

c. To confirm external auditors. PKF Littlejohn is the external auditor for the 5 financial years from 2017/18 to 2021/22. The Chair proposed that this should be confirmed, which was seconded by Cllr Allison; a show of hands was unanimous so the motion was passed.

d. To receive and review Internal Auditor report on 2019/20 accounts. This has been completed once again by villager Mr. Michael Craig. The Councillors had received a copy prior to the meeting, so after a further short review, the Chair proposed that this should be accepted, seconded by Cllr Willies - a show of hands was unanimous, motion passed.

e. To review and approve the 2019/20 Annual Return Governance Statement. The Councillors had received a copy prior to the meeting. The Clerk read out each statement in turn. Councillors considered these and then the Chair proposed these be accepted, seconded by Cllr Willies - a show of hands was unanimous, motion passed. The Chair and Clerk signed the statement.

f. To review and approve the 2019/20 Annual Return Accounts Statement. As in point 6e, all Councillors had previously reviewed this - the clerk asked them to consider the year end bank reconciliation for the breakdown of figures. The Councillors agreed that these had been reviewed and the Chair proposed that the statement be approved, seconded by Cllr Willies; a show of hands was unanimous and the motion was passed. The Chair and Clerk signed the statement.

g. To complete the Certificate of Exemption for the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2019/20 (Part 2) and to be published from 30 Sep-30 Nov 2020. Under the new regulations there is no requirement for a common period for the exercise of public rights- the only requirement is that the 30-working day period for the exercise of public rights should start on or before 1 September 2020. The submission deadline for the receipt of the approved AGAR and supporting documentation or the Certificate of Exemption (as appropriate) is 31 July 2020. OPC meet the criteria and can declare exemption from sending the AGAR to the external auditor for a limited assurance review. The Chair proposed this, which was seconded by Cllr Allison; all in favour, motion passed. The Chair and Clerk signed the statement.

6. TO CONFIRM COUNCIL MEETING DATES FOR 2020/21

Following a short discussion, the Chair proposed 16 September -this was seconded by Cllr Willies, all in favour, passed. It was agreed that as Cllrs Gilluley and Monson were absent, that further dates would be discussed during the September meeting. Regarding the venue, although the Village Hall refurbishment is just about completed (with a new kitchen, new lighting and a freshly painted hall) this would be confirmed closer to the time (pending the national situation regarding Covid-19).

7. PROPOSAL TO CARRY OUT WORKS ON THE BEECH TREE

The Chair reminded the council that A.T. Coombes had not carried out the aerial inspection last year (in spite of this having been agreed upon by the councillors in January 2019) but that it was now necessary as Breckland Tree officer Mr Hugh Coggles had insisted on this in his email: 'There are well established fruiting bodies at the base which are likely to have caused some decay at the base of the tree. There are also historic wounds in the lower canopy where decay is likely. The upper crown is showing some early signs of stress, with reduced vitality and leaf cover. My recommendation would be to have the tree inspected by a suitably qualified consultant, my suggestion would be that a climbing inspection is undertaken to look at the cavities near the base of the crown, it may also be worthwhile to undertake further investigation to find out how much decay is at the base, this would usually require a PICUS survey'. Cllr Willies urged the Chair to seek confirmation that responsibility for the tree rested solely with the Parish Council, rather than the Highways Department, bearing in mind just how much the tree overhangs the main road. Cllr Allison questioned why it was so necessary to carry out an expensive aerial inspection. Cllr Willies pointed out that inspecting the bracing as well as checking for signs of disease was a good and prudent idea and Cllr Hotchkin agreed adding that the owners of The Beeches, following the incident a few months earlier, when a very large branch had fallen onto the path of the village green, had questioned the matter of insurance (as their house is situated closest to the overhanging branches). Cllr Hotchkin asked the Councillors to consider the 2 quotes received: £1065 plus VAT from A.T. Coombes and £580 plus VAT from Treecare Consultants Ltd. Cllr Allison asked the Chair if Breckland Council might have some guidance on how routinely such inspections would be required, bearing in mind just how costly it would be. Cllr Willies considered that the quote received from Treecare offered the best value and it would set a baseline for the future management of the beech tree. There may be some cost implication if traffic control was required, but considered that although this is unknown, it is still necessary for the works to be carried out. All councillors agreed that they were in favour of saving the tree and the Chair proposed that the council spend £580 plus VAT with Treecare, which was seconded by Cllr Willies; the Chair asked for a vote which was unanimous, motion passed.

8. A.O.B.

(a) The Clerk informed the council that due to covid-19, the desert rats event and the Wissey ½ marathon had both been cancelled by the organisers. Ryston runners secretary had advised that the payment of £90 could be retained and used for the following year.

(b) Cllr Hotchkin informed the council that he had been discussing the matter of the request from Mr. Charles Ashley (church warden) to incorporate the land (currently leased to the National Trust for use as car parking) into the churchyard,

as the existing graveyard has capacity for only about another twelve burials. In 1955, OPC purchased this 0.28acre plot of land (no information regarding the landowner) to be used in case further burial ground was needed. The land was never consecrated and then subsequently leased to the NT on 6 May 1987 using solicitors Metcalfe, Copeman & Pettefar, with covenants including permission to remove the surrounding fencing and to mark the boundaries with oak posts. (N.B. the lease was signed by Councillors Mr. Ian Monson and Mrs. Eileen Hartley). The Chair will continue to discuss the next steps with National Trust General Manager, Mr. Russell Clement.

(c) The Chair expressed his thanks to Mr. Craig for completing the annual internal audit and thanks to the church wardens for allowing the Parish Council to meet in the North Aisle.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

9. TO RECEIVE INFORMATION OR SUGGESTED ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION AT THE NEXT MEETING

Mr. Mike Cooper enquired as to what venue would be used for the meeting in september. The chair responded that this would be advised closer to the time, and although Mr. Andy Leclercq suggested the use of a gazebo, it would not be large enough to cope with the current regulations on social distancing of 2m.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions.
The meeting closed at 7.35pm

APPENDIX A		
<u>OXBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL</u>		
Meeting 20 July 2020		
Report: Accounts reported against the budget quarterly		
IAW Statement of Internal Control and Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Control (section Financial Reporting)		
<u>BUDGET 2020/21</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>
Estimated Gross Payments		
Auditors	0.00	0.00
Accountants (see note 1)	25.00	25.00
Training	150.00	0.00
Clerk's wages/expenses	1201.20	0.00
HMRC(see note 2)	220.00	626.32
CGM (grass maintenance - 15 cuts)	612.00	307.20
CGM (herbicide treatment -twice)	66.00	33.00
Hedge maintenance (2 cuts)	480.00	0.00
St. John the Evangelist donation	175.00	0.00
Royal British Legion donation	30.00	0.00
Insurance	201.10	162.21
Village Hall Hire	84.00	0.00
Bank charges	60.00	15.00
Playground Project (set off against various grants)	0.00	3714.84
	<u>3304.30</u>	<u>4883.57</u>
Estimated Receipts		
Village Green Hire	90.00	90.00
National Trust Lease	150.00	0.00
Precept	3046.00	1523.00
VAT Refund	204.00	0.00
Donations	0.00	0.00
Grant received for Playground Project (see note 3)	0.00	12699.00
	<u>3490.00</u>	<u>14312.00</u>

Bank Reconciliation			
Bank Balance b/f		5356.44	
Add Receipts:			
Grant received for Playground Project		12699.00	
Precept		1523.00	
Village Green Hire - Ryston Runners		90.00	
sub-total		14312.00	
Less Payments:			
Clerk's wages/expenses		1064.11	
Breckland Council Recharge election costs		662.42	
HMRC - PAYE clerk		218.40	
HMRC(see note 2)		407.92	
Accountants		25.00	
CGM		340.20	
NGF Play (30% deposit on playground project)		3714.84	
Insurance		162.21	
Bank charges		25.00	
sub-total		6620.10	
Balance @ 3 July 2020		<u>13048.34</u>	
Note 1. Due to Covid-19, previous year's cheque banked late			
Note 2. VAT duplicated payments received £407.92 - returned to HMRC. Due to Covid-19, previous year's cheque banked late £218.40			
Note 3. £2000 received from Hewars Charity / £1000 from Norfolk Community Foundation/ £9699 from National Lottery			