

CASTLE ACRE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in the village hall on Tuesday 10 December 2019

Present: Mr M Hickey (MH) Chairman
Mrs S Moister (SM)
Mr N Patrick (NP)

Mr Sean Allen (SA)
Mr M Tate (MT)
Mrs Helen Breach (HB)

In attendance: Mrs L Firth (Clerk), Mr James Moriarty (JM) (Borough Councillor).

Apologies: Mr L Fisher (LF) Vice-Chairman, Ms Charlotte Williams (CW), Mr T Hubbard (TH)

Apologies not received: Cllr G Middleton (NCC)

53. Minutes of PC meeting on Thursday 10 Nov 2019
MT proposed approval of the Minutes, NP seconded.

54. Actions from previous meetings

28. Portcullis

Following a request to review the traffic signs from the A1065 and between Lower Lane and Bailey Gate, MH held a site meeting with Highways. Highways agreed to replace the second directional sign on the west side of A1065 with one stating 'Castle Acre restricted traffic' plus an arrow pointing on up to the Newton Road turning. This would be similar to the existing sign on the second turning left before Newton Road. Highways also agreed that the two width restriction signs on Blind Lane should be moved back by about five metres, so as not to confuse drivers with the Bailey Gate width restriction warning signs. MH's suggestion of a new sign on Bailey Street, stating 'Narrow Archway ahead! All large vehicles turn around here. Ignore your Satnav!', has been approved in principle by the landowner. MH proposed its purchase. Agreed. Clerk to order. MH and SA to install the sign in cooperation with the landowner. Clerk to inform English Heritage of these changes suggesting that, once completed, the Portcullis could be reinstalled.

51. Newton Road Bridge flooding

MH to continue to press Highways for the correct long term measures to be taken.

113. Updates on outstanding Highways requests

Extra grips at the top of Orchard Lane and Rougham Road are still outstanding, as is the replacement 30 mph repeater sign on St James' Green. MH has chased and received apologies from Highways promising to complete soon.

20. Extra litter bin on playing field

NP to enlarge the picket housing to accommodate the new bin.

Ostrich pub outdoor decking and seating area – removal

The decking has been removed and the remaining carriageway requires no serious repair work. Highways will address the chipped edges of the carriageway in the Spring of 2020.

Supporting the Borough Council's long term empty homes strategy –The Old School

The Clerk received a response from the Borough's enforcement team confirming they have entered into correspondence with the owner asking for the school to be tidied up - no reply to date. If there is no progress by the new year they will attempt to make further informal contact. Clerk to respond to the owner of the Old School latest e-mail

41. Drainage in High Street - update

Highways and Anglian Water (AW) are due to have a site meeting with MT on 11 December. Maintenance work has been scheduled - flushing out, inspecting the drains and gullies with a camera, checking the outlet at the bottom of the village and at the Town Lane/Massingham Road junction. The large road manhole cover, north side of where North Street meets Massingham Road, is where both Highways' surface water drainage pipe and the main AW storm drain are situated. The former goes down Pyes Lane, the latter down Bailey Street to Ranvenir, then into a controlled ditch flow and eventually into the Nar. It is suspected the Highways pipe may not be connected to the AW pipe which may account for the flooding at the junction. MT to chase for a report.

48. Re-painting BT phone box- update

Clerk to chase the Borough's Conservation Officer, following a site visit, for a written report to send on to BT.

56. CA Emergency Response Coordinator - update

Clerk to await further responses before further action is considered by the PC.

Village overflow car park

Cllrs express support for leasing Holkham's field off Priory Road as a visitor's car park with protective grass matting and discrete directional signing. However, a planning application will be needed. Supporting documents to this application should link to the emerging Neighbourhood Plan, stress the importance of an overflow car park and explain why it is needed in the village - an decrease of on-street parking, less traffic congestion, improved pedestrian safety, less impact on the Conservation Area and detracting from its character. Before submitting an application, MH to contact Holkham officially requesting a 50 year lease.

Bi-annual village information flyer

Cllrs supported including funds in next year's budget for a two or four sided village information flyer to be circulated twice a year to all households in the village, highlighting issues that need explaining or promoting. MH to seek out a potential editor.

Pales Green memorial bench and signage on Green.

JM volunteered to contact a local family expressing the wish to donate a memorial bench on the public green located in Pales Green. Clerk to attain quotes for a small sign on the metal gate stating 'Public access, no dogs allowed'.

58. EH directional sign top of Pyes Lane to Priory car park – update

EH has approved and agreed to pay £115 + VAT for the PC's proposal of doubling the size of the existing sign. Clerk to order, MT and SA to install.

61. Damaged gate East Green – update.

Clerk to chase Holkham Estate for a response.

Street light on St. James Green- update

A resident on St. James Green has requested that the street light on the Green goes off at midnight as the bright LED light is shining into their bedroom. A timer will cost £70 and a diffuser £75. Cllrs decided this street light needs to remain on all night as a matter of Health and Safety. No further action.

55. Health & Safety matters (including Tree Report)

Tree Inspection Register - TH will complete updating the Tree Inspection Register soon.

56. Matters requested by Councillors

EH- Charging for parking on Castle car park.

English Heritage (EH) informed the PC that in the near future they intend to introduce payment for use of their car park at the Castle. Cllrs expressed their complete objection to any charge, citing the knock-on effect on parking congestion elsewhere, the loss of parking in Pyes Lane for village hall events, more signage in the Conservation Area etc. EH responded subsequently to these concerns by stating that it is clear that the Castle is being used as additional free car park by many members of the public visiting the village. They consider this makes it more difficult for English Heritage members and other visitors who come specifically to see the Castle to park and by introducing a small charge, this will facilitate parking for them. EH accepts that the introduction of a small car parking charge may result in some drivers seeking other parking places around the village.

English Heritage Trust is a charity which is required by the Government to become self-funding by 2023. The Trust currently derives no income from admission fees to the Castle, yet it has spent approximately £95,000 over the last five years on maintenance to conserve the Castle. Given that the car park is within the Conservation Area, EH will consult with the Borough Council about the need for planning consent for a parking sign (no machine is intended as payment will be taken by text/phone). There is currently no plan to charge for parking at the Priory. Clerk to contact Borough Conservation team to enquire whether a full conservation appraisal might be required before any new signage is installed.

Future CIL payments - Borough funding allocations;

A Methwold Cllr raised his concerns about a Borough Council task force that is considering the most equitable way to spend the expected £1.0 million CIL revenues across the Borough over the next five years, net of any payments to Parish Councils. The Cllr fears that this will mostly go into Kings Lynn's infrastructure projects, despite the King's Lynn area and population being only 25% of West Norfolk. MH believes this should focus on local infrastructure, school buildings in particular.

Repairing surface of alleyway Foxes Meadow to Massingham Road.

SM raised her concern about the uneven surface of the alleyway between Foxes Meadow and Massingham Road being a future hazard to disabled residents. Cllrs believe the path does fall under Freebridge's responsibility to maintain. Clerk to go back to Freebridge asking for further checks to be carried out.

57. Planning – no new planning applications to consider.

58. Correspondence

British Legion 8 May VE day celebration

The Castle Acre branch of the Royal British Legion has contacted the PC to ask what the Council will be organising to mark the 75th Anniversary of VE Day on 8 May 2020. SM to investigate further. Proposals and funding to be discussed at the January PC meeting.

No cold calling zone signs

E-mail from a local resident highlighting an article in 'Your Norfolk' (Issue 60) magazine about a scheme to deter cold-calling by setting up zones with appropriate signage. Cllrs were reluctant to see more signs around the village and consider that the current scheme whereby residents can contact the Clerk to request a 'no cold callers' door sticker and seek assistance from Able Community Care, are sufficient unless there is evidence that cold-callers are not deterred. The PC to monitor over the coming months.

Mayor's Design Awards 2020

Cllrs asked to consider their submissions at the next PC meeting. MH suggested putting forward the Water Tower for the Best Conversion Award.

Borough Council of Kings Lynn Governance Structure.

The PC received a consultation letter from the Borough Council's Chief Executive asking for all Parish's views on the current governance structures. A task group of elected Borough members from all political parties has been set up to review how well their decision making model works for BCKLWN and to recommend if it should be improved or even changed to an alternative way of operating. MH criticised the paucity of background information and supporting documentation that would permit Cllrs to make an informed judgement. MH to draft a reply to this effect.

Extra dog poo bin at Castle car park

Local resident contacted the PC requesting an second dog poo bin at the Castle as the current bin is often overflowing before the weekly emptying each Tuesday. JM to check how often the dog poo bins are emptied by the Borough before Cllrs decide if an additional bin (and the extra £91 annual emptying charge) should be included in next year's budget.

Monitoring dog poo deposits

Cllrs suggested the Borough's Safety and Nuisance officer is contacted in the Spring to return to the village during the busier daytime periods and monitor that dog walkers are picking up after their pets.

59. Reports

Highways –

MH reported following site meeting with NCC Highways (HW) engineer:

- **Yellow lines at Massingham Road junction.** The junction is on HW's list for a traffic order but only given medium priority. Yellow lines would be painted on both sides of Back Lane at the junction and extend right to the end of the Spar building on the Massingham Road. In Spring 2020, there are plans to paint 'Bus Stop' on the carriageway in front of the bus stop sign on the west side of Massingham Road. It should have legal force to prevent non-buses/coaches from stopping there. Until yellow lines are painted, the traffic cones are to remain in place. HW are happy for the PC to erect a two way traffic safety mirror on the opposite bank at the junction. (2020 expense for budget review in January).
- **Massingham Road junction - directional signage.** HW are aware the lettering on this sign has still not been changed nor has the sign been moved back to improve visibility at the junction. HW will action.
- **Closing Little Lane to traffic.** HW confirmed the lane will not qualify for the cost of a £6,000 traffic order. There is a 'unsuitable for motor vehicles' sign at both ends and unless formally requested, HW will not cut back the overgrowth from the hedges on either side. Cllrs accepted this and will ask for volunteers to cut back foliage around the signs to make them more visible.
- **HGV access to Pales Green - new signage proposed.** Cllrs are unhappy at more signs in the Conservation Area.
- **Overgrown hedge at A1065 and Newton road junction.** Clerk to contact the responsible farmer to request that the branches and brambles overhanging the highway are cut back.
- **School** – no update.

Village hall – HB reported: the Castle Acre and District aviation memorial plaques have been hung on the wall by the main door from the hall.

CAPFA – NP reported: there was a committee meeting on 19 November. Due to bad weather the playing field shockwave drainage treatment has been postponed. The play area sub-committee has submitted a £100,000 grant application to FCC (formally Wren) for a new and extended play area. A decision is expected in March 2020. Other grant applications will also be submitted.

Neighbourhood Plan (NP) – MT reported: Habitat Regulation and Site Assessments are being considered and so far a positive response has been received. Concerns were raised in the report about building eleven houses in Castle Acre by 2036 because of its proximity to European protection sites West and South of Swaffham. The P.C asserts that the impact of eleven additional homes in Castle Acre, some seven km from the closest European Protection Site (EPC), is negligible in comparison with the impact of the several hundred homes that have been built, or planned, as part of the development of Swaffham which is only some two kilometres from the EPC. The draft NP will be amended, published and sent out for consultation to the local authority, stakeholders and village residents in the new year. The land next to the new school has now been sold. The new owner should have been consulted about the Neighbourhood Plan but MT expressed his concern that the selling agent may not have passed on this information to the buyer.

Borough Cllr's report – JM reported:

- The Borough's Local Plan to 2036 is being examined by a task group, looking at housing allocations area by area.

- Last Friday, the joint Cabinets of Breckland, West Norfolk and North Norfolk Councils agreed jointly to replace Keir by a new waste disposal operator to reduce overhead costs. This may change local rounds and collection days. The Councils will own their own waste disposal vehicles.

County Council – no report.

60. **Accounts to be paid**

Accounts due for payment, proposed by NP, seconded by SM.

Holkham allotments second half yearly rent April –Sept 2019	£100.00
Gary Lake playing field grass cutting 2019 2 nd payment	£950.00
Berrymans Glass Recycling Ltd (URM UK Ltd)	£36.00 (£6.00)
E.on Energy (electricity)	£66.09 (£3.15)
N.K Patrick Electricals, playing field bin housing materials	£36.88 (£6.15 VAT)
Castle Acre PCC churchyard maintenance	£1,000.00
Compass Point-Consultant advice to Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan	£257.10
Clerk expenses - stamps	£8.40

61. **Village Maintenance**

Leaf clearance East/Stocks Greens

TH, MH and two local volunteers cleared half of the leaves on East Green – Cllrs expressed their thanks. MH has appointed a local garden contractor to remove the rest of the leaves at £60, charged to the unspent £200 PC maintenance budget. Agreed sweeping up the leaves on the roads round Stocks Green is more pressing than clearing the relatively few leaves on the grass itself. Clerk to obtain a quote for a private road sweeper, the Borough's intermittent service being unreliable.

62. **Public Question Time - CA Bus service**

Complaints received regarding local bus service turning people away as bus full to capacity.
HB to inform JM of full report prior to 17 December.

The meeting closed at 9.25pm. The next full Parish Council meeting is on **Thursday 9 January** at 7.30pm