

**Minutes of the Meeting of Fleggburgh Parish Council held remotely on
Thursday 10th December 2020 at 7:30pm.**

Present: June Pratt, Chairman
Frank Brown
Fran Dockerty
Jon Walshe
Richard Sewell
Keith Osborne
Shaun Hacon
Andrew Peake
Jimmy Miller, Clerk

Also present: Haydn Thirtle, Adrian Thompson and members of the public.

Before the meeting, the Clerk informed everyone at the meeting that it was being recorded.

1 To receive and approve apologies for absence

Cllr Roper sent his apologies.

2 Declarations of interest for items and applications for dispensations

None.

3 Fleggburgh Parish Council to adopt a social media policy

In light of recent events on social media, and the complaints which have occurred as a result, it has become urgent that Fleggburgh PC adopts a social media policy to protect parishioners, parish councillors and Clerk from adverse activity on social media.

A proposed social media policy has been sent to all parish councillors. It has also been posted on the Parish Council website for all to see.

Cllr Pratt apologised that a video of last month's FPC meeting was posted on Youtube by Cllr. Peake without the Parish Council's or parishioners' knowledge. She said that, in doing so, Cllr. Peake had broken GDPR rules as he had not obtained prior permission, and the parishioners' anonymity had not been protected. She said that although Cllr Peake had declared that he was recording the meeting, he did not give any indication that this recording would be posted on Youtube. She said that his actions have been disrespectful towards the parishioners, the very people the Parish Council is here to serve. Several complaints have been received from parishioners regarding this issue and these complaints are now in the hands of the Monitoring Officer at GYBC.

Cllr Pratt said that she had called this extraordinary meeting as it has now become necessary to have a social media policy in an attempt to protect parishioners, councillors, the Clerk, and the reputation of the Parish Council. She said that she felt that FPC need to have a social media policy in place straight away to protect everyone.

Cllr Walshe endorsed what Cllr Pratt had said. He said that he was incandescent with rage when he found out that the last meeting was shown in Youtube, without his authority and without the authority of FPC, prior to it being posted. He said that he didn't know why Cllr Peake thinks it's appropriate to post it on Youtube and then compound the issue by making disparaging remarks about some of the things that happened at the meeting.

Cllr Walshe said that he noticed on the Fleggburgh Residents Association page on Facebook, that Cllr Peake had created, that someone had created a fake profile for Cllr Brown, with a picture of Benito Mussolini and some awful postings appertaining to be from Cllr Brown. One post was "I don't know what all the fuss is about. Richard and me tell Jimmy what's to be done, June and Jon nod, and Shaun the Sheep votes it through. It's what we've done for years. Why change it now?" Cllr Walshe said that clearly Cllr Brown didn't post it on Facebook. He said that he suspected that it was Cllr Peake and said he would like to ask Cllr Peake whether he'd posted it on Facebook. On the "profile" for Cllr Brown it says "Doing a good job for the residents of Fleggburgh. Sold £1.5m worth of houses and spent £12.50 on dog poo bins." Cllr Walshe said that this was outrageous. He asked Cllr Peake whether he had anything to do with this?

Cllr Peake said that under the Openness of Local Government Regulations 2014, he had the right to record and share the meetings in public. He said that Cllr Walshe appeared to be condemning his right to free expression and his right to free speech. He said that the meetings are held in public and the public have a right to know what goes on. He said that, for that reason, he shared the last meeting on Youtube and that he would be sharing this meeting on Youtube. He said that regarding the allegations about posts on Facebook, he had no idea who had posted them.

Cllr Walshe said that it was because of Cllr Peake's behaviour that this meeting was being held to adopt a social media policy, which he fully supports. He asked Cllr Peake to confirm that he had nothing to do with the posts on Facebook.

Cllr Peake said that, in his opinion, Cllr Walshe was disrupting the meeting by not sticking to the agenda.

Cllr Pratt disagreed and said that it was connected with the agenda item.

Cllr Peake said that Cllr Walshe's opinions and accusations were inappropriate.

Cllr Peake asked why the NALC template policy had not been proposed. He asked why the Clerk had took it upon himself to concoct a policy of his own.

The Clerk replied that he hadn't concocted anything. He said that he had largely taken the content from another parish council and that it seemed very appropriate for FPC.

Cllr Hacon said that a social media policy was a good idea. He said that the need for one had come about as a result of the actions of one sitting councillor. He hoped that this policy would protect FPC and the public from any further derogatory comments, fake news, and false allegations. He said that he had no problem with meetings being made available but that the meetings being posted on Youtube by Cllr Peake was done with no prior approval from FPC or the public who were exposed to this. He said that GDPR and the Code of Conduct were knowingly breached.

Cllr Sewell said that it was a pity that this need to be done due to one man.

Cllr Dockerty said that she agreed that a policy was needed. She said that she felt that where it mentioned "Good news stories" that this should be changed so that it doesn't exclude informative stories such as the travellers in the car park.

Cllr Dockerty was also concerned about the part of the policy where it said "must not... post content that is contrary to the democratic decisions of the council" since social media policy also includes e-mails and she was concerned that councillors couldn't challenge anything. She said that some

councillors may not have agreed with something at a meeting but that after six months has passed, an issue can be re-looked at.

The Clerk said that the issues was more about councillors attacking the decisions that have been made; Cllr Dockerty suggested changing the wording so that it was clear that it was about councillors attacking the decisions which had been made.

Cllr Walshe said that he wanted to make it clear that he had made no allegations about Cllr Peake except regarding Youtube. He said that he just asked him questions regarding what had happened on Facebook.

Cllr Osborne said that FPC needed a social media policy. He said that the policy proposed was lengthy but covered most of the topics correctly.

He had a query regarding background information and whether it could be published. The Clerk said that this policy did not preclude that as long as the information was not confidential.

Cllr Osborne said that the item on posting content that is contrary to the democratic decisions of the council could mention the six-month rule that is stated in the Standing Orders.

Regarding the third from last paragraph, Cllr Osborne said that it should be more specific about what action would be taken against breaches. He said that grievance and disciplinary policies were needed at FPC. He said that "action" should be "disciplinary action".

Cllr Pratt said that the Clerk should be the person who is moderator. Cllr Osborne asked whether that person could be someone from outside FPC. Clerk said he thought it would be difficult to find someone. Cllr Osborne asked how the Clerk could do the job given that they are responsible for the FPC website and, as such, are posting on social media themselves. Clerk said that his posts on the FPC website were within certain confines

Cllr Brown said that if it hadn't been for Cllr Peake it wouldn't be necessary to have a social media policy. He said that the Clerk should be the moderator and that FPC should adopt the policy with the Clerk as moderator. This was seconded by Cllr Sewell.

Cllr Osborne asked whether this proposal would include the changes that had been requested. Both Cllr Brown and Cllr Sewell said that it would. A vote was taken and there were seven votes in favour of the motion and Cllr Peake abstained. He said that the policy was a blatant act of plagiarism by the Clerk. The Clerk said that it was not plagiarism because he had taken it from another council and been open that he'd done this. He said that plagiarism is only when you take someone else's work and claim that it's yours. He said that he was not re-inventing the wheel on this occasion.

Cllr Pratt made crystal clear that this policy took effect immediately.

Date of next Parish Council meeting: Thursday 17th December 2020

Meeting closed at 8:03.