

The Meeting of the Parish Council was held on Monday the 10<sup>th</sup> day of FEBRUARY 2025 at the Royal British Legion, Long Lane – commencing 7.30 pm

**COUNCILLORS PRESENT:** Messrs Cole, Fenn, Lambert and Rayner, Mrs Edwards, Mrs McGeeney, Mrs Peacock, Mrs Peckham and Mrs Wilson. Vikki Quamina, Community Liaisons Advisor at RAF Lakenheath was also in attendance.

**APOLOGIES:** Apologies were received from Mrs Arnold and Mr Storey.

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:** Amendment to Item 19 as the street light is situated on the corner of Old Methwold Road and Lodge Road not Old Methwold Road itself. Minutes of the last Parish Council meeting were amended and then approved. Mr Cole proposed, Mr Fenn seconded, 3 in favour, Chair, Mrs Edwards, Mrs Peacock and Mrs Wilson abstained having not been present.

**MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD 16/12/24:** Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting were approved. Mrs Wilson proposed, Mr Cole seconded, 4 in favour. Mr Lambert, Mrs McGeeney and Mrs Peckham abstained having not been present.

**PUBLIC SPEAKING:** No members of the public were present.

### **MATTERS ARISING**

1. RAF Feltwell – Vikki Quamina introduced herself and read Sqn Leader Eaton's report. A very successful NATO drone exercise had been carried out last month involving fighter aircraft from US, UK, Netherlands and Norway. 48FW have been recognised as having the best maintenance group in USAFE again and the best Force Support Squadron. Discussions are taking place with Suffolk Highways to alleviate traffic flow problems around base entrances. 48FW would like to be involved in any village plans to commemorate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE day in May. 48FW airmen have been attending Feltwell Lodge Care Home and engaging with residents since late last year which is proving very popular. Vegetation from Portal Close protruding onto neighbouring Moat Side properties should be cleared by 21/2/24 and vegetation along Short Lane and Long Lane will be cut back sooner than April, as was advised to the Clerk by Ross Jack last week. Ms Quamina departed the meeting at 7.40 pm. Chair said he was still waiting to hear from Sqn Leader Eaton's predecessor regarding who to contact about his lack of attendance.

2. Risk Assessment – **Weekly:** Handyman has cleared the greenery around the playing field entrance near the cub hut. Parts for repairing the chains on the multiplay have been ordered.

3. Balance Sheet – No queries.

4. Allotment Pest Control – January report received. Mr Fenn said there are still lots of rats at the allotments. To be discussed by the Allotment Committee at an onsite meeting in due course.

5. NALC – Updates circulated. Adrian Myers, new County Officer, had emailed to introduce himself and give a brief insight into changes/improvements he wished to make following a review of NALC's services.

**MATTERS ARISING (CONT)**

6. Playing Field Boundary Wall – Continue to monitor wall. Email received from Zurich advising closure of the file and payment of £750 fees to their Loss Adjusters. Clerk to clarify if the file can be easily re-opened if necessary without duplicating work already carried out.

7. Highways – 2 Oak Street: Andy Wallace has to check the timescale for the footway widening scheme following changes to next year's works programme. **Other matters:** Westcotec quoted approx. £4000 for a flashing 'Thank You' sign on Wilton Road as it is not a standard sign and permission also needs to be sought from NCC. This was considered too expensive so Clerk will pursue the replacement of the existing flashing 30mph sign.

8. Overhanging Greenery – 50 Wilton Road: Highways have asked the owner for their urgent attention to this matter. **Other matters:** 2 Falcon Road hedge was cut 30/1/25. Clerk to write again to 2 Western Close and send letters to both 33 and 41A Long Lane requesting the cutback of their hedges.

9. SAM2 Data – Chair apologised for the lack of information but would collect data this week when moving the SAM2 and forward to Councillors.

10. Iron Bridge & Track – Anchor Ward – Ongoing.

11. Premises Licence – Fire Risk Assessment – Clerk still awaiting date from Fenland Fire to install a 2kg carbon dioxide fire extinguisher in the kitchen.

12. Damage to Playing Field Entrance, 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2024 – Handyman to install new sign. Clerk has furnished DAC Beachcroft (Zurich Claims) with invoices and photos of the finished work as requested by the third party's loss adjusters.

13. Empty Freebridge Houses – Mrs Edwards was having difficulty contacting Freebridge. Mrs Wilson believed Mr Storey may be looking into this as well since a resident raised this matter with him at the Age UK event.

14. Street Light Bracket Survey & Electrical Inspection, Testing and Certification – Test and Inspection certificates have been received by K&M. Concrete column assessment is ongoing.

15. High Street Parking – Clerk, Mr Cole, Mr Lambert and Mr Storey met Andy Wallace on 24/1/25 to discuss the change of priority from High Street to Short Beck. It had been a busy afternoon and vehicles were parked on the pavement opposite Central Garage so Mr Wallace could clearly see why they were causing a hazard for drivers at Short Beck junction. Various options were discussed and Mr Wallace agreed the change of priority would work. Clerk had emailed him since for an update and he replied that timescale will depend on how the work will be funded and as the design work would be quite detailed, the earliest timescale would be April 2026 although he would try to complete this earlier.

16. Damaged Street Light at Mulberry Close – Clerk said K&M Lighting checked the street light and deemed it to be in good working order although the existing light had been re-installed on the new column. Clerk to obtain price for new lantern. DAC Beachcroft advised they would not be pursuing the claim as the third party had not responded to their emails and there was no address or vehicle registration number available. Mr Lambert will make some further enquiries.

17. Age UK/Citizens Advice Event for Elderly – Mrs Wilson carried out a leaflet drop with the Clerk and Chair, and the event had been very successful. As well as Age UK and BCKLWN Beat Your Bills being present, Careline, Lily Service and Food Pantry were also on-hand to offer advice. Positive feedback had been received by all and another event is being considered for September.

**MATTERS ARISING (CONT)**

18. Tree – Clerk has heard nothing from Highways therefore Mrs Peckham suggested asking the Handyman to cut the branches back from beneath the street light on Lime Kiln Lane. Chair said ivy needed cutting on lamp posts on Long Lane and Addisons as well. Clerk to speak to the Handyman.

19. Street Light – Old style lantern on Old Methwold Road still to be replaced with LED.

20. To Consider Request from Grey's Funfair – Clerk said proposed date was first week of March for opening the weekend of the 6<sup>th</sup>. Clerk to request a date later in the year when the nights are lighter and there is less chance of rain.

21. To Discuss Budget & Precept 2025/26 – Clerk said the precept would be paid in two stages; 50% in April and 50% in September.

22. Cllr Martin Storey Report – Mr Storey was not present therefore no report was given.

23. To Review Grass Maintenance Specification – Clerk read quotes from RH Landscapes, Excite Solutions, Nurture Landscapes and SP Landscapes. RH Landscapes were the most cost competitive at £6480 + VAT and had also quoted for a three-year contract, based on satisfactory performance with any price increase not exceeding the government CPI percentage. It was felt they had provided a good service last season therefore Mrs Wilson proposed accepting RH Landscapes's tender, Mrs Edwards seconded, all in favour. Clerk to contact all four companies.

24. To Consider Request for New Street Light in Mulberry Close – Clerk said the resident had not been happy with the Council's response however, after much discussion, it was still felt that a new street light positioned near No.14 would not benefit the residents living near here or light up the whole footpath, as street lights only light up the footpath directly beneath them. Furthermore, it would be difficult to position a street light where it did not cause light pollution to properties on Hill Street. As the complainant had stated he was a tenant, it was suggested he ask his landlord to install an outside light on his property. Clerk to write to resident.

25. To Consider Request for New Bus Stop outside Manor Park Estate – Clerk said Robert Pratt had undertaken a desktop safety assessment of the proposed stop. His only concern was visibility for overtaking cars due to some bends in this area, however considering the 30mph speed limit, he concluded it would work if the stop was placed downstream of the junction. He confirmed it would be on the bus route for the local high schools. All Councillors were happy with this proposal, particularly Mrs Wilson who had proposed it on behalf of a resident. Clerk to respond to Mr Pratt.

26. Land Behind Feltwell Surgery – Mr Lambert and Mrs Wilson attended a meeting with the Practice Manager at short notice earlier in the day. Dr Sagar had not been present as she only dealt with the medical aspect of the Surgery and was busy with patients. The Practice Manager confirmed the Surgery would not be renewing the car park lease in October due to financial constraints. Mrs Wilson had stressed to her that the Council wished to work with the Surgery to achieve the best possible outcome for the village and that as the car park is well-used, removing it would increase cars parking along Wilton Road and cause chaos for drivers along this main route through the village. She said the Practice Manager was very open to retaining the car park for patients' use. After a lengthy discussion, Councillors felt the land should remain as a Surgery car park with stipulations that it is only used by patients and that the Surgery closes the gate every night. As access would be over Surgery land, Clerk will contact the Solicitor regarding costs for drawing up a right of way access agreement. The agreement would need to include the above stipulations and responsibility for maintenance of the car park and surrounding hedges, and public liability would need to be in place to indemnify the Council in case of any accident. The Council would need a key to the gate as well. Clerk to speak to Solicitor.

### **MATTERS ARISING (CONT)**

27. Changing Rooms – Chair said CTE Electrical had replaced the thermostat in the Officials Room with the one from the Away Team Room as the underfloor heating in there had completely died which, he had learned, was often the case with this type of heating. It was agreed by all to be nonsensical to replace the underfloor heating if it is only going to have a short life span. Chair and Mrs Peckham will meet at the Changing Rooms to explore other options.

28. Hill Street – Clerk to write to resident regarding clearing the debris in front of his house.

29. Climbing Wall Opportunity – Clerk circulated information from Finding Fitness which detailed how they work with Parish Councils to obtain National Lottery funding for their Climbing Wall. There is no cost to the Parish Council, only a small amount of admin work. This was well received by all Councillors so Clerk will pursue. Mrs Wilson said she would be happy to assist her.

30. High Fen Wildland, Thornham Road, Methwold – Clerk read out invitation for Councillors to visit High Fen Wildland but as there was no uptake from anyone, Clerk will respond accordingly.

31. Internal Audit Quotation – Clerk had contacted three companies but only managed to obtain two quotations from TWR Accountants and Wheelers. As TWR Accountants were the most cost competitive at £415 + VAT, Chair proposed TWR Accountants carry out the internal audit again this year, Mrs McGeeney seconded, all in favour. Clerk to contact TWR Accountants.

32. Covid-19 Reflection Day – Clerk to send information to St Mary's Church.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

33. BCKLWN – Emails – Weekly Planning Applications & Decisions; Budget proposals published; Introducing 'Your News' and subsequent editions; Mayor's Design Awards

34. NCC – **Road Closures:** Bell Street 4-10/2/25, stop tap replacement. **Press Releases:** Get hands-on with technology at your local library throughout February. **Other:** Invitation: Livestream Multi-agency Flood & Drought Summit 31/1/25.

35. RAF Lakenheath – Emails – **Notification of operations at RAF Feltwell:** 30/1/25 – Explosive operations, 5 explosions, 9 am – 4 pm. **Other:** Do's & Don'ts of Drones

36. Rural Services Network – Email – Bulletins

37. TWR Accountants – Email – February Tax Tips

38. West Norfolk Community Transport – Email – Asking for help to promote their service

39. Warren Energy Community Fund – Email – Funding open again

40. Keep Britain Tidy – Email - The Great British Spring Clean returns!

41. Alotek Shelters – Email – Promoting Bus Shelters

42. Community Action Norfolk – Email – Invitation to attend Illuminate Norfolk 12/3/25

43. Brochures - Parish Magazine

44. **CHEQUES/PAYMENTS** – Mrs Wilson proposed approving the payments, Mr Lambert seconded, all in favour. Payments were approved and cheques signed for J Martin £29.27, S Sargent £86.40, D Wilkinson £73.12, Limetree Printing £51.81, K&M Lighting £519.24, Lee Palmer £900.00, J M Ayres & Son £2588.40. Direct Debits to Anglian Water £142.17, Biffa £183.00, British Gas £315.14, Vodafone £29.26. Standing Orders to K&M Lighting £100.21, J Martin £1082.38. Clerk advised the direct debit to Anglian Water had been taken in January but the invoice was received too late for last month's meeting.

### **45. PLANNING**

25/00144/F: Side extension to 19 High Street, Feltwell – 9 in favour – APPROVE.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

46. Highways – Mrs Wilson said the road needed repairing near the old Post Office, Clerk said she had already reported this but will chase. Mrs Wilson expressed concern again about the Southery Road and said it was very dangerous and needed attention. Clerk to speak to Highways again.
47. White-Lining – Mrs Peckham reported white-lining needed doing at the Paynes Lane and Old Brandon Road junctions with Wilton Road. Clerk to speak to Highways.
48. Dog Bins – Clerk to obtain price for new bin along Wilton Road.
49. Pension Declaration – Clerk said she had fulfilled the Parish Council's pension duties.
50. Christmas Tree, Churchyard – Mrs McGeeney asked if she could contact Cherry Tree Farm to collect the discarded Christmas tree still laying in St Mary's Churchyard. Mr Lambert said he could deliver it to them if they do not collect.

The next meeting is to be held on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at the British Legion at 7.30 pm.

Meeting declared closed 9.30 pm.

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