

The Meeting of the Parish Council was held on Monday the 9th day of DECEMBER 2024 at the Royal British Legion, Long Lane – commencing 7.30 pm

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Messrs Cole, Fenn, Lambert, Rayner and Storey, Mrs Arnold, Mrs McGeeney, Mrs Peacock, Mrs Peckham and Mrs Wilson. Also present 3 members of the public.

APOLOGIES: Apologies were received from Mrs Edwards.

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

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: There were no declarations of interest.

MINUTES OF THE LAST PARISH COUNCIL MEETING: Minutes of the last Parish Council meeting were approved. Mr Cole proposed, Mrs McGeeney seconded, 5 in favour, Mr Fenn, Mrs Peckham and Mrs Wilson abstained having not been present.

PUBLIC SPEAKING: No issues were raised by the public.

MATTERS ARISING

1. **RAF Feltwell** – Clerk read Sqn Leader's November report which mentioned the recent unidentified drone activity and advised members of the parish to report any suspicious activity to the Police. The period from 20/12/24 to 3/1/25 would be a no-fly period. Mr Storey was disappointed at Sqn Leader Eaton's absence yet again and said relations with the Base had improved considerably due to the excellent attendance of past postholders. He felt his superiors should be asked their intentions on future representation, particularly in light of the unidentified drone activity which had caused worry and concern amongst parishioners. Mrs Wilson felt the Council should also be told what was happening with houses on Portal Close which are all empty, and those on Trenchard Square. All agreed. Chair to contact Vikki Quamina, the Community Liaison Officer, to enquire who the Squadron Leader's superior is so the Clerk can send an email.
2. **Risk Assessment** – **Weekly:** Handyman is in the process of replacing broken chains on the multiplay equipment. No other issues reported. Mrs Peckham said the branches either side of the entrance near the cub hut needed completely cutting to the ground now they are bare and Falcon Road alleyway needed clearing of leaves. Clerk to speak to Handyman. Mr Storey said he would cut the hedge around the perimeter of the field this week or next.
3. **Balance Sheet** – No queries.
4. **Allotment Pest Control** – November report received. Clerk said the contractor was currently visiting the allotments twice monthly but Mr Cole had not seen him at all and Mr Fenn said he had seen plenty of rats. Mr Storey will meet the contractor to discuss his control measures and Clerk will obtain two quotations for vermin control.
5. **NALC** – Updates circulated.
6. **Playing Field Boundary Wall** – Continue to monitor wall.
7. **Highways** – **2 Oak Street:** No response from Mr Wallace. **Other matters:** Malfunctioning 30mph flashing speed signs along Lodge Road and Wilton Road have not yet been repaired.
8. **Overhanging Greenery** – **50 Wilton Road:** No response from Mr Wallace. **Other matters:** Highways Engineer advised further action would now be taken against 2 Falcon Road but he needed advice from Mr Wallace regarding this. He had sent another letter to 2 Western Close.

MATTERS ARISING (CONT)

9. SAM2 Data – Chair said he couldn't access the SAM2's in wet weather but would send data to Councillors this week if possible.

10. Iron Bridge & Track – Anchor Ward – Ongoing. Mr Fenn said the bridge was in a despicable condition, the worst he had ever seen it, and that signs had been erected stating "Not for Private Use".

11. Premises Licence – Fire Risk Assessment – Clerk read letter from Fenland Fire following their annual fire extinguisher service which recommended installing a 2kg carbon dioxide fire extinguisher outside the kitchen to cover electrical risk in this area and an ID sign for it. Total cost is £66.75 + VAT. Mr Cole proposed purchasing both items, Mrs McGeeney seconded, all in favour. Clerk to contact Fenland Fire.

12. Damage to Playing Field Entrance, 2nd June 2024 – New gate/fence should be installed this week. DAC Beachcroft have sent a letter before action to the third party.

13. Empty Freebridge Houses – Mrs Edwards was not present but had advised the Clerk that the Portfolio Manager had put her in touch with someone else regarding this matter who she was waiting to hear back from.

14. Street Light Bracket Survey & Electrical Inspection, Testing and Certification – K&M have not yet completed the bracket survey nor electrical inspection, testing and certification of Council street lights. Frith Blake will start their visual assessment of the concrete columns this week.

15. High Street Parking – Clerk said Kevin Allen had replied 6/12/24 stating removal of the extended path would not eliminate the parking problem. He recommended installing wooden bollards along the edge of it which could be funded by the Parish Partnership Scheme or Local Member's Budget. As Mr Wallace was on leave, Mr Allen had advised a rough cost of £9,000 for 12 bollards but said fewer or more bollards may be required. Mr Cole felt a better and safer solution would be to move the 'Give Way' junction from Short Beck to High Street so that traffic stops on High Street and gives way to traffic from Short Beck. This was considered by all to be a much better idea therefore Clerk will arrange a site visit with Mr Allen.

16. Christmas Tree – Mrs McGeeney said the tree looked beautiful as did the whole churchyard.

17. Remembrance Sunday – Mr Storey said there was a tremendous turn-out and thanked the Chair and others who had organised the event.

18. Damaged Street Light at Mulberry Close – Clerk said the street light had been reconnected. DAC Beachcroft had presented costs to the third party and were awaiting his insurance and vehicle registration details.

19. Age UK/Citizens Advice Event for Elderly – Mrs Wilson said a date had been set for Age UK to attend a coffee morning at St Mary's Church on 22/1/25, 10 am – 12 noon. The Food Pantry would be in attendance and the Borough Council's 'Beat Your Bill's roadshow would also be there. Feltwell Community Group would like to be involved as well. Leaflets will be sent out to residents receiving winter payments from Edmund de Moundeford Trust and Councillors will undertake a leaflet drop to other residents in due course. Mrs Wilson will ask Children's Services to attend and Chair will contact Careline. Mrs Wilson felt a donation ought to be made towards this event.

20. Grass Dumped in The Beck – After speaking to a few residents, Mrs McGeeney had concluded that the grass was dumped by someone who lets his grass grow long for wildlife and cuts it back once a year, disposing of it in the beck.

MATTERS ARISING (CONT)

21. Tree – Clerk has reported tree on Lime Kiln Lane to Norfolk Street Lighting.
22. Street Light – Old style lantern on Old Methwold Road to be replaced with LED when received.
23. To Consider Request from Grey's Funfair – No date as yet.
24. To Discuss Budget & Precept 2025/26 – Clerk presented a financial report showing forecast end of year balance. She said the Council had not been invoiced for its street light electricity supply since November 2023 despite her continual requests for invoices and recommended reserving around £10,000 for this. Provisions should also be made for an increase in wages, grass maintenance, electric, play equipment maintenance, the war memorial garden revamp and a tree survey. Budget and precept to be set next meeting to meet 31/1/25 deadline.
25. Cllr Martin Storey Report – Mr Storey gave brief information on NCC's support of Norfolk Family Farms and said he would be seconding the motion proposed by the Leader to do away with inheritance tax and reinstate the Agricultural Business & Property Relief which has been of great assistance to farmers over the years. Norfolk had taken the top spot in a national highways transport survey, achieving an overall score of 49, the average being 44. Mrs McGeeney asked him to obtain separate rural and urban results because rural roads were most certainly neglected. Mr Storey said 2200 miles would be covered by Norfolk gritters this winter and Mrs Peckham said a speed limit should be imposed on these vehicles having witnessed one travelling at 50mph, throwing salt and sand everywhere. Mr Storey also reported issues with the Norwich Western Link and said £1.5m was being allocated to fund dentistry in schools. New QEH is still on schedule for completion 2030 and the first phase of the West Winch housing development is also on track. All news can be found on both Borough Council and NCC websites. **Other matters:** Mr Storey said Mr Wallace had confirmed roundels would be painted before Christmas.
26. To Review Grass Maintenance Specification – Mr Lambert felt more flexibility should be given to the timing of cuts so that the contractor could start earlier if necessary. It was decided to keep to the current contract (April to October), requesting a price for extra cuts should this be necessary. Mrs Peckham also felt more care should be given when cutting the playing field in wet weather, particularly the football pitch. All agreed. Clerk to obtain prices.
27. To Consider Request for New Street Light in Mulberry Close – Clerk read email request from Mulberry Close resident to install another street light at the top end of the estate. Clerk had obtained a price for solar and non-solar street lights from K&M which came in at £1095.25 + VAT and £2740.36 + VAT respectively, plus £1440 + VAT connection fee from UKPN for non-solar, presuming there is a mains cable available. Mrs Peckham said it would have to be installed on a grassed area and suggested all Councillors visit Mulberry Close to determine where exactly extra lighting is required. Clerk to obtain two more solar street light quotations in the meantime.
28. To Consider Request for New Bus Stop outside Manor Park Estate – Mrs Wilson said she had been asked by a resident if a bus stop could be installed outside Manor Park Estate, particularly for children attending Breckland School who currently use bus stops on High Street or The Beck which are quite a walk on dark evenings. Mr Storey said he would support this and there was funding available from central government. He advised the Clerk to contact Robert Pratt.

CORRESPONDENCE

29. BCKLWN – Emails – Weekly Planning Applications and Decisions; Parish/Town Councils - Council Tax Base Training Slides; Temporary Event Notice 24/01347/LA_TEN
30. RAF Lakenheath – Emails – **Notification of operations at RAF Feltwell:** 15/11/24 – explosive training, 6-8 detonations, 9.30am-4pm; 21/11/24, explosive training, 6-8 detonations, 9.30am-4pm

CORRESPONDENCE (CONT)

31. Rural Services Network – Email – Bulletins

32. Zurich Insurance – Email - Helping Feltwell Parish Council through Storm Bert

33. Brochures - Parish Magazine

34. **CHEQUES/PAYMENTS** – Mrs Wilson proposed approving the payments, Mrs McGeeney seconded, all in favour. Payments were approved and cheques signed for J Martin £285.26, S Sargent £103.20, D Wilkinson £135.26, R H Landscapes & Maintenance £936.00, Cash £50.00, Apex Signs £66.00, CTS Security £3266.26, K&M Lighting £1038.30, Royal British Legion £105.00, Mr Rolph £50.00. Direct Debits to Biffa £209.47, British Gas £108.02, Vodafone £21.95. Standing Orders to K&M Lighting £100.21, J Martin £1082.38.

35. PLANNING

In order to fulfil the Council's decision at a meeting held 12/6/23 (Minute 1795, Item 34) where it was agreed to hold a public meeting, led by Methwold Parish Council, to discuss planning applications 22/00860/FM and 22/00866/FM, and having just received notification that this meeting was scheduled for 12/12/24, the Chair proposed removing the Planning item from the agenda and discussing all applications at an Extraordinary Meeting to be held on 16/12/24, thus enabling the Councillors to make a more informed decision, and voting by secret ballot. All in favour.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

36. Parking on Grass Verge – A complaint had been received about residents parking on the verge at the front of their property on Long Lane causing the grass to be churned up. Mrs Peckham said if no obstruction was being caused then Highways would not be interested. Mr Storey said if the residents were to park on the road then this would cause a bigger nuisance. He recommended the complainant contact Norfolk County Council regarding this matter.

37. Speeding in High Street – Mrs McGeeney said a resident enquired if speed bumps or a 20mph limit could be imposed along High Street. Chair said a similar request was refused for Paynes Lane as 20mph limits are only issued in built up areas like city centres. Again, Mrs McGeeney asked why urban areas were more important than rural because Feltwell residents' lives were just as valuable.

38. Mud on Roads – Mrs McGeeney asked if farmers were supposed to clean mud left behind by their vehicles. Mr Storey said they were and that he was most mindful of this obligation, sweeping roads at night or in the morning unless a complaint was received and it was a safety issue, in which case he dealt with it immediately. He asked Mrs McGeeney to direct complainants to him.

The next meeting is to be held on Monday 13th January 2025 at the British Legion at 7.30 pm.

Meeting declared closed 9.40 pm.
