

The Meeting of the Parish Council was held virtually via the Zoom platform on Monday the 12th day of OCTOBER 2020 – commencing 7.30 pm

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Messrs Rayner (Chair), Lambert (Vice-Chair), Cole, Storey and Studd, Mrs Arnold, Mrs Bane and Mrs Peckham. Squadron Leader Turnbull was also present.

APOLOGIES: Apologies received from Mr Cock and Mrs McGeeney

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: There were no declarations of interest.

MINUTES: Minutes of the last meeting held Monday 14th September were approved. Mr Studd proposed, Mrs Arnold seconded, 5 in favour, Mrs Peckham abstained as she had been absent from the meeting.

PUBLIC SPEAKING: There was no public speaking session as no members of the public were in attendance.

MATTERS ARISING

1. **RAF Feltwell** – Sqn Leader apologised for his absence from recent meetings which was due largely to personal matters and also being the Covid Lead for all MOD staff on the base but said he had been keeping abreast of matters relating to Feltwell via the minutes. **Update:** All USAF personnel are obliged to adhere to UK Covid-19 Government guidelines unless their own internal measures are more stringent and one exception had been that gymnasiums were kept open throughout to maintain physical fitness levels of active service personnel (not their families) which was in line with the stance that UK Armed Forces had also taken to maintain operational readiness should deployment overseas be necessary. There have been no USAF hospitalised cases of Covid-19 since the start of the pandemic and although an absolute figure of Covid cases was not disclosable due to operational security considerations, all data is shared with Public Health England and is included in the county figures. As an illustration of US compliance, all returning personnel from the 492nd fighter squadron when they arrive back from operations in the Middle East in the next 10 days will be required to quarantine immediately upon their arrival in accordance with current UK Government guidance although no cases are expected due to the very remote desert location they were deployed. The temporary F35 infrastructure contractors' compound on the Wangford Road is not expected to be fully utilised although the build goes on unabated with first aircraft expected November 2021. Over the next 15 years, \$2.8 billion will be invested in Lakenheath and Feltwell infrastructure including a new hospital, high school and office facilities. Of particular note was the replacement of the RAF Feltwell communications 'golf balls' scheduled for 2024 (anticipated to be much smaller versions) and the \$4 million redesign of the RAF Feltwell entry gate. This will mean lots of opportunities for local businesses who he encouraged to attend the on-base Industry Days. He thanked the Chair for virtually attending the Changing of the Command ceremony for handover/takeover of the 48th Fighter Wing with Col. Jason Camilletti, now the Base Commander. **Historical Commemorations:** He said donations allocated to commemorate Victory in Europe and Victory in Japan are still available for any future events such as Remembrance Day. **Verges & Hedgerows:** He said that although 6ft in from the road is Norfolk Highways responsibility, there has been limited success with the USAF cutting back greenery on Blackdyke Road and investigations into the ownership and right of way along Leonard's Lane were ongoing. He was aware the Clerk had spoken to the base contact, Ross Jack, regarding a variety of work required and said that although some is Highways responsibility, Ross has requested a price for the USAF to undertake all work required. **Trick or Treat:** Sqn Leader believed the USAF were hoping to hold an event to try to maintain some sort of normality although was unsure if the gates would be open. **Detonations:** Sqn Leader said he

MATTERS ARISING (CONT)

sympathised with residents regarding their concerns and is trying to support the local community but only so much could be done at a local level. He confirmed the Chairs of Feltwell and Hockwold Parish Councils had been invited to attend a meeting with Col. Camilletti to discuss a way forward and what may be considered acceptable, i.e. number of explosions, weather conditions etc. He felt it was unfortunate the 'Show & Tell' event planned for earlier in the year had to be cancelled due to Covid-19 and said a video is being produced to illustrate exactly how the explosive activities take place on-base which will be streamed on YouTube for everyone to view. This will provide a detailed storyboard of the entire procedure from morning to night and end with the operational necessity of such training. Mr Storey said that obviously no answers would be received at this meeting as the matter was out of Sqn Leader's hands and that the measures he had mentioned to try to achieve some common ground on this matter should have been put to the Parish Council some years ago. He said his major concern was damage to properties and more consideration should be given to residents living in the area. Sqn Leader reiterated that he understood these concerns and invited Mr Storey to attend the meeting with the Col. Camilletti but went on to say that even he could only do so much to boundary the disturbance of such activity. He suggested thereafter the matter would need to be escalated to the UK Defence Minister, through the local MP, if the end goal of residents was to stop the detonations in their entirety. He also advised of a claims line for damaged property into the MOD that has seen successful claims in the past. Mrs Peckham asked if more notice of the detonations could be given in future so that the local MP could attend on a day when they are carried out in order to experience the impact of them. Sqn Leader said he could not see this being a problem since they are part of an annual training programme. Mr Lambert asked why the detonations took place when there was low cloud cover when the previous days leading up to that had been clear. He also said there was an awfully large amount of detonations in one day. Sqn Leader said that there will hopefully be room to manoeuvre the boundaries. Sqn Leader departed the meeting at 7.58 pm.

2. SNT – Police Connect emails circulated, no reports regarding Feltwell.

3. Risk Assessment – Quotations for climber resurfacing were circulated via email and the most cost competitive was from Fenland Leisure at £4124 + VAT for a wetpour surface, agreed by all. Mr Cole asked for confirmation that the play equipment was fit for purpose and the Chair said that it technically is. Mrs Peckham thanked Mr Cole for doing a good job in making the handles safe on the Multiplay unit and said whilst Fenland Leisure were removing the handles, they had informed her that the damage was unforeseeable and wasn't simply missed during an inspection as it could have happened at any time. Clerk confirmed that Fenland Leisure will carry out quarterly operational inspections and an annual inspection will also be carried out in Spring. Report from the first quarterly inspection report was circulated via email and the accompanying quotation to rectify all issues arising of £1941.10 + VAT was agreed by all Councillors. The Handyman is still conducting weekly inspections as well and the only issue was the condition of the boundary wall which had been temporarily made safe by the owner who said a permanent repair would be carried out in June. This has not happened therefore the Chair instructed the Clerk to contact Borough Council Building Control to assess the safety of the wall. Clerk said Canvas Spaces would be in the area in 2-3 week's time to inspect the hole in the concrete on the skate park and the Handyman has buried the ducting.

4. Balance Sheet – No queries.

5. Allotment Pest Control – Reports received for July, August or September.

6. NALC – NALC bulletins circulated as received.

MATTERS ARISING (CONT)

7. Briefing sessions (i) Local Plan – Site Allocations & Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (ii) 5 year land supply – Mr Storey said a new planning White Paper had been published by the Government which encompasses the Local Plan. It is an important document which will affect future planning decisions. The Local Plan itself is ongoing and the Committee is proceeding on the basis of the plan as they were given it.

8. Ranger Visit – No visit has taken place as yet.

9. Parish Partnership Scheme – Mr Cole said he thought a bus shelter should be considered for the school bus on Long Lane near the West End. Clerk said although she felt for the children, this is not an official bus stop and her concern was that if the bus routes change as they had this year, then any new shelter might not be utilised. Mrs Bane reiterated her proposal for a trod on Payne's Lane. Mr Cole suggested replacing ALL bins in the village with new ones like that planned for Addisons Close. Mr Storey suggested having white gates on each entrance to the village. Mr Rayner said this idea was discussed and dropped last year due to the costs involved and material used, as well as future maintenance of them. Mr Studd thought the white gates were a good idea and said they would be more affordable if purchased via the PP Scheme. Mr Storey said Stoke Ferry Parish Council had challenged Highways insistence of plastic gates in favour of wooden gates and won, thus achieving a much lower price. Mrs Bane said the 30mph signs on brown wooden gates in Little Melton would be more in keeping with the village and wouldn't require constant cleaning. Mr Lambert queried whether brown gates would be as effective. Clerk to obtain prices for the trod and wooden gates.

10. Locality Budget – Mr Storey is meeting Andrew Wallace again to consider all applications.

11. Cllr Martin Storey Report – Mr Storey said more power is being given to Permitted Development Rights and that Neighbourhood Plans will be considered strongly as well. The ideal is for local people to have local housing and a public consultation is currently underway regarding this. Mr Storey said working from home is becoming the 'new normal' and that this could mean more people moving to rural areas, adding pressure to future housing markets. He also wanted it noted that along with 30 or 40 others, he declined the 2.7% pay rise given to staff at County Hall and Council Members as he felt other people would benefit from this money more than he would.

12. Tree - Old Methwold Road – Clerk has received one quote and is awaiting two more for lifting the tree canopy at Old Methwold Road.

13. Fence – Chair said new gate and fence will be installed in 2-3 weeks.

14. Memorial Garden – Chair said he was extremely pleased with the work carried out and lots of positive comments had been received from parishioners. He said the official line for Remembrance Day from the British Legion was that there should be no public parades or services this year due to Covid-19 but Remembrance Day is a civic event and as such should be organised by the town or parish council unless they delegate it to another body such as the British Legion. He said that if the event is organised by a public body, it must be 'Covid Secure' and asked if the Parish Council would be willing to organise Remembrance Day 2020. Mr Storey felt very strongly that it should be commemorated and Mrs Peckham wholly agreed. The Chair said he would be happy to organise it and would take guidance from Norfolk County Council Public Health Directorate as the Police are threatening a £10,000 fine if the event is not 'Covid Secure'. Mr Storey proposed the Parish Council organise Remembrance Day 2020, Mrs Peckham seconded, all in favour. The Chair thanked the Councillors for supporting this event.

MATTERS ARISING

15. Dog Bins – Clerk said bin has been received and MWM (Anglia) will start work this week.

16. Online Banking – Chair will pursue.

17. Appointment of Internal Auditor – Clerk said the external auditors had completed their review of the AGAR with no issues and she will now prepare and display the “Notice of conclusion of audit” along with the certified AGAR as per their instructions.

18. Playing Field Gates – Clerk said Handyman has this matter in hand.

19. Bell Street Bin – Clerk said Wybone were the most price competitive at £560.98 + VAT which is the same item purchased for Addisons Close. Mr Cole proposed new bin be purchased from Wybone at £560.98 + VAT, Mrs Arnold seconded, six in favour, Mrs Peckham abstained. Mr Lambert proposed MWM (Anglia) lay the base if the price is the same as that for Addisons Close, Mrs Bane seconded, all in favour.

20. Matters Arising from Extraordinary Meeting held 27th July 2020 – Football Club Request for Pitch Movement and Storage of New Goals: Mrs Peckham said the Playing Field Committee agreed that the new trees should be planted in the allotment hedges. **Discuss Strategy for Forwarding Capital Projects Named in the 2020/21 Budget:** *Falcon Road Alleyway:* Clerk circulated email from Solicitor and Mrs Peckham said that if the Parish Council could maintain the alleyway due to its historical right of use and not own it then they can’t be held liable. Mr Lambert agreed. Mrs Peckham said that if that was the case, does the Parish Council have any right to request owners of neighbouring properties to remove growth from their greenery encroaching over it. Clerk to seek clarification on the above matters from the Solicitor. *Playing Field:* Mrs Bane said the Committee had recently met with Frances Rayner of Alive West Norfolk and unfortunately no funding is available for resurfacing the court from the Lawn Tennis Association or Sport England at the present time however the Committee will go to Brandon MUGA with a view to obtaining costs, funding, charges etc. The Committee felt in the first instance, the height of the trees neighbouring the court, Changing Rooms and play area should be reduced as they posed a safety hazard and this would also prevent leaves falling onto the equipment causing safety risks. They also felt the solid panels of the Teen Shelter should be removed entirely in a bid to eliminate antisocial behaviour taking place here. Chair said removing trees would be costly but Mrs Peckham said that only the lower branches of each tree would need removing. Mr Lambert felt that finances were tight and this would have to be done in the next financial year. Mr Studd questioned whether it was premature to be removing branches when funding may not be obtained. Mr Storey felt that caution should be taken when cutting trees as many residents are not in favour of this but agreed that if the leaves were causing equipment to become unsafe then the branches needed cutting. Mrs Peckham suggested that prices for this work be obtained when the leaves have fallen in the next 2-3 months and a clearer idea of the financial position would be available. Mr Lambert suggested positioning any new play equipment away from the trees. Chair felt the trees should be left for the time being. Mr Lambert proposed removing the rear solid panels of the Teen Shelter, Mrs Arnold seconded, all in favour. Clerk to speak to Handyman.

21. Small Business Grant – Ongoing.

22. Weight Restrictions and ‘No Right Turn’ from Wissington Factory – Chair said he and Mr Storey had yet to meet to draw up a plan of action.

23. Meeting Commencement Time – Mr Storey proposed new meeting commencement time of 7.00 pm, Mr Studd seconded, all in favour.

MATTERS ARISING (CONT)

24. Vacancy – Clerk said the Borough Council’s notice had been displayed and the period for an election request ends 16th October. Clerk will advertise the vacancy accordingly if advised by the Borough Council that no request has been received.

25. Wildflowers – Mrs McGeeney was not present to update.

26. Detonations – See Item 1.

27. Review Model Standing Orders – Chair proposed they be re-adopted, all in favour.

28. Operation ‘London Bridge’ – Chair explained that this is a codename for a protocol that all town and parish councils must follow to mark the death of the Queen. He asked for two Councillors to assist him in formulating a plan and Mr Studd and Mr Lambert both volunteered.

CORRESPONDENCE

29. BCKLWN – Email – EIA Scoping Opinion (Environmental Impact Report for new pipeline from Bexwell to Bury St Edmunds); Green Homes Grant Scheme

30. NCC – Emails – Temporary road closure of B1112 Brandon Road 19/10/20 – 23/10/20

31. RAF Lakenheath – Email - Explosive detonation notifications for 23rd & 25th September; Newsletter ‘The Liberty Ledger’

32. PC Lee Anderton – Downham Market Safer Neighbourhood Team

33. Local Government Boundary Commission for England - Division boundaries for Norfolk County Council consultation

34. CPRE – Planning White Paper consultation; Don’t deregulate planning petition

35. Alive West Norfolk – Active Community Newsletter; Walk October

36. Rural Services Network – Rural Bulletins

37. Early Help Children’s Services – Email – West Norfolk Early Help C-19 Round up (weekly)

38. Nexus Fostering – Email – Plea for foster carers

39. NHS Norfolk & Waveney CCG – Email – Survey for people with lived experience of mental health services in Norfolk and Waveney

40. Locus Services – Email – London Hearts - Parish and Town Council £200 Grant

41. Brochures - Parish Magazine

42. **CHEQUES** – Payees list was approved and cheques will be signed by the Chair, Mr Lambert and Mrs McGeeney for the following – J Martin £8.76, S Sargent £98.70, T George £136.00, Viridor £156.39, E.ON £357.42, J Rolph £150.00, R H Landscapes £270.00, HMRC £253.23, SSE £466.11, K C Peckham £588.00, Fenland Leisure Products £637.44, Zurich Municipal £1343.48, NALC £78.00, Westcotec £13,320.00, Spire Solicitors £900.00, S P Landscapes £3810.00, C Cock £32.28, K&M Lighting £103.27, E Lambert £25.84. Standing order to J Martin £846.47, direct debit to BT £55.07.

43. PLANNING

Mr G Lancaster: Conversion of outbuilding to annex at Gladstone House – 7 Councillors in favour, Mr Storey abstained, therefore application was APPROVED.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

44. National Savings & Investments – Clerk advised interest rate is being reduced as of 24th November to 0.01%.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS (CONT)

45. Precept & Budget – Chair asked Councillors to give this some thought for the next meeting.

46. Clerk's Pay Increase – Clerk said NALC had recently published new national salary pay scales for Clerks. Increases should be backdated to April 2020. Clerk to advise new pay scales.

47. Junior FC – Chair said the team had requested a fridge for the kitchen area and also asked if they would be entitled to any rent reduction as they are not able to use the Changing Rooms.

48. Christmas Tree in Churchyard – Chair said depending on the cost, he would like to reinstate the Christmas tree in the churchyard and had the Church's permission. Mr Lambert said the local farmers could assist with the installation of this and Mr Storey said if the cost was insurmountable then he wouldn't mind making a donation towards it. Mr Storey proposed the Parish Council reinstate the Christmas tree in the churchyard, Mr Lambert seconded, all in favour. Chair thanked the Councillors for their support and will take this forward.

Next Parish Council meeting to be held virtually on Monday 9th November 2020 at 7.00 pm via the Zoom platform.

Meeting declared closed 9.45 pm.
