

CASTLE ACRE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in the village hall on Thursday 5 October 2017:

Present: Mr M Hickey (MH) Chairman Mr L Fisher (LF) Vice-Chairman
Mrs H Breach (HB) Mr Martin Tate (MT)
Mr T Hubbard (TH) Ms C Williams (CW),
Mrs Sheila Moister (SM)

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

Apologies: Mr G Middleton (County Councillor), Mr N Patrick (NP), Mr S Allen (SA)

52. Minutes of PC meeting Thursday 14 September 2017 - proposed by Mr Laurie Fisher, Mrs Sheila Moister seconded. Agreed.

53. Actions from previous meeting:

28. Bailey Gate – English Heritage (EH) has installed the portcullis. Cllrs are pleased with its appearance. The legal height restriction for vehicles is 3.4 metres (11ft 4 inches). EH noted that the two posts on each side of gate are currently 11ft (3.3 metres) apart and suggested that they should be moved inwards to approx 8.5 feet (2.4 metres) apart to restrict access further. Unfortunately, drivers using their SATNAV ignore or do not notice the current width restriction signs. Highways' new warning road signage for the A1065 is still lost in the system and has been re-ordered. Email from Mr Steve Barnfield was read out - *“Whilst the portcullis looks great, it has had little effect on wide trucks passing through. We still have the usual culprits of local scaffolders, builders, plant hire etc inching through. So, in another attempt to reduce the flow I wondered if a Lynn News article might filter down to the drivers via the companies, families etc. The aim of the article could be: 1. Highlight the new portcullis. 2. Explain why it has been put up. 3. Point out the restrictions in place & the fact that (I believe) it is an offence to break the size limits. 4. Mention that the villagers are adopting a zero tolerance to those breaking the law”*.

Councillors agreed with this approach – the Clerk to contact Lynn News.

TH noted that the crack on the North Western Arch had not been repaired and asked whether EH had done any repairs. The Clerk to contact EH (Paul Rees)

108. New Textile Bin – CW in process of getting quotes.

6. PC donations - new bank account – no update on setting up the new account from HSBC – Clerk to chase.

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

9. Minns Meadow path – MH spoke of meeting an Internal Drainage Board (IDB) staff member who stated that the IDB would be back soon to do more work on the path and sort out the dip by the boardwalk. The Clerk to follow up with IDB

26. Street lighting - unmetered electricity supply - E.on have reduced the monthly charge by about £5 per month because of updated supply information. The Clerk has checked comparative quotes from other suppliers but E.on is still the best competitive supplier.

- 30. Priory Field path cutting** – Holkham have completed this. The Clerk to e-mail with thanks.
Tree at 25 Town Lane – TH will issue a brief for contractors to quote for the work.
- 33. Pot Hole at South Acre ford** – Highways have filled this in.
- 34. Bridge at the ford** – the first two handrails on the Castle Acre side are loose and rotting. The Clerk has contacted Highways who have agreed to get the bridge repaired – not done yet. The Clerk to chase.
- 37. Heritage litter sign at South Acre ford** – the replacement sign has been put in place. Thanks to Alex.
- 40. St James Green damaged manhole cover** – the Clerk to report this again to Highways.
- 45. Ash Tree, Back Lane** – TH has reported a dying ash tree in Back Lane that needs remedial work, post planning permission. It is on the highways verge outside Egerton House on the margin of the Conservation area. Despite an original planning order issued six years ago in which Highways states that the tree belongs to them, Highways have denied that this tree is their responsibility, stating that it had reverted to the Parish Council's care. The Clerk has not received notification of this. TH and the Clerk have contacted Graham Middleton, NCC Cllr, to try to resolve the issue without success so far. TH to continue negotiations.
Parking along Massingham Road – MH to spoke to Mr Singh at the shop who informed contractors about their bad parking. This resolved the issue for a while. MH stated that if any Cllr notes poor parking from contractors, they should report it to Mr Singh.
- 49. High Street drainage issue** – the Clerk has reported this to Highways but nothing has yet been done. The Clerk to chase.
Orchard Lane jetting road drains – the Clerk to chase Highways
NCC Highways funding for local highways improvements – Cllrs to consider options at the next meeting.
- 51. Street signs** – Chimney Street sign has been reinstalled. Replacement signs for Pales Green and Blind lane are still pending. Cllrs mentioned that there was no directional sign for Stocks Green – maybe Highways could place one on the finger post by Priory Court. Clerk to ask.
Newton Road Bridge – Flooding/drainage problems still not resolved by Highways. MH to chase the highways engineer.
Old School, Stocks Green – Email from new owner read out. *"Yes, I finally managed to buy the property. I think it took nearly four years and levels of stress I don't want to have again to complete. Even after that I have been trying to deal with further legal issues arising which, in part, have caused the delay. I am hoping nothing further will pop out of the bushes. I had been planning to try and get up to Castle Acre for a prolonged stay to sort out a host of issues but the weather and other business issues have prevented me from doing so. I am looking into the possibility of creating a sort of B&B but it will run on slightly different lines than 'standard'. I am conscious that I will need to deal with the local council and the various other interested parties before moving ahead with this plan but since I am not proposing anything drastic, I am pretty sure what I propose will be acceptable. I will, of course, keep the Parish Council appraised as to what is going on. I envisage a multi-stage project but may be obliged to change that plan after the various consultations."*
South Acre Road hanging branch opposite the boardwalk – this has been cut.

54. Health & Safety - Reports on any new H&S

Minns Meadow walk boardwalk – it is reported that the chicken wire safety surface is becoming worn and dangerous. Cllrs were asked to come up with alternative surface suggestions at the next meeting.

55. Matters requested by Councillors

Review of Holkham's initial housing mix and designs for the Massingham Road hybrid development – MH briefly reviewed the Holkham presentation to Cllrs on 14 September. Holkham's initial scheme of different sized housing units includes a 5-bedroom property. The top line findings from the village's Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire responses indicate an overwhelming rejection of any more 'executive' houses in the village and while CAPC is conscious that the call for 'affordable' or 'low cost' housing is difficult to define or supply, CAPC will find little enthusiasm from residents if Cllrs give their support to this housing mix. MH proposed that this 5-bedroom house be replaced by a terrace of three more affordable two bedroom homes which could be initially offered for sale to villagers or family members for a limited period. Cllrs unanimously agreed that this would be a positive step.

MH asked Cllrs for their views on the development. Cllrs felt that the overall footprint of the estate was encouraging with large enough plots and attention to landscaping. HB stated that the dwelling designs were functional, unimaginative and would add nothing to the historic village. SM agreed with HB that the designs needed more effort and read out a passage from the Holkham Gazette which she felt did not reflect the designs presented. MT stated that the designs were a bit 'toy townish' and neither modern nor traditional but in the middle. The village questionnaire was weighted towards traditional designs. MT also stated that he liked the fact that the gable ends pointing into the highway made the street view more interesting. He also noted that the entrance bend in the road had been smoothed out from the previous presentation and he was concerned that this would encourage speeding. TH remarked that he felt generally encouraged by the design but that some refining needs to be done. LF thought the general sizing was good and the plan reasonable but that the present design of the dwellings would make the development look like any estate on the edge of any village. CW felt that Holkham would be battling against affordability and asked whether specific designs could be proposed to Holkham rather than a vague objection to their proposed designs i.e. a strong aesthetic to put forward. Agreed that HB to search out styles to present to Holkham as alternatives. MH referred back to the LDF Borough Council's imposed condition (which the Parish Council fully supports) that *development on sites within or adjacent to the conservation area will need to be carefully designed to ensure appropriate regard is given to these historic assets and that the site makes a positive contribution to the setting of the nearby Listed Buildings. Standard housing designs are unlikely to achieve this*.

MH opened the meeting for views from the floor:

A resident residing at 56 Foxes Meadow, which backs onto the proposed development, asked whether access to the footpath around the field at the back of his property would be kept and if the trees would be protected. Cllrs noted that Holkham's landscaping seemed good but would put this question to Holkham.

JM congratulated the PC on their negotiations with Holkham – a very good policy. It was early days for the Neighbourhood Plan which is as yet un-adopted, so although the findings could be referred to, the actual plan was not yet a legal document. MH asked whether the PC would have the opportunity to object to the designs or house sizes when the plans were presented to the Borough Council. JM said that would be possible.

TH asked where drainage for the development would be attached to the existing system but its location is unclear.

Patrick Grange, developer of the four new houses on Massingham Road, stated that he had to make many changes to get his house designs through the Borough Council's Conservation Panel and felt that the same would happen to Holkham on presentation of the scheme. There would be many more versions to go through before an agreed design would be reached. Mr Grange also pointed out that the protected hedgerow around the back of his properties did not appear on Holkham's plans. Mr Grange also explained that Highways has insisted on a permanent radar speed sign of 30mph to be positioned halfway between the Stone Barn and the village gates, plus painted 30mph roundels to be on the road surface at entry to the village. To do this work and install a footway, the road will be closed on 23 October. MH proposed that the PC object to the painted roundels. All agreed. Mr Grange to e-mail the Highways' officer's contact details.

The Clerk to contact Holkham with a list of the PC's concerns and contact Highways.

56. **Planning**

17/01665/F Premier Store – Conversion of storage area to one bedroom accommodation.–

MH read out the design and access statement for the proposal, which can be viewed online at the Borough planning website, explaining that the conversion of the storage space above the shop into a single person's flat was to offer accommodation to a shop employee who will run the Post Office full time and act as Assistant Manager in the absence of Mr Singh, due to a serious medical condition. Mr Singh is seeking permission to vary his approved application to make these minor internal changes that will secure the vital employment of this young man, give him accommodation, keep the village shop operating efficiently and, above all, retain the all-important Post Office in Castle Acre which Mr Singh believes may be lost if this application is refused.

MH opened up to the floor for comments. The immediate neighbours will accept this internal change only if a condition is put on the application that there can only ever be two Velux windows on the west side roof which should always be sealed/fixed units and only frosted glass with no additional windows to be added at a later date. There should be a planning condition that the new residential unit is only linked to a job at the shop below.

HB, TH and LF believe that the PC needs to look beyond the immediate emotive issue and to the future well-being of the village. Particular issues could include more on-street parking of four to six vehicles created by two residential units with no allocated parking. Highways have yet to comment on this application.

HB pointed out that the storage area of the shop had been greatly reduced, not only with the loss of the first floor storage, but with an added reduction on the ground floor. HB stated that increased storage capacity had been a main case for getting the original planning application approved. Cllrs discussed that the lack of storage may mean more deliveries from large vehicles in an area of the village already too busy with a four way junction, a bus stop, playing field, school, shop parking and delivery parking all within the vicinity. MT pointed out that reducing the storage space is a business decision. Cllrs accepted that the shop and reinstatement of the Post Office is important to the village but they could also see the need for looking to the future and what may happen in fifteen years time. The time limit on reinstating the Post Office at the shop is mid-November.

[CW left the meeting at this point with apologies]

HB proposed that the PC Object to the planning variation, LF seconded. Two Cllrs voted against the proposal and one abstained. MH used his casting vote to vote against the proposal. SM proposed that the PC Support the planning variation with conditions, MT seconded. Two Cllrs voted against the proposal and three voted to approve the proposal. The Council thus agreed to Support the planning variation with conditions, three votes to two.

The Clerk's response to BCKLWN will include two conditions and two comments:

1. Only two Velux windows on the west side roof to be allowed. These must always be sealed/fixed units and only with frosted glass - no additional windows on the west side roof or the frosted glass replaced with clear glass to be permitted at any time in the future.
 2. The proposed single accommodation residential unit in the west first floor area must be solely for use by employed staff of the shop.
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1. Castle Acre Parish Council notes with regret the reduction in the goods storage area on the ground floor and the loss of additional storage space on the first floor from the original approved application 13/01630/F – one of the perceived advantages of the extended building - as this may lead to additional deliveries to the shop and increased vehicle movements. However, we recognise that this is a business decision.
 2. Castle Acre Parish Council notes that the additional accommodation could lead in the medium term to additional on-street parking close to the busy Massingham Road/Town Lane junction which is a crossing point for families walking to the school and vehicles accessing the dwellings in Back Lane and Foxes Meadow. The Parish Council would like see clarity from Highways on these potential parking issues.

57. Correspondence

St James Green bush removal – the residents of No. 1 Stone Barn Court contacted Holkham about the large bush on the verge outside their house which is extending almost onto the highway and is making it impossible for them to repair their front wall. The PC is responsible for maintaining St James' Green. However, Holkham offered their team to remove the bush for £370. The Clerk to get quotes for this bush removal from local contractors and will add both raising the lower branches of the two adjacent trees to 8ft and the removal of an elder growing at 90 degrees on the west side of the playing field entrance. Quotes to be presented at next meeting for approval.

Holkham – Castle Acre Rights of Way – e-mail received read out from the trainee surveyor at Holkham. *“I am in the process of submitting an application form for deposits under section 31(6) of the Highways Act 1980 and section 15A(1) of the Commons Act 2006. I attach the plan which is to accompany the application showing the byways, bridleways and footpaths over our land at Castle Acre. The application extends over eight parcels of land and so as I am submitting a section 15(1) application, site notices will be erected at each of the eight parcels. This application does not deny existing or future permissive rights of way but this exercise formally states statutory rights of way. However, I thought this was an opportunity to confirm the permissive footpaths. I attach a second plan which mark the permissive footpaths that Holkham would like to continue to grant around the Priory at Castle Acre. These permissive paths will duly be signed as such in line with the Highways Act 1980 s31(5).”*

MH proposed arranging a meeting with Holkham, the Clerk, John Roff and Sally and Tim Hubbard, to go through their plans and to clarify both permissive and statutory paths on all of Holkham's land around Castle Acre. MH asked if the PC should proceed on this basis? Cllrs agreed. The Clerk to contact Holkham to set up a meeting.

Castle Acre Branch Royal British Legion – PC is invited to lay a wreath at this year's Remembrance Day ceremony to be held on Sunday 12th November. MH unable to attend. LF to be the PC representative. Cllrs to donate individually to pay for the £18.50 wreath.

58. Reports

Highways – MH reported: Archer Lane drainage work has still not been progressed. A tractor trailer has churned up island at Archer Lane and also on the island opposite Premier Stores.

School – no report:

Village Hall – HB reported: next concert is Jazz on Friday 24th November.

CAPFA – MH reported in CW’s absence. One container has not yet been emptied and thus cannot be moved. Clerk to chase CW. The invoice for the drainage work on the playing field was over £1,000 more than agreed and will be queried before possible approval at the next PC meeting. CW is looking at suppliers and grant funding for new play equipment.

Neighbourhood Plan (NP) - MT reported: the village questionnaire has been a source of information with the next task being to establish the pertinent areas to Neighbour Planning. Feasibility studies are required identifying areas where supporting evidence is required. A collation of the types of responses was handed out to Cllrs and a bar chart representation of numbers of preferences on each topic. MT stressed that this only gives a flavour of the type of comments made about particular issues. Some questions in isolation have caused contradictions. We need to identify to the community what can be achieved.

Borough Council – JM reported: Boundary Review in process which would come out for consultation. The Priory Ward boundary could be moved further towards Great Massingham. In response to MH’s query, reviewing the Local Plan site options to 2036 will be conducted by the Planning Task Group which includes JM. However the Group is not moving forward quickly and the October meeting has been cancelled. The next stage will be a report for public consultation. MH asked whether the Task Group would consider an position paper from the Neighbourhood Plan Group setting out the village’s views on the potential development of both the Holkham and Green King land prior to the consultation period? JM thought it would be best to stick to the stated time frames, although the research collected can be referred to in any documents. The Neighbourhood Plan remains a work in progress and not an adopted legal document until it is approval next year. MH asked whether the PC can suggest that Castle Acre is not a key service centre? JM said yes, this was possible. JM went on to say that the last two Neighbourhood Plans received had been passed by a majority.

In a personal capacity, JM asked if reducing the width between the posts at Bailey Gate had been proposed by the PC? MH stated that the English Heritage representative had suggested they should be moved as well. JM would not support this proposal at Borough Council level as he had concerns that moving them would have a detrimental effect on the residents of the village itself.

County Council – no report.

59. Accounts

Agenda amendment – . Due to an oversight of the Clerk, the SPC Printers’ July invoice had not been presented earlier for approval. The invoice will be charged to the Locality funding for the Neighbourhood Plan.

Mr Laurie Fisher proposed, Mrs Sheila Moister seconded these payments.

Berrymans Glass Recycling Ltd (URM UK Ltd)	£ 35.34 (£5.89 VAT)
E.on Energy (electricity)	£ 72.75 (£3.46 VAT) *
K&M Lighting Services (Street Light Pyes Lane)	£ 78.00 (£13.00 VAT)
Linda Roast (July August September Clerk’s Salary)	£512.00
SPC Printers (Neighbourhood Questionnaire printing)	£768.00 (£128.00 VAT) **

* Amounts vary from Agenda because of late arrival of invoices

** Additional to Agenda

60. Village Maintenance

Pot hole Back Lane – outside Rowan House needs filling. The Clerk to report.

Church parking – SM thanked the consideration of the church in allowing funeral mourners to park on the cemetery grass. SM asked whether the Ostrich could be encouraged to request their overnight guests to park in their car park and not on Stocks Green. The Clerk to write a letter.

Massingham Road verge and litter – The verge has been strimmed which has revealed lots of litter. The Clerk to ask the litter picking team if they would kindly be able to extend their area and clear the litter.

61. Public Question Time

Traffic Island at top of Town Lane – A resident suggested that the County Council funding money be spent on moving the signs back away from the junction to aid visual clarity along Massingham Road.

New bungalow at Back Lane – the developer invited Cllrs to view the dwelling to see what could be achieved in a small area. He added that he felt that garden and back infills would be the only way to achieve smaller dwelling being built in the limited building land available in Castle Acre.

South Acre Road trees – Holkham has been reminded that the trees need attention but they offered no response. The Clerk to chase again.

The meeting closed at 9.45pm.

The next full Parish Council meeting is on Thursday 9 November at 7.30pm in the village hall.