

Castle Acre Parish Council

Clerk: Mrs Libby Firth, 7 Sandles Court, Back Lane, Castle Acre, Norfolk PE32 2XF

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Minuted record of Parish Council business conducted via Zoom video online meeting 8 October 2020.

Present: Mr M Hickey (MH) Chairman, Mr L Fisher (LF) Vice Chairman,
Mrs H Breach (HB), Mr T Hubbard (TH),
Mr L Manson (LM), Mrs S Moister (SM),
Mr N Patrick (NP), Mr M Tate (MT)

In attendance: Mrs L Firth (Clerk), Mr J Moriarty (JM) (Borough Councillor) and one member of the public.

34. Apologies: None

Apologies not received: Cllr G Middleton (NCC), Mr S Allen (SA)

35. Minutes of PC meeting held via Zoom on 10 September 2020

The following corrections were noted:

- The date of the next meeting to 8 October.
- Spelling Fisher correctly.
- Adding 'need' in the sentence in item 33

LF proposed approval of the Minutes and SM seconded.

TH asked for re-confirmation that the PC had paid a £400 subsidy to CAPFA towards the playing field verti-quake drainage operation – a subject he raised at the September PC meeting and which was subsequently minuted. MH stated that the payment was made last October but the drainage work had not gone ahead over the winter as the ground was too wet.

36. Health & Safety - reports on any new H&S

TH will soon obtain quotes for work on the Stocks Green limes. Waiting for Borough approval to trim the cheery trees by the playing field entrance. Noted the overhanging Oak tree branches at the bottom of Bailey Street will be cut back by the landowner. Holkham is aware of its trees overhanging Orchard Lane. Their tree officer will undertake remedial work and also conduct an assessment throughout Castle Acre on any trees where Holkham has a duty of care. TH stressed that one of the trees on Orchard Lane needs urgent action.

TH asked the Clerk to inform Holkham that overhanging branches from the trees on their land adjacent to the permissive path westwards running north to Common Road need cutting back.

37. Updates on actions required from previous meetings

41. Surface water flooding

MT reported problems at the bottom of Bailey Street due to the telecom chamber overflowing, combined with the gullies in Blind Lane also being full. Clerk to chase Holkham to clear the blocked drainage ditch at Minns Meadow sooner than their estimate of autumn 2020.

55. Repairing alleyway off Foxes Meadow

No further progress. Still awaiting action from Borough Council.

87. Road sign outside Jokers

Highways have removed the sign. No further action required.

76. Damaged railing on Newton Road

Clerk still chasing a fixed date from Highways as to when this work will be completed.

67. South Acre ford - prohibition of motor vehicles TRO consultation

MH confirmed the consultation period had ended and the results are pending.

31. New SSSI sign at the ford

In response to the Clerk's request for a new, more informative sign to replace the one by the ford, Natural England cited their current financial constraints and sent a copy of the current sign!

29. Parking and litter issues associated with the new play area

Cllrs noted that now schools are back, the amount of parking along Massingham Road has decreased, as should the current high levels of litter decline over the winter months. Public toilets on the playing field. The Clerk obtained quotes for hiring portable toilets from Classical Toilet Hire and Toilet Plus whose costs range from £240 and £400 per month for unit, delivery and cleaning. Agreed this was too high a cost for the parish to bear, though SM asked the Clerk to research 'pay to use' portable toilets and report back at the next PC meeting. MH suggested a better option might be to work with the Playing Field Association in obtaining cost estimates for extending the pavilion to incorporate public toilets linked to its main drains.

29. Purchase of traffic safety mirror at Massingham Road junction

MH received a quote from 'Barriers Direct' at £495+VAT for a three-way, blind spot, multi-function traffic mirror with an 800mm diameter and eight metre visibility for drivers at the Back Lane junction across to the location of the mirror on the east bank of Massingham Road. MH's contact at Highways supports this dimension/location, though purchasing the 900mm version at £675 +VAT might offer better visibility? Clerk asked to contact Barriers Direct to see if it would accept an order on sale or return, should the mirror prove ineffective. Final decision to proceed to be taken at the November PC meeting.

29. Changing Council's banking arrangements

The Clerk is investigating further.

34. Damaged bench on St James' Green

SA kindly agreed to remove the broken bench from St James' Green. A call for a bench to be donated was included in the most recent edition of the Nar Valley News. No offers received so far.

34. Broken latch on gate on the wooden walkway at SA ford to Minns Meadow

Clerk to contact the PC's resident volunteer to ask if he would possibly assess and fix the latch.

38. Matters requested by Councillors

Prohibition of bonfires on council allotments

SM raised her concerns that smoke from bonfires on the village allotments can adversely affect the adjoining properties and should they be banned?

Cllrs did not support this but agreed to add a clause to the allotment Rules and Responsibilities stating:

‘Bonfires on allotment plots are strongly discouraged as smoke can cause a nuisance to properties in the vicinity and could affect those with breathing difficulties. Repeated lighting of bonfires could lead to a Notice of Withdrawal being issued with immediate effect and the loss an allotment holder’s plot.’

Supporting young people in the village

SM contacted a village resident who is a local youth worker. He is kindly prepared to assist the PC in looking at options for helping young people in the village. For example, organising youth workers to run projects. Both YMCA and YAB supply package deals for youth workers or alternatively the PC would need to train volunteers from the village. Active Norfolk offers two workers for three hours per week for £7,500 per year. There is grant funding to support such projects. SM was asked to circulate the information to all Cllrs for review at November's PC meeting. JM offered to input his experience as a former village youth worker.

Quarterly parish newsletter

MH pointed out that a quarterly newsletter delivered to all households in the parish is one of the aims of the current Five Year Action Plan. MH cited West Acre Parish Council’s coloured newsletter as an example. The thinking behind the newsletter is to take a more proactive approach on communicating with residents, talking about possible future developments - e.g. working with young people, implementing projects in the Neighbourhood Plan, encouraging more clubs and societies etc. - and getting feedback from residents. ‘Normal’ PC business will continue to be covered by the monthly PC News in the NVN and in PC meetings Minutes.

Cllrs had approved £300 towards costs in the 2020/21 budget. MH has contacted a journalist and a designer, both residents in the village, who are prepared to volunteer to help produce the newsletter. Cllrs agreed that initially the newsletter should be bi-annual and that MH can take this development further with proposals for the next PC meeting.

39. Planning

-20/01297/F - to build a 9 meter wide by 3meter deep oak framed cart shed with storage and parking bays at Lime Kiln Cottages Cuckstool Lane.

There were no objections raised to the application. LF proposed approval and LM seconded. MT, TH, HB, NP, SM voted to support. MH abstained.

-20/01308/F - single story extension to provide ground floor bedroom accommodation (with shower/WC) for disabled person, demolition of porch to enlarge existing doorway at Abbey Cottage, Back Lane.

HB and LF declared an interest in the application. There were no objections raised to the application. TH proposed approval and SM seconded. MT, LM, NP voted to support. MH abstained.

Holkham’s Massingham Road housing development

MH reported that Holkham has applied for an extension to the start date for construction to May 2021. MH is waiting for confirmation of the actual date.

40. Correspondence

HGVs use of Newton Road/ Town lane

A local resident copied the PC in his recent e-mail communications with Norfolk Highways in which he raised his concerns about the apparent increase in both the number and weight of HGVs using Newton Road / St James's Green as a short cut to other villages. He cited damage leading to lowering the road level at the Newton Road/North Street junction, possible damage to the Newton Road bridge and called for a weight restriction to be applied.

Highways rejected that claim stating the bridge can cope with 40 tonnes weight or more and that raising the road level is 'not at intervention level'. The resident asked for the PC's support in reducing unnecessary HGV traffic through the village – maybe a traffic survey would be the next step? MT noted the high costs involved in running such surveys or, if done in house, the need for a number of volunteers to make the survey effective.

Cllrs believe there is limited scope to reduce traffic volumes but it is committed to slowing traffic speed and increase parking options. The resident thanked the PC for allowing him to speak and hopes the PC will support actions to reduce HGV volumes to the benefit all villagers. The resident has contacted Andy Wallace at Highways who has agreed to meet him onsite. MH offered to join the meeting.

Parking on footway - response from No.4 Sandles court

Cllrs received in advance the response from the resident to the raised parking issue and expressed their appreciation of the efforts taken by residents at No.4 Sandles Court to avoid blocking the footway when parked. The PC will continue to follow up on similar incidents within the village in the future..

VE Day funding

The Borough Council's £100 grant towards the village's 75th VE Day celebrations was unspent, due to Covid restrictions. Rather than returning the sum, SM proposed that the money, plus the agreed £100 PC subsidy, could be used to replant the flowerbeds around the village war memorial and in time for the Remembrance Day service. SM suggested that the Horticultural Society could be contacted to assess the current flower beds and help with replanting. All agreed. LF proposed asking the Borough Council for permission to reallocate the grant funding. JM offered to follow up on behalf of the Council and report back to the PC.

Repainting of bench and bin at SA Ford

A resident has suggested that the bin and bench at the ford could do with repainting. Cllrs agreed. Clerk to determine if the village volunteer could undertake the work.

41. Reports

Highways

MH reported: Highways have finally painted the bus stop restricted area on the Massingham Road carriageway outside the Spar shop. It is on rather a larger scale than the PC had envisaged!

Village hall

HB reported: the village hall is now open. Restrictions are in place as per government guidelines with track and trace QR code, social distancing practice, a maximum of six people at any one time unless the hall is being used for educational, exercise or political purposes when the numbers can reach up to 15 people. The committee are obtaining quotes to improve the carpark at the front of the hall, following complaints about the ground flints.

CAPFA

No new report.

Neighbourhood Plan

MT reported: the Plan has been submitted to the Borough Council for the Reg.16 consultations which will start on October 15 and last for eight weeks. After any further amendments, the Plan will then be given to an independent Examiner. The Plan could be 'made' at that stage but might be overturned if not approved by majority vote in a residents' referendum, probably scheduled for May 2021.

BCKLWN

JM reported:

- The BC appear to be gearing up for another wave of lockdown and are working on passing on advice regarding Covid regulations and restrictions.
- The BC confirmed that they do not have any spare bin housings and gave links to suppliers of high cost housings.
- No further update as to when the food waste bins collections will start again. Maybe once the new refuse contract starts in April 2021? This is an item on the corporate performance panel agenda.

*Clerks Zoom video communication failed and Minutes had to cease. The Clerk rejoined the video call at 9.08pm

42. Accounts to be paid:

Berrymans Glass Recycling Ltd (URM UK Ltd)	£30.00 (£6.00 VAT)
E.on Energy (electricity)	£66.09 (£3.15 VAT)
Clerk's expenses- Zoom monthly account for September	£14.39 (£2.40 VAT)
Clerk's salary – July to September	£607.00
SAM2 new battery 50% contribution	£40.00

TH proposed approval of the accounts and SM seconded.

32. Village maintenance

Potholes

Nothing further to report. Clerk to chase Highways.

Repair to Bailey Gate portcullis

No further progress.

Repairing the riverbank at SA ford.

MH contacted the engineer at the Internal Drainage Board who confirmed that there should be funds left over from the Nar restoration project to pay for repairing the river banks at the ford, probably next summer.

TH suggested this restoration project would make a really good educational experience for local school children. MH to pass on the idea to the school..

Temporary closure of Bailey Street - overhead BT works

MH advised BT will temporarily close Bailey Street (except for access) between 08:00 and 16:00 from October 26 to October 28.

33. Public questions

A resident informed the PC that Swaffham Lions would like to volunteer to come to the village and do a litter pick. Clerk to pass details on to Paul Slocombe.

Meeting closed at 9.35pm. The next full Parish Council meeting is scheduled for **Thursday 12 November at 7.30pm** via Zoom. Cllrs agreed that PC meetings should continue to be held via Zoom until further notice.