

CASTLE ACRE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in the Village Hall on Thursday 12 June 2017:

Present: Mr M Hickey (MH) Chairman Mr L Fisher (LF) Vice-Chairman
Mr N Patrick (NP) Mr Martin Tate (MT)
Mr T Hubbard (TH) Mrs H Breach (HB)

In attendance: Ms L Roast (Clerk), J Moriarty (Borough Councillor) and one members of the public.

Apologies: Mr S Allen (SA), Ms C Williams (CW), Mrs Sheila Moister (SM)

22. Minutes of PC meeting Thursday 11 May 2017 - proposed by Mr T Hubbard, Mr Laurie Fisher, seconded. Agreed.

23. Actions from previous meeting:

28. Bailey Gate damage and signage – Letter written to English Heritage (EH) CEO Kate Mavor on 16th May. Reply received: *“Please accept my sincere apologies for the lack of response on our part resulting in the need for you and your Councillors to escalate the matter to me. I have now had the opportunity to look into the situation and it appears that our own internal procedures have fallen short, which is in no way excusable for the delay and lack of communication on our part. Please rest assured that we will be looking at how to improve this in future to prevent a similar occurrence.*

As you are aware, last summer we obtained outlined permission to make improvements to the Bailey Gate to stop oversized vehicles from driving through it. The proposed solution is to install a portcullis and although the design for this was agreed in principle, regrettably the delay has been in working this solution up to full design, as it has taken longer than anticipated to agree the final design and methods of attachment to the monument.

It was also necessary to obtain further agreement from the highways agency regarding the changes to the road signage around the monument to make road users aware of the reduced height for vehicles. As both of these matters were being resolved, Steve Bax should have kept you informed of progress and I apologise once again that this was not the case. I am pleased to say, that despite the long delay, all these matters are now resolved and the works to install the portcullis will take place by the end of August. At the same time as the installation of the portcullis we will also address any outstanding maintenance repairs to the gateway from previous incidents.

I would also like to thank you and the Parish Council for your continued care and monitoring of the monuments within Castle Acre, your local presence and pride is much appreciated”.

Production of the new Highways signs on the A1065 is delayed.

85. Ostrich car park sign – Highways have quoted £95 to produce a permanent sign to the Ostrich car park, positioned opposite the junction of Town Lane and Massingham Road. The Ostrich to confirm its agreement to pay for this sign.

4. Sheep fencing at Priory Precinct Meadow – an e-mail from Henry Barringer at Holkham was read out: *‘As mentioned before, the fencing is purely hypothetical at the moment, so I fear that this has been slightly blown out of proportion. Until we have a guarantee of funding, we will not be taking any further action. If grazing is to happen, then we would want to limit the disturbance to the livestock, and therefore stop access directly across the field. Even when fenced in, sheep are easily worried, as I’m sure you are aware. It would also not be practical to graze the block in two halves. As we have discussed in the past, whilst we know people use*

the field for access, this is currently without permission and unregulated. We wish to maintain the grassland in whichever way protect the historical features most. EH has identified sheep grazing for topping as opposed to running agricultural equipment on it. I will keep you up to date with any progress’.

6. PC donations - new bank account – the Clerk to meet the Norwich HSBC business representative on Thursday 29 June to complete the account paperwork.

Dog waste bin at Minns Meadow – waiting for NCC to issue a furniture license.

9. Minns Meadow path –some sections need tamping down and some need filling with stones. MH proposed obtaining a quote from a local building team. NP suggested that the latch gate might need lifting. Cllrs to look at the state of the path and will review at the next meeting.

16. Temporary Post Office – likely to be closed for 4-5 weeks. The Litcham postmaster is prepared to set up a bi-weekly service in the village hall. However, the PO manager responsible for sanctioning this service contract had a heart attack. JM extremely disappointed that the PO management has not stepped in but he has been assured that the PO will not be permanently closed.

CROW Act footpaths – The Clerk contacted John Roff after he attended a workshop on saving footpaths and rights of way. Definitions of footpaths and bridleways are not always clear. Private roads do not count, these can be basic roads. Some footpaths may be concessions from the landowner rather than a formal footpath/right of way. Various maps are available and Mr Rolf is happy to buy any further materials that he may needs at no cost to the Council. As the task of proving footpaths before the Crow Act’s 2026 deadline is complex, Mr Rolf is not sure he will be able to see it through to the end. He has designed a three stage - three year plan which breaks the task into manageable pieces for his successor to pick it up, if need be. If anyone else wants to join, he will be able to give them a particular route to research. Peter Harris, chairman of the Nar Valley Way Group in Swaffham has offered to help. The three stages are:

Stage 1 - to establish what exists in Castle Acre.

To involve the community by asking residents to draw/highlight any footpaths they know of on the map at the back of the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire. Place that information onto a spreadsheet and take relevant photos for evidence.

Stage 2 - prove what is marked is a right of way or a footpath.

Link all the footpaths with map references. Ascertain during next winter which footpaths are really worth contesting.

Stage 3 - The Parish Council to prioritise the footpaths they want to keep.

Submit the forms.

17. Scrambler bikes at South Acre ford – no reply to the Clerk’s last email to Rupert Trigg, Secretary - Norfolk TRF, requesting that he informs his members that South Acre Road is not a Green Lane and should not be publicised as such. MH explained that NCC never consulted either Norfolk Rivers Trust or Natural England about the potential closure of part of South Acre Road. NRT has suggested installing a trail camera to record damage by vehicles going through the Ford but this was deemed too expensive and could be stolen. The Clerk will maintain a log of future off-roader or scrambler bike incidents. Residents will be asked in the next Nar Valley News to be vigilant.

24. Health & Safety issues.

Tree Inspection Register – TH to complete the missing identities of some of the tree on the Register.

Playing Field area with containers – TH was approached by a resident worried about youths climbing onto the top of the containers and could fall. That area is also very untidy and an eye-

sore. The Clerk to send a letter to Castle Acre Playing Field Association requesting immediate action.

25. Matters requested by Councillors

None.

26. Planning

Holkham's Massingham Lane eleven dwelling development. It is expected that the design and landscaping proposals will be presented to Cllrs at the July meeting.

27. Correspondence

Castle as a nuclear shelter– e-mail from Julie McDowall who is writing a book on how Britain prepared for nuclear war. In the National Archives, there is correspondence between Castle Acre Parish Council and the Government about the possibility of using the castle as a nuclear shelter. Permission was refused due to the cost of adding a suitable roof and the damage this and other necessary installations would have caused to the monument. E-mail passed onto Mary-Anne Garry, Historian, to reply.

King's Lynn murder walks on Monday nights June & July – E-mail read out detailing which guided walks are still available. To go in the Nar Valley News

Hedge on the corner of Town Lane/Massingham Road – The Clerk to contact The Grove to ask for their hedge to be cut back.

Ernest Doe and Son - tractor damage to Bailey Gate. PC Mark Taylor has asked the company's director to contact the Clerk about the alleged damage done to Bailey Gate in April/May by their tractor number EU15 AUH.

Private Pumping Stations – Anglia Water contacted the Clerk to ask if residents who have private pumping stations could register them via a website link. The Clerk to put the link and details in the next Nar Valley News.

Green Points Community Chest – Borough Council initiative – e-mail received asking if the PC could nominate any village charity that might benefit from the green recycling cash bonus scheme. Cllrs proposed the Village Hall and the playing field. Cllrs are unclear as to how this Green Points initiative operates. The Clerk will ask for clarification.

Drones in Castle Acre – e-mail received: *“This week there have been two occasions when a drone has passed over our property and also on Sunday sitting in a nearby garden a drone passed overhead. I appreciate that there are regulations regarding the use of drones and my concerns relate not just to the fact that the regulations may not being adhered to but health and safety, damage to property should the operator lose control, noise nuisance and loss of privacy - many drones have cameras fitted to them”*.

LF offered to consult with his work colleagues about drone regulations and suggested looking at the CAA website before the PC takes the matter further.

28. Reports

Highways – Highways' work to relieve the flooding on Archer Lane by lengthening the ditch has still not started. Orchard Lane surface is still not leveled.

School – MT reported: contrary to earlier reports, the village school maximum intake of 76 is currently estimated to be 12 pupils short as there are places in the higher age groups. The lower years have a full intake. The current excess of pupils from Swaffham are being taken by Sporle school but there is talk of enlarging the Swaffham primary provision.

Village Hall – HB reported: the hall will soon obtain an drinks license once the formal advertisement has been displayed for 28 days and no objections are received. No off- premises sales will be permitted. Noted the excellent booked concert on 9 June with a subsequent concert planned in September.

CAPFA – The fete is on 9 July.

Neighbourhood Plan (NP) – MT reported: the steering group is keeping to its timetable. The initial draft questionnaire has been formatted. Once the artwork is approved and goes to print, delivery should be on 7 July. All residents received a circular today summarising the subjects and comments raised at the May public meeting. MT and MH will answer enquiries about the NP and display examples of the questionnaire at a stall at the village fete. The NP page on castleacre.info will go live in about a week.

Borough Council – JM reported: the Borough planning department has a high workload and is short of staff. New legislation will allow BCKLWN to increase its planning fees which will meet the costs of employing more officers. Graham Middleton is Castle Acre's new Norfolk County Councillor. He will be encouraged to attend PC meetings when there are important issues to resolve, such as South Acre ford.

Food waste – it is no longer necessary to use biodegradable bags, any plastic bag will do

29. **Accounts**

2016/17 accounts form was circulated earlier by email. MH read out the statutory statements. Proposed by Mr Laurie Fisher, seconded by Mr Tim Hubbard that the accounts form be signed by the Chairman and the Clerk. All agreed.

Payments proposed for approval by Mr Tim Hubbard, Mr Laurie Fisher seconded.

Berrymans Glass Recycling Ltd (URM UK Ltd)	£ 35.34 (£5.89 VAT)
E.on Energy (electricity)	£ 80.48 (£3.83 VAT)
TTSR Limited (village Green cutting 1 st Payment)	£786.48 (£131.08 VAT)
Castle Acre Playing Field Association (Insurance reimbursement)	£1,200.03

MH explained that the Parish's unmetered electricity supply has increased by over 85% in two years. The Clerk to investigate other sources of supply, though there are few who deal with unmetered supply. She will also ask why the Parish's cost is increasing when the new fourteen LED bulbs should lead to a saving. The Clerk to cross-check Sporle's electricity prices.

30. **Village Maintenance**

Priory Field path – the fenced- in path around Holkham's fields is now overgrown. The Clerk to contact Henry Barringer to ask for it to be cut back.

Tree at 25 Town Lane – TH to find out if this belongs to the playing field or to the resident who wants to have it trimmed.

31. **Public Question Time**

Priory Field path – needs cutting as above.

Drones – invading privacy and inappropriate over gardens. Need to find out exact legislation and then put in the Nar Valley News that CAPC will prosecute the owner.

Playing Field containers – will be discussed at next CAPFA meeting

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.

The next full Parish Council meeting is on Thursday 13 July at 7.30pm in the village hall.