and County Council, draw up new draft contract and establish budget available plus recommendations for spend: **IN PROGRESS**
13. Grant. Clerk to pay CAB grant of £300: **ACTIONED**
15. Legal guide. Clerk to buy: **ACTIONED (ON ORDER)**
16. Privacy Policy & Notices. Clerk to update and place online: **ACTIONED**

20/81: CLERK'S REPORT

General

- The Clerk thanked Cllr Bastin for IT assistance with the laptop and highlighted that she had reimbursed the Council for the difference in cost between the first software purchase of Microsoft 365 which was unsuccessful and the replacement version which was lower cost.
- Wi-fi in NHPC Office / Seacourt Hall: BT/Openreach engineers had not turned up for three appointments in the last two weeks so no progress. A fourth appointment had been arranged for the following day and a complaint had been issued to BT.
- A dumped sofa and other related items had been removed from LM Upper Field.
- The CAB sent a thank you letter following receipt of the Council's grant.
- The Clerk had arranged annual leave from Wed 21st to Fri 23rd October. Arrangements were being put into place to cover the office, phone and email enquiries.
- The MHCLG Right to Contest questionnaire from OALC had been circulated and a response agreed via email owing to a very short deadline prior to the meeting.
- Councillors were requested to send agenda items to the Clerk by the Thursday before each Council meeting and to ensure that any Motions also had a Seconder. The Clerk was asked to include these points when the Standing Orders were reviewed.
- The Vale circulated details of Cumnor PC Neighbourhood Plan consultation from 15th Oct – 3rd Dec. The Council's response to be included on the November agenda but Councillors were also encouraged to submit individual responses. Details of how to view the consultation to be added to our website.

Correspondence

- The Clerk had responded to an FOI request asking for details of our insurance.

- A resident had asked if walkways into the LM Playing Fields could be gravelled. The Clerk was looking into previous work planned by OCC.
- A Cedar Road resident asked about overgrown shrubs on rear boundary and this had been investigated by Cllr Potter. No action was required at present but this would be reviewed in the Spring.

Finance

- Committee Chairmen were reminded that any known budget requirements for 2021-22 should be submitted by Mon 19th Oct for inclusion in the F&GP Committee discussions on 29th Oct. Cllr MacKeith requested assistance with the Allotments budget and Cllr Church offered to help.
- CIL monies received £7,327.24.
- The second Precept of £48,116.50 was received.
- VAT reclaim for £3,166.35 was received.
- The Autumn term instalment had been received from the Acer Trust for use of the football pitch.
- Finance software – the Clerk was researching costs to transfer from RBS to Scribe who provide a very user-friendly software package. This would be with a view to making any changes at the start of the next financial year.

Cllr Fairclough chaired the following item as Cllr Kay had temporarily left the meeting due to problems with internet connectivity.

20/82: COUNCIL MOTIONS

Motion Proposed by Cllr Dowie and Seconded by Cllr Allen

NHPC accepts the principle of Completeness of Information (NHPC Standing Orders Part I, Section 20) and that any member may for the purpose of his duty (but not otherwise), inspect any document in possession of the Council or a committee and if copies are available shall, on request, be supplied for the like purpose with a copy (NHPC Standing Orders Part II, Section 64) and therefore Knights Solicitors be requested to make available a copy of the full solicitors file to any Parish Councillor that requests a copy.

Cllr Dowie added that he believed this motion removed any procedural impediment to him obtaining a copy of the file. The motion was discussed at length by councillors, including reference to the NALC Legal Topic Note 1 Councils' Power to Discharge their Functions, section 26 on the 'Need to Know'. It was thought that the Standing Orders referred to a councillor's right to inspect any document in possession of the Council, whereas these were not Council documents.

In consideration of the above, Cllr Berrett Proposed to move to a vote, Cllr Church Seconded, and Cllr Dowie requested a named vote. Cllr Kay had returned to the meeting immediately prior to this vote. All Councillors were in favour, other than Cllrs Dowie and Allen who voted against with Cllr Bastin abstaining. A vote on the main Motion was then held and Cllrs Dowie and Allen voted for and all others voted against, except Alistair Bastin who abstained. The Motion was not carried.

20/83: COUNCIL MATTERS

1. Council Policies & Statutory Documents

- Register of Interests Form:** Councillor Kay reminded councillors of their obligations. The Clerk had updated the website with all current documents. Cllr Bolder had submitted an updated document. In response to a request, the Clerk to clarify arrangements for redacting councillor addresses from the published forms, upon request.
- Council Policies & Code of Conduct:** Councillors to consider the following proposal:
The Clerk to report back to subsequent Council meetings under the Clerk's Report any instances of inappropriate behaviour by Councillors to provide information about why

their behaviour is inappropriate, and allow them an opportunity to explain their behaviour outside of the formal complaints process. If agreed then this process would be brought into practice at the next Council meeting on 26th November when all relevant instances dating back to the start of this Council would be reported to Council, but this process would not apply retrospectively to any instances before May 2019.

Cllr Kay outlined the above proposal which would not include investigations but would enable councillors to explain their behaviour. The proposal was discussed at length and Cllr Bastin proposed the motion was amended to apply only from October 2020 rather than May 2019. Cllr Fairclough Proposed to move to a vote and this was Seconded by Cllr Berrett and agreed by councillors.

Cllr Kay Proposed the amended Motion, that the process would be enacted to include items from October 2020, Cllr Fairclough Seconded and this was Approved by Councillors.

2. **Water pollution:** Update from the Clerk on responses from Thames Water and the Environment Agency. Council to consider any appropriate further actions.

The Clerk had circulated the Environment Agency's response which Cllr Bastin considered disappointing. EA had outlined that they were taking Thames Water to court for an alleged pollution incident dating back to 2016. A response to the Council's letter from Thames Water was still awaited.

Cllr MacKeith advised that, following recent discussion, she had applied to join the recent Water Blitz but all spaces had been taken. Councillors discussed whether there were other opportunities for water testing but it was thought that lab facilities were needed. It was agreed that Cllrs Church and Bastin should consider this matter further, with any new proposals to be brought to a future meeting.

3. **Works arising from the tree survey:**

- a. **Cllrs Potter and MacKeith plus the Clerk to update Council on progress:** Urgent works required within one month were being completed by the tree surgeon. The same contractor had provided quotes for all trees falling under the R&A Committee that required work within 12 months. The T24 group of willows required a large amount of work and the Clerk and Cllr Potter to meet the contractor on site to discuss.

Cllr MacKeith advised that there were no urgent actions for the allotment trees but there was a list of required actions. She had met the tree surgeon and he was sending revised quotes for her budget for works to be carried out in the next financial year.

- b. **Remove some lower branches overhanging the concrete path (as per site visit with Cllr Potter) £128 and clearing back of vegetation at the rear of Lime Road houses, by the disused double gates £135.** Cllr Potter confirmed that the removal of the lower branches was work from the tree survey. The second item had been identified during a site visit. It was agreed to fund these works from the Playing Field and Open Spaces budget. The motion was proposed by Cllr Potter, Seconded by Cllr Kay and unanimously approved.

4. **Remembrance Day Service:** Cllr Fairclough updated that permission had been obtained from Oxford City Council to hold a small service for up to 30 people. The Committee planning was well advanced with many attendees having confirmed. The City Council imposed a condition that the cemetery would be closed to the public during the event and this had caused one complaint, which had been responded to. It was unclear whether it would be possible for the service to take

place as it depended on the government's Covid restrictions in place locally at the time of the service. Cllr Fairclough was updating the order of service from last year and producing a timetable for the event.

5. **Bus shelters:** Cllr Kay advised that progress on the project had been slow and there was some clarification needed on the actual requirements for the parish. The two shelters included in the Botley road corridor works phase 1.2 and the two shelters on West Way in a later phase of the works to take place in November 2021 would be covered by Botley Road Corridor funds not s106. Replacement of the damaged shelter on the A34 side of Westminster Way was covered by other developer funds and should take place shortly, whilst the new shelter to be located opposite would be funded by s106 monies leaving considerable s106 funds for bus shelters elsewhere in the parish.
6. **NHPC Bank Accounts:** Council to consider the proposal to move £85,000 from the current Barclays accounts into a current account with the Unity Trust bank offering online banking to use for day to day income and expenditure purposes. In addition, there would be a consolidation of the remaining funds into a single Barclays savings account, and closing of the second savings account (currently used to top up the current account) plus the current account.

The Clerk outlined the reasons for changing banks and the poor service currently received from Barclays which resulted in difficulties with financial administration for the Council. Councillors were in favour of the proposal with Cllr Kay Proposing for it to be actioned, Seconded by Cllr Bastin and it was unanimously Approved.

7. **Scout Hut lease:** Council to consider the recent communications between Knights and the Scouts, and decide on appropriate next steps in the process.

Cllr Kay briefly updated on the current situation and advised that the Scouts had not met the latest deadline to sign the new lease, despite multiple communications via the solicitors. In Cllr Kay's opinion the main options now were (a) to withdraw the offer of new lease immediately and ask the Scouts to vacate, or (b) to allow the process to continue without enforcing any new deadline, or (c) to set a firm deadline for agreeing and signing a new lease which if the Scouts did not meet would result at that time in a withdrawal of the offer and notice being given for them to vacate the premises.

During a detailed discussion on this topic a wide range of factors were considered including the following:

- The main terms of the new lease were passed on to the Scout Group months before the draft lease itself (ie it would be a 1 year lease, with 3 months' notice, and not including any rights under the 1954 Landlord and Tenants Act). Also the Scout Group had already lost any rights under the 1954 Act, so signing a new lease would not lose them anything further, but would give them security of tenure until the end of that new lease.
- The Scout Group agreed, when requesting the new lease, to attempt to agree the terms of the new lease by the end of July. No serious attempt has been made by them to make any progress on agreeing the lease terms and instead much time has been devoted by them to raising FOI and GDPR queries, submitting a complaint to the Ombudsman, and writing lengthy letters to both Knights and NHPC, indicating different priorities.

- A Tenancy at Will is only a temporary measure and should not continue to be extended indefinitely as suggested by the Scout Group. If it was suitable to continue a Tenancy at Will for a lengthy period such as a year then Knights would have recommended that option rather than establishing a new lease.
- The amount of time and funds being allocated to this issue, which would continue to be the case if no firm final deadline were established.
- Concerns regarding the current condition of the building, and whether it was safe for the Scouts to be using it. No safety reports or details of insurance cover have been supplied to NHPC by the Scout Group for several years.

The following actions were proposed by Cllr Fairclough:

The Clerk to write to Knights asking them to write to the Scouts stating the following requirements:

- (1) That they produce proof of insurance and also proof that the building is fit for use (eg electrical and gas safety checks, fire extinguisher and fire safety checks that had been completed within the past 3 years) to be sent to Knights by 30th October 2020
- (2) Sign and return the new lease to Knights by the date of the next Council meeting on 26th November 2020
- (3) Vacate the premises by 31st December 2020 should they not meet both deadlines set under (1) and (2) above.

An option to simply maintain the tenancy at will until such time as the new lease is agreed, with no deadline for this, but subject to receipt of the items listed in (1) by the end of October was also discussed. This was Proposed by Cllr Bastin and Seconded by Cllr MacKeith. Cllr Dowie requested a named vote and Cllrs Bastin, MacKeith, Dowie, Allen and Berrett were in favour, with Cllrs Kay, Fairclough, Rankin, Potter and Blase voting against. Cllrs Dykes and Church abstained. The Chairman used his casting vote against so the amendment was not carried.

Councillors then voted on the original proposal which was Proposed by Cllr Fairclough, and Seconded by Cllr Kay, and Cllr Dowie requested a named vote. All Councillors voted in favour, except Cllrs Dowie, Allen and Blase who voted against. The motion was therefore Approved.

8. Purchase of office equipment:

Resolution for the Clerk to purchase display screen equipment items for the Parish Office totalling £180.46 (**Paper 2**). After review this was Proposed by Cllr Kay, Seconded by Cllr Church and unanimously approved by all Councillors, except Cllr Blase who was temporarily absent during this vote.

9. NHPC Key Objective - Resilience: Cllr Berrett to update on the following:

Key Objective 7 adopted in July is to "Extend emergency support established during the COVID-19 pandemic into a longer-term plan for operating as a resilient community (ie a community that supports its most vulnerable residents and is able to effectively respond to emergencies)".

This encompasses:

- Ongoing support during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Working to address isolation and digital exclusion
- Emergency response / resilience plan

– Work with stakeholders including the Botley Community Fridge, Botley Responders, District and County Council, and other service providers and charities.

The objective was agreed to be the responsibility of the Communications Committee and the Environment & Wellbeing Committee.

Cllr Berrett proposed that a Working Group be established of up to 5 Councillors from these 2 Committees to develop a strategy and action plan to achieve this objective which would subsequently require approval by full Council. The remit of the group would be the objective and activities as agreed, and the Working Group would report to full Council at least quarterly. Cllr Church Seconded the proposal and Cllr Dowie requested a named vote. All councillors voted in favour, apart from Cllr Blase who was still absent and Cllr Dowie abstained, so the motion was Approved. Initial members of the Working Group are Cllrs Berrett and Church, and any other Councillors interested in joining the Working Group are to contact Cllr Berrett.

10. Environment Committee Issues:

Cllr Church to update Council on Environment & Wellbeing Committee issues. Councillors to discuss and agree the following proposals:

1. This Council notes the upcoming consultations on the Oxfordshire 2050 plan and the County Local Transport and Connectivity Plan and recognises the importance of these to our future development. Council agrees to take part in these consultations and nominates the Chairman of the E&W Committee to be the first point of contact and to draft responses to be shared with other Councillors. Method of finalising responses to be agreed by full Council in a meeting.

This motion was Proposed by Cllr Church, Seconded by Cllr Berrett with the first point of contact being Cllr Church. Cllr Dowie requested a named vote and all councillors voted in favour, apart from Cllrs Dowie and Allen who voted against, so the motion was carried.

2. This Council notes the upcoming Tree Week. It is proposed that NHPC explores the possibility of organising a community tree planting event and locating suitable land for this. The Council should encourage other organisations and landowners to take part in Tree Week and welcomes the participation of Oxford RFC. Tree planting is one activity that the Council can undertake as part of our commitment to tackle climate change. To this end the Council will
 - Look for suitable places to plant trees in our parish and engage with landowners
 - Talk with local groups who might like to help
 - Commit up to £250 towards tree and relevant materials

Cllr Church updated that since drafting the motion he had secured 600 trees free of charge from the Conservation Volunteers for planting Dec 6th. Persimmon Homes had agreed to support this and further tree planting at Tilbury Fields and would look to support maintenance and replacement. The project would still require support materials so £250 would be required. Cllr Church agreed to Cllrs Dowie's request to circulate relevant emails from the Conservation Volunteers. The motion was Proposed by Cllr Church, Seconded by Cllr Fairclough and Councillors voted unanimously in favour.

3. The Council notes 'Climate and Nature Emergency action plan for North Hinksey Parish Council' (**Paper 3**). This was discussed and amended at the last Environment and Wellbeing Committee. The Council agrees the Plan and its aims, which are in line with previous declarations, and supports moves in the attached three month plan to take this work forward'. Cllr Church commented that this was a sizeable plan but felt it appropriate. It was initially largely exploratory but tied in with the County Council's Climate Action Framework. Cllr Bastin

Seconded the motion. Cllr Dowie requested a named vote and all Councillors were in favour, apart from Cllrs Dowie and Allen who voted against so the motion was carried.

11. Allotment Committee Issues: Allotment Committee members to consider and approve:

- a. **Grounds Maintenance works in Nature Reserve £1,023 to be taken from Earmarked Reserves (Minns Funds).** See quotes and options in **Paper 4**. The Clerk confirmed that these items were identified as health and safety requirements under the recent ROSPA report. The actions had been provisionally agreed by the Allotments Committee, pending a quote. For the gate, it was agreed to replace the top rail only but councillors accepted that additional work might be required on the bridge, as stated in the quote. In order to accommodate any additional costs, it was agreed to approve costs of up to £2,000. Proposed by Cllr MacKeith, Seconded by Cllr Fairclough and unanimously approved by the Allotments Committee members.
- b. Purchase of bench for the Community Orchard to be funded by NR Maintenance budget– two options:
 - 1.8m wide stainless steel and Iroko hardwood bench at a cost of £610 (no VAT).
 - OR** Kara bench seat SF75-19 1800mm wide, £320 + £70 carriage + VAT. <https://www.neptunestreetfurniture.co.uk/kara-range?lightbox=datapitem-jhahds1i>

Cllr MacKeith suggested the Kara bench was more in-keeping with other benches in the area and matching bins were available. However, other Allotments Committee members favoured the other option which was the same as that installed in the Louise Memorial Fields. The first option was Proposed by Cllr Dowie, Seconded by Cllr Fairclough and approved by the Allotments Committee members.

- c. Cut back of vegetation and bolt down bench to concrete base at £80 (no VAT). To be funded by the NR Maintenance Budget. This was Proposed by Cllr MacKeith, Seconded by Cllr Fairclough and unanimously Approved by the Allotments Committee members.

12. Recreation & Amenities Committee Issues: Committee members to consider and approve:

- a. **Consideration of quote to replace two 150mm square oak bollards around LM car park, to same spec as recent replacements £267 each, total £534.** These works to be funded from the R&A budgets. Cllr Dowie suggested to review spec for replacement of future bollards to ensure longevity. The current work was Proposed by Cllr Potter, Seconded by Cllr Kay and unanimously Approved by R&A Committee members.
- b. **Resolution for Oxford Conservation Volunteers to complete an additional working day on the Fen at £125 on Sat 14th November.** Cllr Potter had circulated photos from the October session and outlined work to be completed. The motion was Proposed by Cllr Potter, Seconded by Cllr Bastin. Cllr Dowie requested a named vote. All members of R&A Committee voted in favour, other than Cllrs Dowie and Allen who abstained so the motion was carried.

Cllr Allen left the meeting this point.

- 13. Public Art in Botley Centre:** Cllr Kay to update Council on progress. There was a requirement to pull together an artistic brief to be circulated to the artists. Councillors discussed the best places for art to be placed around the parish. Cllr Berrett asked to be put in touch directly with the organisers and she had set up a specific email address to work with them. Cllr Kay to report back to Council on the final brief.

14. **Botley Centre redevelopment:** Cllr Berrett to update Council on current issues. The Car park was to be closed for one day the following week. There had been complaints from Arthray Road residents about lorries turning as the pavement had been damaged. Anti-social behaviour had taken place in the car park with vehicles racing around at night, so Savills/MACE were installing speed bumps and had informed the PCSO. The Farmers Market had taken place on two Saturdays with good attendance. There were no tenants in shops in lower buildings but some tenants had moved into the flats.
15. **Seacourt Hall:** Cllr Berrett updated that the Hall Committee's AGM was being held via Zoom on 10th Nov and two new reps were required from the new hall users. Public reps would also be elected and all were welcome.
16. **Financial regulations: (Paper 5) :** The Clerk circulated a draft document and outlined the main proposed changes. The Clerk recommended the review to more closely reflect NALC's model document and to reflect current ways of working at NHPC, including the new banking arrangements. Councillors were asked to submit comments to the Clerk and a final draft to be brought to the November meeting for review.
17. **Resolution to dispose of 'Kustom' amplifier, speaker and microphone system, induction loop and associated cabling** from original Seacourt Hall. Not listed on current Fixed Asset Register. Cllr Kay Proposed that the Clerk was authorised to dispose of these items, preferably by offering on a 'free' website. This was Seconded by Cllr Rankin and Councillors voted Unanimously in favour.
18. **Resolution for Council to Adopt the General Power of Competence:** As outlined in **Paper 6**. The Clerk outlined the criteria for adoption of this Power and the benefits to the Council. The motion was Proposed by Cllr Fairclough, Seconded by Cllr Church. Cllr Dowie requested a named vote and all other Councillors voted in favour, other than Cllr Dowie who voted against, so the motion was carried.
19. **Adoption of Parish Noticeboard Monitors:** Councillors to discuss viability of appointing councillors to display agenda and notices on their nearby NHPC noticeboards. Councillors discussed who could take responsibility for each noticeboard and the Clerk to circulate a final list. It was thought that current agendas were too lengthy to be displayed as hard copies so the Clerk to produce a 'summary agenda' with only subject headings for display. The full public agenda notice to be published on the website. This was Proposed by Cllr Kay, Seconded by Cllr Berrett and Unanimously Approved.

20/84 Approval of Receipt & Payments: (Paper 7) Cllr Kay Proposed to approve the payments, Seconded by Cllr Church and unanimously approved.

20/85 Other Documents & Letters Received: There were none.

20/86 Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 26th November 2020 at 8pm via video conference.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 22.54 hours.

Appendix A

Item 20/78 - Question from Cllr Kay for Cllr Dowie:

At the last full Council meeting held on 10th September during discussions about the Scout Hut lease you stated that you intended to contact Knights Solicitors directly to request information. It was then made abundantly clear that you were not authorised by Council to do so. Despite this you went to the Knights offices in Botley on 23rd September, and then wrote an e-mail to our contact there requesting a sealed copy of 'the full solicitor's file relating to NHPC's opposition to the Scout's right to a new lease from the time of engagement to present day'.

The response was that you should refer any queries on this matter to the NHPC Chairman and Clerk, however you sent a further email on the 5th October, harassing our contact at Knights and accusing him of unacceptable behaviour, and also copied him in to an e-mail dated 9th October asking the Clerk to add a motion about these documents to the agenda of our October Council meeting. Your demand for a sealed file, if acted upon, would have resulted in an invoice being sent to NHPC, and you portrayed yourself, as a Councillor, as being in a position to authorise this action, and therefore any expenditure associated with it.

As no Councillor should carry out actions that conflict with the Code of Conduct and Council Policies I will now ask if you are willing to state the following:

- i. That you understand your conduct in this matter was inappropriate.
- ii. That you commit to not carrying out similar actions in the future.
- iii. That you apologise to both Council and (indirectly via the Clerk) to Knights Solicitors for any negative impact that your actions may have had in relation to our dealings with Knights, for wasting the time of staff in both organisations, and for attempting to instigate actions that would have resulted in unauthorised commitment of expenditure by the Council.

Response from Cllr Dowie:

On 9 October 2020 I asked for Councillor Kay's resignation because he made a statement on 10 September 2020 that was not accurate and was deliberately misleading. The statement was: "This is not the first time that various Councillors have been accused by Councillor Dowie of inappropriate or unlawful behaviour without a shred of evidence and it should be noted that these matters are all on record." Once again, in his current question, Councillor Kay has made statements which are not accurate and are deliberately misleading. Again, I ask him to resign.

Councillors and members of the public are reminded of my Councillor question at the NHPC meeting on 16 July 2020 relating to access to documents (Section 64 of Standing Orders (Part II)). The publicly available minutes of the meeting contain Councillor Kay's reply and associated allegation.

On 9 September 2020 I made a Councillor request for the solicitors file relating to legal advice provided by Knights to NHPC on the subject of the Scout Hut lease and a complete copy of any information from VWHDC to NHPC confirming that it would be necessary to demolish the Scout Hut in order to build the proposed new Pavilion. A copy of my request was circulated to all Councillors by the Parish Clerk. Councillors have seen the confusion and obstruction that followed in the e-mail chain.

At the NHPC meeting on 10 September 2020 the issue of the Scout Hut lease was discussed for over 10 minutes. There were conflicting points of view. I made it clear that I do not believe that Councillors are getting full information from Knights and that Councillor Kay is not allowed to refuse access to the information in question. There was a claim from Councillor Potter that I had "... been given a very clear steer from the Chair and the Clerk that every bit of information that has come from Knights has been forwarded to Councillors". There is no way to resolve the issue unless the complete legal file is obtained direct from Knights, and no reason why it should not be made available to Councillors.

Councillor Dowie further quoted from the following:

- NHPC Standing Orders, Part I, Section 20 (Completeness of information)
- NHPC Standing Orders, Part II, Section 64 (Inspection of Documents)
- Section 26 of NALC's LTN1 (Council's Powers to Discharge Their Function)

At this point the time limit of 5 minutes was reached (NHPC Standing Orders Part II section 23) and a majority of councillors did not support continuing for an extended period. A summary of the remainder of the written response is included here for completeness:

There is no doubt that the issue of the Scout Hut has been considered by full Council. There is no doubt that councillors have the right to inspect documents and obtain relevant information. Neither Councillor Kay, nor any other Councillor, nor the Parish Clerk has the right to block access, edit, redact or otherwise withhold information from Councillors that they are entitled to see or obtain.

It is very important to see the complete legal file from Knights as it will include the context, the questions asked of Knights, and written details of a meeting before the October 2019 decision to serve the Section 25 notice, where Knights advised a few Councillors in person, whereas currently it appears that Councillors have been provided with incomplete advice.

Finally Cllr Dowie referred to a motion being considered in the NHPC Council meeting on 15 October 2020 (agenda item 20/82) relating to NHPC Standing Orders Part I, Section 20 and NHPC Standing Orders Part II, Section 64), which removes any procedural impediment (real, fake, imagined or disputed) to all Councillors accessing all correspondence and all advice to/from Knights, sent on behalf of all Councillors and/or intended for all Councillors and paid for by Parish Council funds.