

A Meeting of the Parish Council was held on Monday the 11th day of SEPTEMBER 2023 at the Royal British Legion, Long Lane – commencing 7.30 pm

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Messrs Cole, Fenn, Lambert, Rayner and Storey, Mrs Bane, Mrs Arnold, Mrs McGeeney (arrived 8.00 pm), Mrs Peckham and Mrs Wilson. Also present 6 members of the public.

APOLOGIES: Apologies were received from Mrs Peacock and RAF Commander Geary.

The Chair asked if anyone was recording the meeting and Mr Cole replied that he was. All members of the public gave their consent to be recorded.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: Mrs Peckham declared an interest in Planning.

MINUTES: Minutes of the last Parish Council meeting were approved. Mr Lambert proposed, Mr Cole seconded, 5 in favour, Mrs Bane and Mrs Wilson abstained having not been present. Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held 10/8/23 were approved, Mr Cole proposed, Mrs Wilson seconded, 3 in favour. Mrs Arnold, Mr Fenn, Mr Lambert, Mrs McGeeney, Mrs Peckham and Mr Storey abstained having not been present.

PUBLIC SPEAKING: The meeting was suspended for 9 minutes for Public Speaking.

MATTERS ARISING

1. **RAF Feltwell** – The RAF Commander was not present but would forward his report to the Clerk. Mrs Bane felt 23 explosions conducted at the training exercise on 7/7/23 seemed excessive. Chair said the new Community Relations Officer would be joining the RAF Commander at the next meeting.

2. **Risk Assessment** – **Weekly:** No issues reported. Handyman had installed the new litter bin, cleared leaves from the tennis court, replaced the orange fencing along the boundary wall and fitted the new bench. Mrs Peckham said the tennis net was sagging so Clerk will ask Handyman to adjust. **Quarterly Inspection:** Report from inspection carried out 1/9/23 was circulated and all issues were Low or Very Low Risk. Clerk to arrange meeting with the Playing Field Group to look at these issues and those highlighted in the annual inspection in the new few weeks.

3. **Balance Sheet** – No queries.

4. **Allotment Pest Control** – July, August and September reports received. Mr Storey asked whether more vermin had been caught than usual due to environmental conditions. Clerk to enquire.

5. **NALC** – Newsletters circulated.

6. **Cllr Martin Storey Report** – Mr Storey said NCC was in the final round of upgrading all streetlights to LED thus cutting CO₂ emissions by 200 tonnes/year. He said RAAC (Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete) had only been detected in one Norfolk school which was being dealt with, and stated NCC had raised concerns regarding RAAC in 2018/19 and again in June 2023. He then gave information on new bus services. Mrs Peckham said Andy Wallace had advised the 30mph and 40mph roundels for Wilton Road and Lodge Road would be completed in the second scheme of white lining which had still not been done, Mr Storey to obtain an update at his meeting the following day.

7. **Playing Field Boundary Wall** – Mr Lambert felt a respectful amount of time had passed and the owners should now be approached for an update in the safety interests of all playing field users. Clerk to contact the owners.

MATTERS ARISING (CONT)

8. Changing Rooms – New meter door had been installed. Mrs Peckham said the boiler room needed tidying.

9. Highways – Path has been sided out but needs continuing round towards Oak Street. Clerk to obtain update from Andy Wallace. Missing ‘Paynes Lane’ sign near the Social Club has been reported but not yet installed. Chair said according to Andy Wallace, enforcement of a 20mph speed limit has to be authorised by the Secretary of State and as they are virtually non-existent, felt the Parish Council could not take the resident’s request for one from Oak Street to Central Garage further. Clerk then read an email from a resident concerned that increased parking in front of the Church from visitors to The Food Pantry and coffee morning was creating hazards to drivers exiting right from Newcombe Drive. It was felt by all that these activities were a lifeline to some people in the village and therefore parking issues, which only occurred a few hours each week, should be tolerated as there were alternative routes around the village.

10. Doctor’s Surgery Car Park – Mr Storey had been monitoring the parking situation along Wilton Road in a bid to obtain numbers ahead of his meeting to be arranged with the Practice Manager and said they had decreased of late. Mr Lambert said the inside hedge of the overflow car park needed cutting and the fence on Upcher Close was falling inwards. He felt the side and top of the hedge should be included in the allotment hedge cutting regime but the first cut ought to be carried out by hand. He believed the Doctors Surgery was an important asset to Feltwell and the Parish Council ought to assist with the hedge cutting where possible. Mr Storey proposed adding the side and top of the hedge to the allotment hedge cutting specification, Mr Lambert seconded, all in favour. Mr Lambert proposed hand cutting the inside of the hedge on this occasion and topping where necessary, Mr Storey seconded, all in favour. Mr Lambert and the Clerk will meet with prospective contractors to quote for this work. Clerk to contact Hastoe Housing regarding the fence.

11. Overhanging Greenery – Clerk said Dan Jordan had received a response from the owners of 50 Wilton Road which he needed to discuss with Andy Wallace. 6 Newcombe Drive had been cut and the owners of 19 Wilton Road advised theirs would be cut after the nesting season. Greenery from 6 St Mary’s Street needing cutting back from the footpath. Clerk to write to owner.

12. Feltwell in Bloom Monthly Update – Mrs Wilson said the wildflowers looked colourful but questioned what would happen when the weather turned. A resident invited to speak on this matter said plants would be cut back when they had gone to seed and made tidy. Perennial seeds would be left and others would be after sown in the same location. If the wildflower trial was successful then Mrs Wilson agreed with Mrs McGeeney’s suggestion that the planting area should be alongside the wall of Oakfields Estate instead. The resident said they could only plant in an area according to the licence and another licence would need to be applied for if this changed. Mr Lambert felt the project should be left and monitored over the winter period.

13. Grass Maintenance Contract Quotations – Mr Lambert said the contractors had made a much better job of the churchyard and Mrs Peckham said the same for the playing field. However, the Chair had received a complaint about a couple of indents on a grave after it had been skimmed over. Mrs Wilson felt the contractors should be more mindful and respectful when undertaking work here. Clerk to contact contractor. Going forward, Chair felt the specification needed to be more detailed. Mrs Peckham didn’t think the second herbicide spray had been carried out at the playing field. Clerk to contact contractor. Mr Storey asked the Clerk to obtain details of the herbicide manufacturer and application rate used to kill weeds around the village this season.

14. Oak Garden Wall – Clerk said MWM (Anglia) had apologised for not yet carrying out this work but it would be completed in good time for frosts.

MATTERS ARISING (CONT)

15. Rangers – Next visit October. Clerk to report overgrown Buddleia bush on Short Beck, Hill Street to be cleared of debris opposite Hill Farm House, alleyway from Paynes Lane to High Street to be cleared and swept, and walkway from The Beck to St Mary's Churchyard to be cleared of brambles, although Mr Storey will ascertain from Andy Wallace whether this belongs to Highways.

16. Streetlight Contract Renewal – NPower refund and ERBS payment had been received.

17. Bus Shelters – Bus shelters had been cleaned.

18. Second Memorial Bench – Bench was installed at the weekend. It was unanimously agreed that the installation of the concrete pad should also be funded by CIL monies.

19. Audit – Approve Accounts – Clerk said the external auditors had completed their review which concluded that 'Section 2, Boxes 1 and 6 have been incorrectly completed due to an error in respect of unpaid direct debits in the prior year. Section 2, Boxes 1 and 6 for the current year should read £32,828 and £67,887 respectively'. She will now publish the notice along with the certified AGAR. Clerk read out a paragraph in the covering letter of the review which drew attention to a mandatory change to Paragraph 1.26 within the Practitioners' Guide 2023 for the 2023/24 period which stated all councils must have an email account belonging to the council and to which they have access, ideally a .gov.uk or .org.uk address or an address linked to the council website. In order to answer 'yes' to Assertion 3 in the 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement, the Council should urgently ensure its email address complies with this requirement. Chair proposed issuing new email addresses to the Councillors and Clerk to comply with this requirement, Mrs Bane seconded, all in favour. Chair and Clerk will work together on this project to ensure the requirement is met asap.

20. Casual Vacancy & Appointment of Internal Drainage Board Representative – Clerk advised Mr Fenn would serve as Borough Council representative on Southery & District IDB up to May 2027.

21. To Consider Residents' Concerns Regarding Hill Street Junction with St Mary's Street/The Beck and Speeding Along The Beck – **Hill St Junction with St Mary's St:** Mr Wallace said all lines are ordered but had no date for completion although deadline is the end of the year. 'Give Way Ahead' sign had only just been ordered. **The Beck:** Chair is awaiting price for post from Westcotec and will speak to the primary school for permission to install it.

22. To Consider Playing Field Matters Raised in Email from Parishioner – **Gates:** Mr Samuels was invited to speak by the Chair and said all gate mechanisms were now working albeit one which only locked if physically shut. He expressed disappointment that the kissing gate had not yet been ordered but the Chair pointed out that there had been no August meeting and Mrs Peckham advised Mr Samuels that the two designs of which he had forwarded quotes had not been well liked which was why alternative designs were being sought. Clerk will arrange a meeting with Mrs Peckham and other Councillors to look at the entrances.

23. To Consider Resident's Enquiry re SAM2 Data – Chair said he had sent the data away to be deciphered.

24. Iron Bridge & Track – Anchor Ward – Liz Truss MP had forwarded responses from Norfolk County Council (NCC) and South Yorkshire Pension Authority (SYPA) who had both attended a Teams meeting on 26/7/23 to discuss the liability for maintaining the bridge. SYPA stated it had no duty to maintain it and its fiduciary and financial responsibilities to its pension scheme members did not extend to continuing to maintain it. They had previously sought to share the cost of maintenance with local people who they believed were the significant majority of users, through a proposed toll but as there had been no appetite amongst local users to contribute, NCC was then lobbied about it. NCC stated that although there were public rights of way over the bridge, it had no duty to maintain

MATTERS ARISING (CONT)

it and could not respond further at that time. Waldersey Farms had undertaken repairs to the roadway as a gesture of goodwill but without any local alternative proposal, SYPA were disinclined to revisit trying to organise and administer a toll for contributions towards maintenance. They stated that if the public demanded to use the bridge without contribution then NCC should adopt it. NCC stated their highway authority and bridges team were not aware of the adoption suggestion and consequently were unlikely to be interested in pursuing the matter further primarily because it pertained to a non-maintainable public highway. The Chair then invited the residents in attendance to speak who said that when the toll fees were proposed, the farms were asked for too little and residents too much, and Bidwells/SYPA had been unresponsive when residents tried to discuss this with them. They said they have also requested NCC record a public footpath over the footway section of the bridge in addition to the public highway which is referenced by SYPA as a reason why NCC should adopt it. Mr Storey said he had been following the emails and residents should take credit for their efforts. He said NCC were aware of the poor condition of the road and he is ensuring they continue to monitor it. He was still of the belief that the farmers doing the damage should contribute the most to repairs, and questions must continue to be asked of them and also NCC. He appreciated the residents attending the meeting, assuring them he was working hard to achieve a satisfactory resolution for all parties and was attending a meeting with Highways the following day where he would discuss the matter. A resident asked if he could also mention the “not maintained and use at your risk” signage as she didn’t think NCC would allow safety concerns on a public highway. Mr Storey said if they were not adopting the road then this may be difficult but he would also discuss this with them. The Council agreed to keep the matter in the minutes.

25. Fence – Short Beck – Clerk said fence looked as if it had been propped back up. To be revisited when Rangers have removed the Buddleia bush.

26. To Consider Bid for Parish Partnership 2024/25 – Trod not yet installed by developers. As deadline is 8th December, progress of this will be monitored with a view to extending it via the PP Scheme.

27. To Consider Councillor Training Offer – Mrs Peacock, Mrs Wilson and the Clerk had attended a training session on 21/7/23 and Mrs Wilson said it had been very worthwhile. A second session is being arranged.

28. To Consider the Purchase of a Christmas Tree – Mr Storey and Mr Lambert said they would purchase the Christmas tree again this year. Chair thanked them both for this, said the tree had been ordered and he would advise cost and collection date.

29. Playing Field – **Do Not Park Sign:** Clerk said she had received prices for a couple of signs but had been unsure of size so suggested discussing this during the gate meeting.

30. Handyman Vacancy – Clerk said the Handyman had advised his intention to retire as soon as a replacement could be found. Vacancy to be advertised in the Parish Magazine, noticeboard, website and Facebook page. Starting wage to be current Handyman wage with a trial period of 6 months. Mrs Bane felt a gift should be purchased for the Handyman who had undertaken this role since June 2016 to thank him for his service, all agreed.

31. Changing Room Electricity Supply Renewal – Current contract expires 30/9/23. Clerk said EDF’s renewal price based on 5000 kWh/annum was £1724/year, £3578/2-year or £4659/3-year contract. It was agreed that under the current climate, a 1-year contract would be sensible. Other prices obtained on this basis were British Gas £1500.50/year, Octopus £1506.50 and SSE £1644.60. Mrs Wilson proposed renewing with British Gas at £1500.50/year, Mrs McGeeney seconded, all in favour. Clerk to renew with British Gas.

MATTERS ARISING (CONT)

32. Insurance Renewal – Clerk obtained three quotes on a 1-year and 3-year basis. Costs to renew with current provider (Zurich) were £1517.64 and £1391.06 respectively. Other quotes were from Clear Councils (Aviva) at £1135.75 and £1064.67 respectively, and AJG Community Schemes (Hiscox) at £3141.58 for both terms. Although Aviva were cheapest, concern was raised about changing insurers during the ongoing issue with the boundary wall. Mrs Peckham asked if a claim

would affect the yearly renewal price of a 3-year contract. Mr Lambert proposed enquiring if Zurich could reduce their quotation by at least £150 and if so, renewing with them on a 3-year term, Mr Fenn seconded, all in favour. Clerk will contact Zurich and ascertain if a claim affects the yearly renewal price.

33. Request for Use of Changing Room Toilets – Clerk read out email request from resident to have access to the Changing Room toilets during a group picnic. Mr Storey proposed permitting the group to use the toilets at no charge if this were a one-off event, Mr Lambert seconded, all in favour. Clerk to write to resident.

34. Remembrance Sunday Service Books – Chair said following the passing of HM The Queen last September and succession of King Charles II to the throne, the wording of the National Anthem in the Remembrance Sunday service books was incorrect and needed updating. As this is a civil service, he asked if the Parish Council would assist with printing costs which he didn't think would be a great amount. All agreed in principle but a cost would be required before a decision could be made. Chair to obtain.

CORRESPONDENCE

35. NCC – Emails – **Traffic Orders:** Emergency temp closure of Paynes Lane; **Press Release:** 22 New Fire Engines for Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service. **Other:** Norwich Western Link Project Update

36. BCKLWN – Emails – Home Improvement Schemes

37. RAF Lakenheath – Email – **Notification of operations at RAF Feltwell:** 22/6/23 – EOD training – 13 small shots 1000-1300 hrs; 29/6/23 - 3 detonations 0900-1400 hrs

38. Norfolk & Waveney Health & Care Partnership – Email – Updates, £86m investment in three new diagnostic centres to be built at region's hospitals

39. Rural Services Network – Email – Bulletins

40. East Cambs District Council – Email - Reach Neighbourhood Plan (22/6/23-3/8/23)

41. Wicksteed – Email – Promotion of toddler products

42. Brochures - Parish Magazine, Clerks & Councils

43. **CHEQUES/PAYMENTS** – Mr Lambert proposed ratifying the August payments and approving the September payments, Mrs Bane seconded, all in favour. Payments for August – J Martin £268.80, S Sargent £109.90, T George £44.00, A Stannard £80.00, Methwold Parish Council £33.34, Norfolk ALC £9.35, Peckham's Construction £480.00. Direct Debits to Biffa £209.40, EDF Energy £20.80, SSE £1001.62, Vodafone £20.34. Standing Orders to K&M Lighting £100.21 and J Martin £1020.50. Payments for September – J Martin £123.84, S Sargent £118.10, T George £140.80, Glasdon £204.19, PKF Littlejohn £378.00, J Gooch Electrical £216.00, J Rolph £150.00. Direct Debits to Biffa £209.40, EDF Energy £43.73, SSE £1069.84, Vodafone £20.34. Standing Orders to K&M Lighting £100.21 and J Martin £1020.50.

44. PLANNING

23/01502/F Construction of Vehicle Access at 38 Paynes Lane– 8 no comment, Mrs Peckham and Mr Storey abstained. NO COMMENT.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

45. Highways – Road is rutted on junction of Hill Street with Short Beck.

46. Green Bag – A large green bag has been left on the green near The Chequers probably from builders working at a nearby property. Clerk to write to owners requesting its removal and that grass underneath is made good.

47. Long Lane Development – Clerk was asked to obtain an update as no work seemed to have taken place for a while.

Next meeting to be held on Monday 9th October 2023 at the British Legion at 7.30 pm.

Meeting declared closed 9.32 pm.
