**South Lopham Parish Council**

**Minutes of decisions made/virtual meetings held by email during the period from**

**the last meeting 3 March 2020 to 31 May 2020**

 **Opening remarks** regulations have now been introduced to enable town and parish councils to conduct ‘virtual meetings’. [The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales)](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/392/contents/made) Regulations 2020 came into force on 4 April and will apply to local authority meetings and police and crime panel meetings that are required to be held, or held, before 7 May 2021.

The new legislation allows councils to carry out their business lawfully whilst ensuring that the health and safety of officers, councillors and members of the public is protected in accordance with government advice.

The lawful way to do this is that a decision, that would otherwise have been on the agenda for a committee or Council, is now made by an officer. To ensure that this remains inclusive of elected members, the officer is advised in their decision-making to seek the views of members of the committee/Council. This could be by email, SKYPE, telephone (not the best as there is no permanent record).

The officer cannot in law fetter (constrain) their discretion entirely, but that does not mean that they cannot give almost overwhelming weight to the views of members responding remotely to a report and officers’ advice, or even after seeing written submissions by members of the public in lieu of public access.

This document sets out the decisions made over the period and will be published on the Parish Council website and stored in the meetings folder in the same manner as approved/published meeting notes. For each decision taken there is a full record of email consultations and approvals to support the decisions made.

30/3/20 Payment to Skyblu Solutions £150.00 an offer was made to the council by an experienced consultant to investigate a number of lost rights of way in the parish - email circulated 27/03/20. The council unanimously approved the initial investigation as this was a project that the council has been planning to undertake over the next couple of years. A detailed report was issued and circulated to council members. The money was taken from the Village Projects budget 2019-2020.

30/03/20 Payment to C Phillips £336.00 Clerk’s salary

30/3/20 Payment to HMRC £84.00 tax on Clerk’s salary

END of FINANCIAL YEAR 2019-2020 reconciliation completed

09/04/20 Received £1947.50 Breckland Council receipt of precept

27/04/20 Received £944.90 transfer of funds from our savings/deposit account into the online current account. It was discussed and agreed unanimously that as the deposit account had no cheque book or online capability, making access to the funds difficult, that it was sensible to move the money to the current account. The monies will be separately identified on the internal spreadsheets. Email sent 22/04/20 requesting approval, all approved. Invoice for 50% received 23/04/20.

28/04/20 Payment to Skyblu Solutions £540.00. Having received the report about potential lost rights of way the council discussed the content and approved a further tranche of work to be undertaken, total cost £1080.00 part payment at commencement of work remainder on completion. This involves detailed research into a number of routes and an application to register these for formal upgrading. The money required for this project is being taken from the Village Projects budget and an amount from reserves. The RFO was requested to amend the budget to enable this project to proceed as we had not planned for this expenditure when we set our budget/plans for this year. Since we have a small reserve of funds the decision was made to spend some of this. Email from R Webb 19/04/20 setting out the proposal and seeking approval to proceed with further work & amending the budget, all approved.

15/05/20 Payment £273.12 to BHIB for our annual insurance. Email requesting approval sent 05/04/20, all approved.

15/05/20 Payment £152.62 NALC for annual membership. Email requesting approval sent 27/03/20, all approved.

16/05/20 Email circulated asking for approval for 3 payments, April Lophams’ News £30.20, Clerk’s expenses for printer cartridges £31.49, donation to St Andrews Church £250.00, all approved.

Other Matters in the period.

Speeding has been an issue and various emails have been sent. Footpaths have generally been maintained and more walkers are making use of the network, path 10 has been opened up and cut by Frizzell, 2 new finger posts have been replaced, support was given to a team set up to assist with vulnerable residents in the area and the Parish Council registered for the Covid19 support in the community initiative.

Report from SM - I have not yet drafted a letter to Norfolk CC and BDC Environmental Team regarding the dumping/burning of waste on the field at the bottom of Brick Kiln Lane.  I can report that the owner has been using the field regularly throughout the “lock down”. There appears to be a new project -a partially underground construction with sandbags and a turf roof.

Under planning I can report that the application for an annex at Nimbus, Low Common has been approved with conditions.  Use restricted to only as incidental to the main dwelling.

Email circulated about a future possible planning application and advising that a footpath and marker are incorrectly positioned, Clerk awaiting discussions on how to respond.

The internal audit has been completed and circulated for approval.