

A Meeting of the Parish Council was held on Monday the 8th day of JANUARY 2024 at the Royal British Legion, Long Lane – commencing 7.30 pm

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Messrs Cole, Fenn, Lambert (Vice-Chair), Rayner (Chair) and Storey (arrived 8.30 pm), Mrs Arnold, Mrs McGeeney, Mrs Peacock, Mrs Peckham and Mrs Wilson. Also present RAF Commander Geary, RAF Community Relations Advisor - Victoria Quamina and 2 members of the public.

APOLOGIES: No apologies were received.

The Chair asked if anyone was recording the meeting and Mr Cole replied that he was. All present consented to being recorded.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: There were no declarations of interest.

MINUTES: Minutes of the last Parish Council meeting were approved. Mrs Wilson proposed, Mr Cole seconded, 6 in favour, Mrs McGeeney abstained having not been present.

PUBLIC SPEAKING: The meeting was suspended for 6 minutes for Public Speaking.

MATTERS ARISING

1. **RAF Feltwell** – The RAF Commander arrived at 8.10 pm and introduced his colleague Victoria Quamina, RAF Community Relations Advisor, who gave a brief update on her role which involved dealing with complaints, volunteer opportunities and any public events etc. RAF Commander then gave a report for November and December. In addition to operational commitments and routine training, 48FW aircraft participated in Exercise Atlantic Trident in the UK, conducted an exercise in Italy and participated in the Dubai Air Show. The Station hosted the latest UK/US Agile Combat Employment Working Group and 48FW conducted an Active Shooter Exercise in November. The Wing also successfully passed an Explosive Safety Inspection in December. Visitors have included the UK Minister for Defence Procurement, US Deputy Secretary of Defence, Czech Air Force and United Services Organisation. The USVF hosted a Thanksgiving Service at Ely Cathedral on 22/11/34 and 48FW hosted members of the local community at the Station for a Tree Lighting Ceremony and Yuletide Event on 1/12/23. 48FW will be conducting night flying activities for two weeks starting 8/1/24. Lastly, the RAF Commander advised he would be leaving the role in the Spring to take up an appointment at RAF Marham and would forward the name of his replacement as soon as possible. RAF Commander and Ms Quamina departed the meeting at 8.25 pm.

2. **Risk Assessment** – **Weekly:** Handyman had reinstated the plastic fencing where necessary, swept up broken glass from the bottle bank area and tightened the ground bolts on the Changing Room door handrail. He noticed both pedestrian gates had had self-closing springs fitted and reported a couple of weeds growing up through the tennis court. Clerk to check warranty with resurfacing company. Weed killing options to be discussed at March meeting. **Quarterly Inspection:** Clerk to obtain resurfacing prices for areas highlighted in the report. **Gates:** Clerk said she, Mr Cole and Mrs Peckham were meeting Mr Ayres tomorrow morning as he felt the design needed to be tweaked slightly but said this would not affect price. **Playing Field Group:** Vacancy to be discussed.

3. **Balance Sheet** – No queries.

4. **Allotment Pest Control** – Reports received for December and January.

5. **NALC** – Newsletters circulated.

MATTERS ARISING (CONT)

6. Cllr Martin Storey Report – Following his meeting with Andrew Wallace, Mr Storey was finally able to confirm four roundels would be painted on both Lodge Road and Wilton Road within six weeks, coinciding with the white-lining scheme. These are to be funded by his Road Safety Community Scheme which is now open again for new projects. A proposal to include family members on short breaks for disabled children is due to be considered by NCC as well as a proposal to increase the number of preferences a parent or carer can make from three to four when applying for a mainstream school place. He touched on a multi-million-pound Norfolk Fire & Rescue scheme to modernise buildings and 24/7 free bus travel for all disabled bus pass holders in Norfolk. NCC can assist parents and carers affected by the sudden closure of three Alpha Nurseries in finding childcare. Flooding is a big concern to many parishes which, he said, should be tackled jointly by all relevant departments such as Highways, IDB etc, the main cause being blocked ditches, dykes and rivers. Lastly, the Borough Council is looking into how it can support Parish Councils in dealing with troublesome Councillors. Further information for the above and other matters can be found on NCC and Borough Council websites including information on the disposal of small amounts of DIY waste now being permitted at recycling centres.

7. Playing Field Boundary Wall – Clerk had only managed to obtain one price for chain link fencing but will endeavour to obtain two more in time for the next meeting.

8. Changing Rooms – Clerk said the Primary School Caretaker is collecting the hand sanitizer tomorrow morning.

9. Highways – Mr Storey said Andrew Wallace had viewed the footpath outside 2 Oak Street on Google Earth during their meeting and would be coming out to reassess it. Mr Wallace had thought an NCC scheme may be viable although costly and Mr Storey did not wish to divulge further in case it wasn't suitable. Clerk said the owner of 2 Oak Street had 21 days to respond to Highways request to cut back the hedge and another 21 days after that before any action could be taken. Clerk to confirm with owner that he had received a request from Highways. Clerk to chase missing 'Paynes Lane' sign near the Social Club.

10. Overhanging Greenery – Clerk said Andrew Wallace's response to Mrs Peckham's question was that he did not know an agreement existed at the time they met to view the hedge. Mrs Peckham remembered a meeting taking place between the owner, Highways and Mr Storey years ago and believed that if such an agreement were in place then the owner would have a copy. Councillors felt Mr Storey should take this matter forward as no progress was being made and the hedge only needed cutting back by 1ft to make the junction safer. Clerk said the owner of 19 Wilton Road had advised hedge was due to be cut 10th/11th January having been let down on previous occasions. Mr Storey said the footpath from The Beck to St Mary's Churchyard belongs to Norfolk County Council and is registered as a Public Right of Way.

11. Grass Maintenance Contract Quotations – Deadline for quotations is 31/1/24.

12. Rangers – Clerk said repeated requests for Rangers to clear leaves and debris from Hill Street had been to no avail. Mrs McGeeney said leaves outside one property were making the footpath slippery and dangerous, and it was agreed by all to politely ask the owners to clear them. Clerk to write to owners. Mrs Peckham felt letters should also be sent to other central village property owners whose frontage was just as bad and it was agreed for the Clerk to send letters accordingly.

13. Audit – Approve Accounts (Email Address) – Chair said NALC had released further details of the gov.uk scheme which will cost £56/year + VAT for two years. As NALC host the Council's Norfolk Parishes' website, there will be no additional admin charge. Mrs Peckham proposed signing up to the NALC gov.uk service, Mrs Wilson seconded, all in favour.

MATTERS ARISING (CONT)

14. 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 Storey said Andrew Wallace advised the 'Give Way Ahead' sign would be installed in February. **The Beck:** Chair to chase the SAM2 post installation.

15. To Consider Resident's Enquiry re SAM2 Data – Chair hoped to have data for next meeting. Mrs Peckham asked when the SAM2 on Wilton Road would be working again and Chair said he hoped to replace the battery tomorrow.

16. Iron Bridge & Track – Anchor Ward – During Public Speaking, a resident said the road was almost in worse condition than before it was temporarily repaired in August by Waldersey Farms which had been triggered by involving Liz Truss MP. Ms Truss said in her email to the resident and Parish Council on 25th November that she had contacted Norfolk County Council to question if they were planning to maintain the highway by adopting it given their application under s.53 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 but there had been no further update. Clerk to seek an update from Liz Truss, and Mr Fenn will make some enquiries with the Highways bridges team. Mr Storey who was not present during Public Speaking, said he had no new information on this matter but would pay the resident a visit.

17. Long Lane Development – Clerk to obtain confirmation that work will recommence this month.

18. To Amend the Bank Mandate – Ongoing.

19. Budget 2024/25 – See Item 22.

20. Spar, High Street – Clerk had only recently written to the proprietor so advised waiting until the next meeting before taking further action. Mrs McGeeney expressed her anger that the Post Office counter in the Spar was not open as per the hours stipulated by the Post Office when it relocated its branch in 2016. Although now the One Stop, the proprietor is still the same and Mrs Arnold said this was a breach of contract. All agreed for the Clerk to write letter of complaint to the Post Office.

21. 9 Oak Street, Collapsing Gable End – Clerk said the owner was aware of the collapse and although unable to obtain their contact details, she had been informed the property was managed by Shires Estate Agents. She had furnished CNC Building Control with this information who were taking this matter forward.

22. Budget & Precept 2024/25 – Chair suggested budgeting for the installation of a street light near the Almshouses on Oak Street as this area was very dark. The Government's amendment to the Local Government Act 1894 which came into force 26/12/23 includes funding certain church repairs so the clock revamp could also be considered in conjunction with a CIL Project Fund application in July and donated monies already ringfenced. Revamp of the war memorial garden was discussed but it was agreed that a specification of work must be ascertained first for which Mrs Wilson suggested setting up a working party. Mrs Peckham said CIL money could also be allocated to both items. Clerk produced a financial report which stated a forecasted balance brought forward at 1/4/24 of approximately £12,000. Chair said an uplift in wages, electricity and grass maintenance could increase the village running cost to £50,000-£55,000. Mrs McGeeney proposed setting the precept at £52,500 but there was no seconder. Mr Lambert proposed setting the precept at £50,000, Mr Fenn seconded, 6 in favour, Mrs McGeeney and Mrs Peckham abstained.

CORRESPONDENCE

- 23. NCC – Email – **Press Release:** Household­ers to get free DIY waste for small projects
- 24. BCKLWN – Email – West Norfolk Local Hero Awards 2024
- 25. RAF Lakenheath – Email – **Notification of operations at RAF Feltwell:** 14/12/23 – Demolition operations, 4 detonations 9am-2pm; 10/1/24 – Explosive training, numerous detonations in rapid succession 9am-5pm – RESCHEDULED. **Other:** Happy Holiday greetings
- 26. TWR Accountants – Email – Christmas Opening Hours; December Tax Tips & Newsletter
- 27. Norfolk & Waveney Health & Care Partnership – Email – Updates
- 28. Rural Services Network – Email – Bulletins
- 29. Queen Elizabeth Hospital – Email – Modernising Update
- 30. CPRE Norfolk – Email – New Year message from Chair; Help reduce Norfolk's light pollution
- 31. Brochures - Parish Magazine

32. **CHEQUES/PAYMENTS** – Mr Cole proposed approving the payments, Mr Lambert seconded, all in favour – Cheques to J Martin £55.45, S Sargent £70.40, T George £105.60, D Wilkinson £44.00, HMRC £522.63, L&R Enefer £108.00, J Rolph £100.00. Direct Debits to Biffa £273.49, British Gas £131.80, URM £63.07, Vodafone £20.34. Standing Orders to K&M Lighting £100.21, J Martin £1020.50.

33. PLANNING

There were no planning applications.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

34. Dog Fouling – Clerk read email from the primary school requesting advice for preventing dog owners from leaving their animal's faeces on the pavement in front of the school. Clerk suggested the children create large posters to be displayed on the fence. Chair said this is a whole village problem which Mrs Peckham said occurs at this time of year every year due to the early dark nights.

35. Parked Vans Obscuring Short Beck junction – A complaint had been received regarding vehicles parked on the green in front of Central Garage restricting vision for drivers approaching the junction of Short Beck with High Street. Clerk to write to the proprietors to ask them to refrain from parking vehicles here.

36. Vacancy – Candidate interviews took place on 4th January 2024. A vote was taken and 7 councillors were in favour of accepting Mrs Emma Edwards application, Mr Storey stated that he could not vote as he had not been present at the interviews and abstained, Mrs Arnold and Mr Fenn also abstained having not been present. Mrs Edwards was duly elected as Parish Councillor for the Feltwell ward. Mrs Wilson felt that a precedent should be set and in future, applicants should be interviewed, even if they were the only applicant, which had not been the case in the past. It was agreed to review the Co-option Policy.

Next meeting to be held on Monday 12th February 2024 at the British Legion at 7.30 pm.
Meeting declared closed 9.45 pm.
