

# Castle Acre Parish Council

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## NEWSLETTER TO ALL CASTLE ACRE RESIDENTS – Edition 7

16 June 2020

Dear Residents

With the incidents of Covid-19 slowly declining and the Government gradually lifting restrictions, Cllrs feel the format of the past newsletters and the information contained have probably served their purpose. The usual monthly Parish News will re-emerge in the Nar Valley News but probably not until September as the editor hasn't yet set a date for its renewed publication. In its place, we are issuing this update of Parish Council decisions and on-going actions from the May and June Council meetings, both of which were successfully held on Zoom! The July meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> could well follow this format, if meetings at the village hall are still not allowed.

Both the Borough and Norfolk Councils have issued some recent updates to do with lockdown restrictions, some of which are set out below. Equally, the previous general guidance can still be seen in the last newsletter at [https://www.castleacre.info/images/downloads/Parish\\_News\\_Updates6\\_May20.pdf](https://www.castleacre.info/images/downloads/Parish_News_Updates6_May20.pdf)

From comments received, these newsletters were well received. Before lockdown, Cllrs had decided to issue a bi-annual newsletter and to deliver it to all households. We will look at this in the autumn.

If you know of anyone in the village unable to view this update electronically, please either print off a copy yourself or call our Parish Clerk, Libby, who will print and arrange for one of the village volunteers to deliver it. Libby's contact details are shown in the title heading.

### **Village playground remains closed**

The current guidance states that the playing field can be used for recreation, though not team sports. The pavilion remains closed. People who play team sports can meet to train together, although anything involving physical contact is not allowed. Parents can accompany their children to coaching sessions carried out on a one to one basis or in small groups. The play area remains closed, probably until 4 July, subject to revised government guidelines. However...

### **New playground project is underway**

Some good news from CAPFA! The plans to replace and extend the under 7's and junior play areas are back on track. In April, the committee were celebrating, having just secured a £100,000 grant from FCC Communities Foundation, a not-for-profit business that awards grants for community projects through the Landfill Communities Fund, with an additional £10,000 from the National Lottery Awards for All scheme. The generosity of their support is very welcome, making a lasting impact on the community as it will enable CAPFA to go ahead with plans to transform the current playground area. The project will redevelop the existing under 7's play area with lots of new equipment. It will be enclosed for safety and the replacement surfacing will be a huge improvement. The project also includes expanding into a new junior play space

between the under 7's area and the existing skateboarding area. This is designed for over 7 's and will have more challenging play items, including a new zip line, castle tower and larger multi-person swings sets. The selected contractor is throwing in an extra two adult exercise machines for free.

Unhappily in March, just as plans got going, the lockdown brought things to a standstill. However, we're now very pleased to be able to say that the project is underway again. A site meeting with the contractor, Action Play and Leisure, has confirmed arrangements, the order for equipment and materials has been placed and the work will start on 6 July. The estimated six week programme should be completed by mid-August.

Meanwhile, many thanks to the hardworking group of volunteers who have been refurbishing the pavilion during the lockdown. The changing rooms, kitchen, tea room and lobby have all been painted, everything thoroughly cleaned, window boards changed and new carpet tiles laid.

We look forward to being able to celebrate the completion of the project and, most of all, for children to be able to enjoy the new play areas. Subject to lockdown restrictions in place at the time, CAPFA and the PC expect to coordinate an opening event in late August/September - ribbon cutting, village fete, BBQ, even maybe an end of lockdown party for the whole village?

Meanwhile, CAPFA will continue to make plans for new facilities and hope for more funding successes in the future.

### **Maintaining social distancing**

Castle Acre is a popular village with visitors. Over the late May Bank Holiday, the first weekend after some restrictions were lifted and the sun shone, it seemed everyone had one idea – let's go to Castle Acre! Our dedicated litter team emptied the bins by the ford four times in five days, fished portable BBQs out of the Nar, collected dog poo bags thrown from cars onto the verges, watched the traffic chaos down at the ford from ignoring the 'no parking beyond this point' sign and counted 27 cars parked in the Castle car park and along Pyes Lane! Above all, they watched the crowds ignoring the social distancing guidelines. Until these change and you are concerned at visitors' behaviour, call 101 and ask the police to intervene. The Parish Council has also forewarned our local police Beat Officer.

### **Village litter bins.**

Recently some village litter bins have been used to dispose of parcel wrapping or cardboard boxes from home deliveries. Could residents please dispose of these in their own domestic bins, recycling if possible. Thank you.

### **Parish Council news (updates up to 16 June)**

The headlines are:

- The PC held both its May and June meetings by Zoom. Members of the public joined the first meeting. The May Minutes are posted at [https://www.castleacre.info/images/downloads/minutes\\_may20.pdf](https://www.castleacre.info/images/downloads/minutes_may20.pdf) A printed version is on the PC noticeboard outside the Spar shop.
- May is the traditional month for the Annual Parish Meeting when residents are encouraged to come to the village hall to question PC Cllrs about the past parish year. Given the current lockdown restrictions and with the village hall closed until July, this meeting had to be cancelled. Cllrs

approved the Chairman's Report which is customarily read out at this meeting. This is now posted on the village website at:

[https://www.castleacre.info/images/downloads/Chairman's Annual Report May20.pdf](https://www.castleacre.info/images/downloads/Chairman's%20Annual%20Report%20May20.pdf) .

- At the June meeting, Cllrs unanimously voted Martin Hickey as Council Chairman and Laurie Fisher as Vice-Chairman for this parish year.
- Only Liam Manson, of Arch House, Bailey Street, submitted an application which met residential criteria to fill the vacant seat on the Council and was duly elected onto the Council. Cllrs welcomed Liam who will make a significant contribution to the workings of the Council. Liam's contact details will soon be on [https://www.castleacre.info/parish\\_news.htm](https://www.castleacre.info/parish_news.htm)
- Cllrs approved the annual accounts statements which will be posted on castleacre.info. Thanks to Richard Price who audited the PC accounts. If residents have any questions on the accounts, please contact the Clerk.
- Planning applications. Ref: 20/00573/FM - siting of 14 glamping eco pods on the land west of the school (known as Further Pond Close), off Back Lane. By a majority, Cllrs voted to object. You can read the detailed PC submission on the Borough's planning portal or ask the Clerk for a copy.

Ref: 20/00726/F - insertion of roof lights and porch canopy, The Coach House, Stocks Green. This is the single storey house behind Victory House. The application calls for an extra conservation roof light at the front and two more at the back ( Drury Lane), plus a new front door porch canopy. Cllrs voted unanimously to support this application.

- As residents may have noticed, English Heritage's portcullis is back under the arch of Bailey Gate. It is set higher than before and should so remain in place, providing large trucks and farm vehicles take notice of the many height restriction warning signs on the A1065 and coming into the village.
- There is no final confirmation yet from Holkham that the Massingham Road housing development will begin in September.
- Damaged footbridge off South Acre Road. Thanks to the PC's volunteer helper, Len Rye, for repairing the broken plank and to Lofty for supplying the wood. If any resident would also like to help the PC in completing small tasks like this, please give your details to Libby. Thank you.
- The final version of the Neighbourhood Plan is close to being sent off to the Borough Council and then for its official Examination after which, adjusting for any amendments, the Plan will be put to the vote by residents, hopefully this autumn. A majority vote in favour will establish the Plan's legal status. Once the Plan is made and adopted, the Borough Council will use it to determine planning applications. While some may disagree with a specific policy or direction, it is vital that everyone votes in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan as a whole. Its rejection will open the door to unwanted housing development to the detriment of Castle Acre's unique status.
- Fallen tree in the River Nar. Thanks to the fishing club who removed the tree which had fallen across the Nar near Jubilee Bridge.
- The next PC meeting is scheduled for 9 July, either in the village hall (if permitted) or again by Zoom. See the PC noticeboard or ask the Clerk for final details of the meeting location. Please e-mail Libby by 8 July if you would like to be linked to the Zoom meeting.

Should residents have any questions or concerns that can be resolved by the PC, please e-mail the Clerk.

For contact details of all your Parish Councillors, go to [https://www.castleacre.info/parish\\_news.htm](https://www.castleacre.info/parish_news.htm) or call Libby.

## **NCC updates (from 3 June)**

### Community support

The Norfolk Resilience Forum is reminding Norfolk residents that those self-isolating with Covid symptoms or shielding should not go out to work, to shop, or to visit friends in their homes and that anyone still struggling with food deliveries and medicine supplies, as a shielding or vulnerable adult, can still ask for help. To date, 3,294 emergency food box deliveries and 9,237 prescription pick-ups have been made for shielding and vulnerable residents by the community hubs across the county.

### Education, schools and learning institutions

The Government's guidance on gov.uk has been updated with information including information on the curriculum, afterschool activities, repeating a year for pupils, transport and keeping children safe online. Information on if its compulsory to send pupils to educational settings and education for children at home has also been amended. It also includes updated information for parents of children with special education needs.

To support all learning institutions to be open, NCC has sourced and is supplying PPE free of charge to all for collection from four main distribution points across the county in King's Lynn, Thetford, Norwich and North Walsham. Failing this, NCC can arrange to deliver the PPE. Each location is initialling receiving approx. 3-4 weeks supply.

Commencing 8 June, NCC is distributing across the county over 1800 devices and 250 4G hot spots to schools and institutions for disadvantaged children with a social worker.

Support for post-16 year olds. NCC recognises that the additional complexities of the COVID recovery risk an overall reduction in apprenticeships. To mitigate this its post-16 team have been engaging with providers to ensure that, where possible, apprenticeship schemes can still commence in September 2020. The vast majority of providers have confirmed that they will be honouring all apprenticeship placements already offered.

## **Updates from the Borough Council (from 5 June)**

### Test and Trace Service

The NHS test and trace service:

- Ensures that anyone who develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can quickly be tested to find out if they have the virus.
- Helps trace close recent contacts of anyone who tests positive for coronavirus and, if necessary, notifies them that they must self-isolate at home to help stop the spread of the virus.

Find out more here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works>

## Discretionary Grants

The Borough Council has now launched a limited discretionary grant funding pot for businesses that may not have been eligible, to date, for financial assistance. On 1 May 2020 the government announced it was allowing local authorities to develop policies to pay discretionary grants to local businesses affected by COVID-19.

While local authorities are able to decide their own policies, government has asked that four specific types of businesses are prioritised for the grant, and has specified three mandatory criteria all applicants must meet in order to receive the grant. As funding is limited, the policy is restricted to those businesses the government has specified are a priority plus businesses that the council consider to be local priorities. The Council has contacted businesses that it knows to be eligible which are being processed for imminent payment. This funding is limited, so it is important that businesses check their eligibility. Full details of eligible businesses and the eligibility criteria are available on the Borough Council's website [www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/discretionarygrant](http://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/discretionarygrant)

## Borough Council service impacts

Please remember the Borough Council offices are no longer accepting visits from the public. People can contact the Council through Live Chat on its website, or by calling 01553 616200. Anyone needing to provide documents can post and drop these into the letterbox which is emptied daily. All of the Borough's service impacts can be found here: [www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/coronavirus)

## **Benefits**

If you need advice on claiming benefits, go to [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) and click on Benefits. There is a wealth of information there to assist you, including how to apply for Universal Credit. This website has a comprehensive guide to how to cope with issues thrown up by the Coronavirus, including detailed help about avoiding scams. Norfolk Citizens Advice is aiming to offer advice through Adviceline, email and webchat. See the website on how access these. The website has been updated to reflect new protections for those renting and others struggling to pay bills. Go to <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/if-you-cant-pay-your-bills-because-of-coronavirus/> A new section has also been added for people worried about having to go to work which is titled 'Coronavirus - what it means for you' Click on <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/health/coronavirus-what-it-means-for-you/>

Please respect social distancing and stay safe.

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