

WATERBEACH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Waterbeach Parish Council held on 4th February 2014 at 7.30 p.m. at the New Pavilion, Cambridge Road, Waterbeach.

OPEN FORUM

Mrs Strange asked about the previous vandalism on the cricket pitch. It was explained by a representative of the cricket team that a divet had been deliberately removed and taken away just before an Under 12s match. It was clearly deliberate sabotage and whilst not expensive to repair it was potentially dangerous for the children. The groundsman had made an excellent job of repairing it. The cost of maintenance of the wicket this year so far had been £1500 over a 9 month period. The new CCTV cameras installed have infra-red capability and will cover a wide area of the Recreation Ground including the cricket pitch.

Mrs Robertson was present in support of the grant application from WAY and was given permission to speak at that point in the meeting.

Mr Osborne raised the question of dogs on the recreation ground. Complaints had been made to South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) about his own dogs. However he lives near the recreation ground and stated that it is very difficult to keep his own dogs calm when there are many dogs running free on the recreation ground. He asked if it was possible to have more forceful signs telling dog owners to keep their dogs on leads. This is an ongoing contentious issue and it was agreed to add the matter to a future Agenda.

Andrew Evans had spoken at the last meeting and wished to raise the same issues. He did not want to discuss the Facebook page which is not constructive. He felt that a few good points had nonetheless been raised and it would be good to have a public forum where people can ask questions and get answers in an adult manner. E.g. someone had said £1000 per month was being spent on fuel. Cllr M Williamson pointed out that the financial report for the year to date is available on the website and the total amount spent on fuel in the first 9 months of the year was just over £1100. The annual amount spent on fuel in the last 3 years has hardly changed. It was agreed that the Parish Council would set up an official page as soon as practicable so that people could get real answers.

Mr Desborough was advised that we do not discuss staff in the open forum and he should contact the Clerk if he had questions about the groundsmen.

Mr Edwards raised concerns about the process of the skate park project. He was concerned that the design should take into consideration his rights to privacy. The half-pipe had been moved in order to accommodate the previous owner of his property. He does not have any objections to a good facility being provided for the users. The skate park working group agreed to meet with him soon.

Mrs J Williams spoke about the fact that she has been attending meetings for 18 months now and has seen members of the public reproved and personal attacks on some councillors. She hopes the council can stick to business and not spend time on mudslinging.

COUNCIL

PRESENT

Councillor Kay, Chair
Councillors Bull, Bullivant, Cornwell, Grant, B Johnson, P Johnson, Lloyd, Smart,
J Williamson, M Williamson, Wright

IN ATTENDANCE

E Jones, Parish Clerk

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Howlett, Rabbett and Smith

137/13 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 7 January 2014 were approved as a correct record and were signed.

Proposed: Cllr B Johnson. Seconded Cllr P Johnson. 7 in favour, 5 abstentions.

138/13 MEMBERS INTERESTS

Cllr P. Johnson declared an interest as a District Councillor in item 5 and other matters relating to SCDC.

Cllr Smart asked the Chair if he should declare an interest in item 10 but she replied that she did not think it necessary.

139/13 SKATE PARK

Cllr Cornwell presented a report (attached) on the skate park plans. There were no questions.

It was **RESOLVED** to proceed immediately to the production and publication of a tender based on the budget figure of £75,000 and for up to £30,000 of that sum to be made available from s106 money

Proposed: Cllr Cornwell. Seconded Cllr Grant. Unanimous.

140/13 OUTDOOR FITNESS EQUIPMENT

The Clerk reported that contracts had been signed and provisional installation dates agreed for weeks commencing 24 February and 23 March 2014. The final cost would be £22,485

plus VAT which Cllr Cornwell pointed out was slightly less than originally anticipated. £18,000 would come from the Amey Cespa Community Fund grant and £4,485.50 from s106 funds. An open/ launch day would be planned. Cllr Cornwell has a contact who will be happy to help arrange that.

141/13 PARK CRESCENT

The Clerk explained that SCDC was taking on responsibility for the housing estate at Park Crescent, (former military housing). As the District Council has no staff dealing with play parks, the Parish Council had been asked to take on the regular safety inspection of the play park only. Any issues would be reported to SCDC and the cost of any remedial work would be the District Council's responsibility. It would also be necessary to inform our insurers of this additional responsibility

It was **RESOLVED** to agree to take on inspection of the Park Crescent Play Park, subject to an official inspection before we start.

Proposed: Cllr Kay. Seconded Cllr Wright. Unanimous.

142/13 SPRING FLOWERS

Cllr Bull read out an email from a resident praising the green space in the village and suggesting that to have more colour in the spring we might undertake a community planting project. The Parish Council has in fact planted some bulbs on the green spaces in the village this year, but it was agreed that this was generally a good idea and there would be an article inserted in the next parish council newsletter to see if people would be interested and also the primary school would be contacted. Cllr M Williamson said he was keen we should only use native bulbs. It was noted that in some years the bulbs along Car Dyke had been cut back too early and this affects flowering in subsequent years.

143/13 FINANCE

Cllr M Williamson explained that the Finance Committee had reviewed the figures for the current year-to-date as well as those suggested for the 2014/15 budget. It was noted that the cost of fuel was £1196 for the year to date and cost of maintenance and of servicing and spares for equipment is significantly below budget – congratulations to the ground staff.

The 2014/15 proposed budget had been revised by the Finance Committee to a level where the amount proposed was £1779 more than the previous year. We are proposing a Precept rise of about 3% as previously agreed.

It was felt important to restate the effect of the withdrawal of the Council Tax Support Grant. The way that Council Tax benefit is now calculated means every £1 spent on the precept costs a bit more for individual Council Tax payers i.e. even if we do not change anything, the cost to individuals goes up. Last year those costs were mitigated by the Council Tax Support Grant (a government grant) being passed on to Parish Councils which enabled us to keep the

precept down. However in 2014/15 SCDC is not passing the grant on to Parish Councils (it should be noted that some other district councils are passing it on – e.g. East Cambs – albeit a reduced amount). If we precept the same amount as last year, the cost to parishioners would therefore actually go up by 6%. The Parish Council had decided that this was too much so we decided to reduce what we are asking for in order that there will only be a 3% rise in the Band D charge. It was suggested we write in protest to SCDC and/or The Right Hon Eric Pickles MP.

Over the last 4 years the Parish Precept has risen by less than 7% compared to a CPI rise of 13% so we have kept significantly behind inflation

The proposed precept is therefore £134,422 – which is slightly under the budget proposed but we can make up the difference as we have good reserves. With good management we should be able to keep within budget.

After some discussion

It was **RESOLVED** that we write in protest to The Right Hon Eric Pickles MP, our MP and both the CEO and the Leader of SCDC about the decision not to pass on the Council Tax Support Grant,

Proposed: Cllr Lloyd. Seconded Cllr J Williamson. Unanimous.

The proposed expenditure budget was discussed and a question was raised about income figures which were not included here. It was pointed out that these had been part of the Finance Committee discussion. Also the expenditure budget did not include the detail of any allocation of s106 monies or reserves.

It was **PROPOSED** that the expenditure budget be adopted as proposed.

An **AMENDMENT** was proposed that the Finance Committee meet again to discuss and evaluate the income and any variance of income over the previous year and to look at the allocation of reserves and s106 monies.

Proposed Cllr Grant. Seconded Cllr Cornwell. In Favour 3 - Cllrs Grant, Cornwell, Smart.
Against 8

AMENDMENT NOT CARRIED

It was **RESOLVED** that the Budget for 2014-15 be adopted as proposed in the attached report.

Proposed: Cllr M Williamson. Seconded: Cllr Lloyd.
In Favour 9. Against 3 - Cllrs Grant, Cornwell, Smart.

It was agreed that the Finance Committee review the remaining income such as sports club rents but Cllr M. Williamson pointed out that this income is extremely small in comparison to the Precept.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Precept for 2014-15 be set at £134,422

Proposed: Cllr Grant. Seconded Cllr Bull. Unanimous.

144/13 REQUESTS FOR FUNDING

Cllr M Williamson presented the proposed grants application procedure and form which he would like to make available as soon as possible. In the current year £8,000 had been budgeted. It was suggested that the council encourage organisations to apply in February each year and to publicise this in the Parish Newsletter so that most decisions can be made in March.

There was a side discussion about whether the library serves the whole community. The library officer spoke about visits from all classes in the school as well as playgroup children. The library particularly serves young children and the elderly who don't want to travel into town.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the proposed procedure for future grant applications with the majority of grants to be in the region of £500. On occasions this limit may be exceeded at the absolute discretion of the Parish Council.

Proposed Cllr M Williamson. Seconded Cllr P Johnson. Unanimous

a) **WAY**

Cllr M Williamson believes we agreed to pay £2500 in April 2013 for the current financial year, from the previous year's budget.

Membership numbers at the Youth Club are currently in the 40s.

It was proposed to grant an amount which would cover the rent to Tillage Hall plus a further £1,000.

Cllr Williamson asked if they can complete the application form.

It was **RESOLVED** that a grant of £2500 be allocated to WAY from the current year's budget (i.e. 2013-14) and the organisation be encouraged to submit a new application for 2014-15 to the new council after the election in May.

Proposed: Cllr Kay, Seconded Cllr J Williamson. Unanimous

b) **MAGPAS**

After a short discussion it was felt that as this organisation was regional it was not appropriate to fund it. It was **RESOLVED** not to allocate a grant to this organisation

Proposed: Cllr Cornwell, Seconded Cllr Lloyd. Unanimous

c) **WASPS** – application postponed.

d) **OVER** Day Care Centre.

After a short discussion it was felt that as only one resident currently used this organisation it was not appropriate to fund it, but that it should be suggested to the Day Care Centre that they could encourage such individuals to apply for a grant to help them access the facility

It was **RESOLVED** not to allocate a grant to this organisation

Proposed: Cllr Bullivant, Seconded Cllr Lloyd. Unanimous

e) **FARMLAND MUSEUM**

It was explained that there had been a miscalculation in the grant application agreed in December 2013 and that the amount requested was therefore considerably reduced to £483.36.

A leaflet would be circulated soon about cheap rate tickets for residents and the Museum is looking into the possibility of arranging transport on event days for those residents without their own transport.

145/13 POLICING

- (a) The Chair explained that a report had been received explaining the details of changes to arrangements for the local policing panels. This has been circulated.
- (b) The Chair read out a report from PCSO John Mason regarding the latest actions following the burglaries in the village. It was agreed to publicise this in the village. People also need to be advised that the e-cops system is changing.

Cllr Cornwell left the meeting at 9pm

It was reported that there had been another burglary at the weekend and residents were advised to be vigilant. Cllr J Williamson is trying to organise a Neighbourhood Watch meeting

The Chair reported that a resident had asked that the Chief Constable and the Police Commissioner's Office be contacted and asked what action was being taken. District Cllr Hockney volunteered to do this on behalf of the Parish Council.

146/13 HEARING

The Chair explained that the High Court hearing with regard to Mrs Smart's Employment Tribunal Appeal would take place on Monday 10th February and that the Chair would attend on behalf of the Parish Council. The Council will be legally represented but it was proposed that we also agree to pay the expenses for Alan Williams, who had handled the original case, to also be present to support our legal representative as he knows the case well. Costs would include his travel expenses and approximately 4 hours' work.

It was **RESOLVED** to pay Alan Williams costs to attend the High Court hearing in London on 10th February.

Proposed: Cllr M Williamson, Seconded Cllr Lloyd. In Favour 9. Abstentions 2 – Cllr Smart & Cllr Grant

147/13 HEALTH AND SAFETY

- The Clerk spoke about the tree surgeons' report covering the Recreation Ground and recommended swift action. It was also her intention to get reports for the Village Green and other areas. After some discussion it was agreed to ask Acacia to also look at the Village Green and Gault and Cemetery and to also get two other competitive quotations from other tree surgeons for all areas

- The station ticket machine on the London platform has not been working for some time causing people to have to cross the line to the other platform to get tickets.
- The station car park machine has still not been replaced.
Cllr P Johnson has good contacts within Network Rail and will write to them about both these matters as will County Cllr Leeke
- Cllr Wright reported that the job the groundsmen had done on the path on St Andrews Hill seemed to have worked very well
- Cllr Smart asked whether anything had been done about chippings outside One Stop. The Clerk explained that having taken advice, this did not seem to be a good solution so she was looking into other options.
- Cllr Grant wanted the planning application for the cycle racks to come before the Parish Council before submission. Cllr Smart pointed out that we would need permission to make a change to a green space.
- Councillor Bull mentioned a large pothole off High Street along Greenside still to be dealt with - Cllr Leeke will report on this later.
- The dog bin in Primrose Lane needs to be moved away from the community building and also it needs to be emptied.
- Cllr Bull raised the question of mud on the public footpath on the village side of the locks, which she believes to have been caused by the Environment Agency.

148/13 REPORTS

- (i) **Parish Clerk** – presented her report which is attached to these minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to authorise outsourcing of the Payroll processing

Proposed: Cllr M Williamson; Seconded Cllr Lloyd. In favour 9. Abstained – 2 Cllr Grant & Cllr Smart

The Clerk confirmed that we have written approval from the District Council for the s106 expenditure item recently queried and agreed to check that such authorisation is in place for all s106 expenditure.

Cllr Smart pointed out that it was previously reported that 2 quotations had been received for the ramp work. The Clerk said that perhaps she had overlooked one which might have come in during her absence and she would check.

- (ii) **County Councillor** – Cllr Leeke apologised for the fact that he had missed the previous meeting, having been detained elsewhere. He reported that the County Council budget is set to rise by 2% depending on the referendum limit. This includes cuts to the Park and Ride, children's centres, road repairs and winter gritting.

There is a fresh A14 consultation exercise given that there is a fresh proposal without tolling.

Chapel St Crossing – Cllrs Leeke, P Johnson and Kay had attended a Highways meeting to argue in favour of the Parish Council's proposal. There had been good feedback about the clarity of the proposal but no decision yet.

With regard to Highway Maintenance, A10 potholes beyond Red Roofs had been poorly repaired. Winfold Road – some short term maintenance will be done and proper resurfacing in the summer. In the High St, the drain outside no 29 which repeatedly floods along the corner has been cleared and rodded and is to be inspected further by camera. On Greenside the potholes mentioned earlier have been reported to Whittlesford Highways who were asked to do a more permanent repair. On the south side of Cambridge Road near Coronation Close resurfacing has been requested. Work on Station Rd is currently under way. It was pointed out that there is still a section of old water main which has not been replaced, near the station. In Bannold Road work has been done on kerbs and pavements which is a big improvement. There is still a problem on Long Drove near where the fishermen park

Cllr Leeke will also see what can be done regarding payment machine at station car park

A question was raised about the weight limit on Clayhithe Bridge which is believed to be 7.5 tonnes and it was suggested large vans should be stopped rather than diverted when the A10 is closed.

- (iii) **District Councillor** –District Councillor P Johnson read out his report which is attached to these minutes

District Councillor Hockney was also present and asked to speak. He wanted to highlight the Shop Local campaign, which was started last year and is now supported by a business networking group. Their Facebook page is growing in popularity and there is good press coverage. SCDC asked if it would be a pilot scheme for their economic strategy. A workshop is available to provide specific support for strategy for local businesses and to inform about rate relief.

- (iv) **Chairman**

There will be elections in May. Cllr P Johnson will let us know when application forms are available for those who wish to stand for election.

The next Parish Council newsletter will cover the election, village flowers, the fitness equipment, response to the Local Plan and the Precept.

There was uncertainty about the correct time to fix a date for the Annual Parish meeting. The rules on this to be checked.

The Parish Council had received a request for permission for burials on public green spaces in the village but is not in a position to grant such permissions.

The question of cemetery fees was raised and Cllr B Johnson confirmed that she is working on a draft report.

- (v) **Library Officer no report submitted**
- (vi) **CAPALC – no report submitted**
- (vii) **Neighbourhood Watch – no report submitted**

149/13 ACCOUNTS

A list of bills due to be paid was circulated to councillors.

It was **RESOLVED**. To pass the accounts for payment. Proposed, Cllr M Williamson
Seconded, Cllr Lloyd. In favour 9. Abstentions 2 Cllrs Grant & Smart

It was agreed that in future the Clerk would circulate a provisional list of accounts for payment at the same time as circulating the agenda thus enabling councillors to have more time to consider most of the items. Bills which came in between that date and the meeting would still need to be added to the list.

150/13 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

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 asks that in the public interest the public and press are temporarily excluded from this meeting and herewith instructed to withdraw*

151/13 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

Staff appraisals had been carried out and as a result salary rises due in April 2013 were agreed along with relevant back pay. Full details appear in the confidential minutes.

The Meeting closed at 10.21 pm

Chairman