

WATERBEACH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Waterbeach Parish Council held on 3 February 2015 at 7.30 p.m. at the Old Pavilion, Cambridge Road, Waterbeach.

OPEN FORUM

The question of road gritting on the school bus route between Landbeach and Cottenham was raised. The fact that this is not seen as a priority route by the County Council was recognised as an important issue to be discussed further in the formal meeting (see below).

PARISH COUNCIL

PRESENT: Cllrs Bull, Gaunt, A Grant, K Grant, Gilzean, B Johnson, P Johnson, Rabbett, Shipp, Smart, Williams, J Williamson, M Williamson (Chair), Wright

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Cllr Howlett

14 / 120 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 6 January 2015 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chair

Proposed: Cllr Bull Seconded Cllr P Johnson
Unanimous

14 / 121 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Cllr P Johnson – Member of South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC)

14 / 122 BUDGET 2015-16

Councillors considered the forecast for the current year ending March 2015 which shows a deficit of £4,156 which is better than budgeted but is still an estimate. They then looked at the draft budget for 2015-16 and considered options for the precept. There was some discussion in which the following points were made:

- We have an estimate but the cost of the pedestrian crossing is still unknown
- There will be a reduction in s106 income due to the new regulations exempting smaller developments.
- Grant funding should be applied for whenever possible
- Over the past ten years the Band D Council tax for Waterbeach had increased from 50.33 in 2004-2005 to £83.40 in 2014-2015. This represents roughly 5% per year on average. However, in some years the Band D had been increased by a very large amount (over 15% in one case) and in some years by nothing. In two cases, the Band D tax had been reduced.
- In comparison with other Councils in South Cambridgeshire, our Band D is currently in the upper quartile. Comparing with more local parishes, our Band D is higher than

Landbeach, Milton and Fen Ditton, but lower than Hornингsea (£84.79), Histon and Impington (£87.67) and Cottenham (£106.38).

- The council should be building up a fund for machinery replacement.

Clr K Grant PROPOSED that the precept for 2015-16 should be increased by 4%.

Clr Shipp proposed an AMENDMENT that the precept be increased by 3%

This was not seconded and so the amendment failed

It was **RESOLVED** that the precept for 2015-16 be increased by 4% which will result in a precept of £86.74 per Band D household.

Proposed: Cllr K Grant Seconded: Cllr Bull

In Favour: 12 Against: 2 – Cllrs Gilzean and Smart

14 / 123 REPORTS ON GROUNDS CARE

A report about the way grounds care is handled in nearby communities of a similar size had been circulated and was considered by the meeting. There was some discussion about the fact that every village has different issues and that the report did not cover the size of the open spaces in the other villages or the costs.

In the meantime the report from the IOG has been received and will be circulated to councillors. The purpose of commissioning the IOG report was to obtain an overview of the current standard of upkeep of the Waterbeach open spaces as well as options for future upkeep at different standards.

The Clerk indicated that she would be happy to get historical input from Cllrs Smart and Shipp and any other councillors who could contribute information about the management of the open spaces within the village such as Cllr Wright for the Cemetery and Cllr Bull, Chair of the Recreation User Group. It was pointed out that there are many tasks to be carried out beyond the grass cutting.

It was emphasized that whilst councillors' help with the specification of the work would be appreciated, there should be absolutely no contact with any prospective contractors. If the council should, in due course, decide to pursue this option, it would follow a formal tender process which would be managed by the Clerk.

14 / 124 HEALTH AND SAFETY

- There was further discussion about the need for gritting on the school bus route. It was noted that school buses are a Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) service and that drivers do not have the discretion to vary their route without being directed to do so. It had been suggested that the affected Parish Councils should pay but the cost is not yet known. The Chair does not believe that the Parish Council has the statutory power to spend money on this service.

It was agreed that:-

- a. The Parish Council write to ask CCC to inform school bus drivers as soon as gritting is being carried out and tell them on these days to use the diversion route via Butts Lane.
- b. The Parish Council to write to CCC about the danger of overcrowding on school buses and the fact that there should be a seat belt for every child.
- c. The Parish Council to write to CCC to ask them to ensure that the route is included in the list of priority routes for gritting next winter.

Cllr Grant to draft a letter.

- The Ladybird Springer on the Village Green still needs to be repaired or replaced. The suppliers did agree to deal with this but the Clerk will chase them.
- The road surface at the north end of Burgess Drove is in an atrocious state. The Clerk will report this to CCC Highways but urged individual councillors to also make their own reports via the CCC website.
- The odour from the Amey Cespa site is appalling. This to be reported both to the Environment Agency (EA) and to SCDC Environmental Health. Cllr J Williamson has a number for the EA which she will circulate to councillors.
- A dog bin is still needed on Bannold Road.

14 / 125 OFFICER & COUNCILLOR REPORTS

a. Parish Clerk

The Clerk had circulated a report which is attached to these minutes and which also flagged up the issue with lack of gritting. Also included was a report from Urban & Civic (U&C). It was agreed to add U&C as a standing item on this agenda for future updates. The Clerk indicated that their representatives would be happy to attend parish council meetings.

b. County Councillor

The County Councillor also spoke about the problems with the lack of gritting on the school bus route. He had been advised, contrary to the Chair and Clerk's view, that the Parish Council did have the power to pay for this service. It was agreed that he speak with the Chair outside of the meeting to discuss further. He hopes the cost will be known by the end of this week. He also spoke about the smell from the Amey Cespa site and indicated that the EA can take action based on the history of reports on a site, not just based on a specific incident.

c. District Councillor(s)

Cllr Hockney spoke about the success of the initiatives Shop Local and Trade Local and that a Waterbeach Business Association is being set up. He passed on thanks to people from Waterbeach who had come forward to help with the Landbeach Tithe Barn project. There is an online petition which residents can sign, regarding school road safety. He also spoke about the closure of the NatWest Bank in Histon.

Cllr P Johnson spoke further about road safety and the school buses. He suggested that the Parish Council should write to NatWest about the closure of its Histon branch and the effect on the people of Waterbeach. He has been working with the SCDC footpaths officer on the footpaths in Waterbeach and there is now a district maintenance budget to keep them cleared regularly.

d. Chairman – no report

e. Library Officer

A report had been circulated. The SLA still needs to be dealt with by the Clerk. A grant application has been submitted to be considered at the March meeting.

f. Tree Officer

Awaiting the report from the arboricultural survey

14 / 126 WORKING PARTY AND PROJECT REPORTS

a. Cemetery

The working party plans to meet shortly to consider a report about the paths and other issues. There will be an update at the next parish council meeting.

b. Skatepark

Cllr Gaunt reported that a project manager has been appointed, the tender advertised and tender documents are being issued. SCDC have advised that planning permission can only be sought once a specific design can be submitted.

c. Emergency Plan

The working party has met and is making some progress, working on putting information into the template and seeing where the gaps are. Only a few responses have been received following the article in the newsletter and it is now planned to approach community groups to see if they would be willing to help.

d. Toddler Playgroup

Informal advice has been received from an SCDC planning officer and the working party will now proceed to get formal pre-planning advice. The Clerk pointed out that if the project is successful, storage space would need to be found elsewhere for the items currently stored in the old garage.

e. Neighbourhood Plan

A detailed report had been presented to the planning committee by Cllr K Grant and a separate informal meeting has been arranged for 24 February. This will be to inform and update any interested parties who wish to attend and contribute. The aim is for the meeting to agree on a small number of specific issues which will be the focus of the Waterbeach Neighbourhood plan. Councillors were invited to email Cllr Bull and Cllr K Grant with any ideas they had about what the priorities should be. The working party to keep the Clerk informed.

14 / 127 ACCOUNTS

Cllr K Grant PROPOSED that payment for the IOG report be delayed as it had not yet been seen by all councillors. Seconded by Cllr Smart. In favour: 4 Against: 9 Abstentions: 1

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the payment of accounts for the month as set out in the schedule.

Proposed: Cllr M Williamson Seconded: Cllr Wright

In favour: 9 Against 2 Abstentions: 3

14 / 128 FUTURE AGENDAS

It has been suggested that there is demand for a hard surface path around the edge of the recreation ground. It was agreed to put this on the Recreation User Group Agenda.

As it was now nearly 9.30 pm it was **RESOLVED** to continue the meeting beyond the two hour limit imposed by standing orders in order to complete the discussion of all matters on the agenda.

Proposed: Cllr Bull Seconded: Cllr P Johnson

In Favour: 10 Against: 3 Abstentions: 1

14 / 129 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

It was resolved in accordance with section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meeting) Act 1960 that as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted at the next agenda item(s) the Chairman asked that in the public interest the public and press be temporarily excluded from this meeting and were herewith instructed to withdraw.

Proposed: Cllr Wright. Seconded: Cllr Gilzean Unanimous

14 / 130 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

This information can be found in the council's confidential minute book

14 / 131 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

The Confidential Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 6 January 2015 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chair

Proposed: Cllr Gilzean Seconded Cllr Wright In Favour: 9 Abstentions: 5

14 / 132 CONFIDENTIAL EMPLOYMENT MATTERS

It was **RESOLVED** to allocate a further £3,000 in the current financial year and to budget £2,000 for the financial year 2015-16 towards professional fees for HR advice and support and associated legal advice.

Proposed: Cllr Williams. Seconded: Cllr A Grant. In favour: 13 Abstention 1: Cllr Smart

The remainder of the discussions concerned employees or former employees and the minutes can be found in the council's confidential minute book.

The meeting closed at 10.20pm

Chair