



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 Meeting business conducted at Castle Acre village hall on 12 January 2023 at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllr Laurie Fisher- Chairman, Cllr Neil Patrick- Vice Chairman, Cllr Helen Breach, Cllr Martin Hickey, Cllr Tim Hubbard, Cllr Liam Manson, Cllr Sheila Moister, Cllr Martin Tate.

In attendance: Mrs Libby Firth- Clerk and four members of the public.

93. Apologies: The Council accepted apologies from Cllr Sean Allen and Cllr Jim Moriarty.

94. Declarations of Interest- None reported

95. Minutes of the 10 November meeting

Items to be corrected:

-Item 85a. To include the word 'potentially'- 'the PC is potentially planning to' Replace the word 'overflow' with 'visitors'.

-Item 88. 5th item listed- replace 'investigate it further' with 'progress the issue'.

-Item 89. Village Hall report- include 'acoustics'. CAPFA report- include 'Playing Field' to read 'The Playing Field committee'. To include 'on the playing field, this is to' ahead of 'commemorate the Platinum Jubilee'. Cllr Moister proposed approval of the minutes and Cllr Manson seconded this proposal. The Council agreed.

96. Health & Safety

-Clerk has reported the faulty street light on the junction of Town Lane and Pye's Lane to be repaired.

Tree Report – No new updates

-Cllr Hubbard wished to update the PC that Sally Hubbard's donation initially offered to the Horticultural Society, towards the cost of planting the Platinum Jubilee memorial tree, has now been reassigned as a donation to the PC to purchase a tree guard for the memorial tree.

97. Resident request remove/reduce street light on Pales Green, near to The Jokers property

-The Chairman brought this item forward on the agenda, as the resident who had contacted the PC was in attendance at the meeting, and the resident was invited to address the Council. The Resident wished to express their wish for the street light on Pales Green to be switched off, or the illumination period and brightness reduced, reporting that at least three other neighbours supported this proposal. Cllrs asked the resident to share further evidence of their neighbours support and confirmed the item would be reviewed at the next PC meeting. Clerk to ask K&M services for pricing options for a timer to be fitted, adding a shield and reducing the light brightness if feasible.

98. Review of PC's support of Dark Skies Policy

-The Chairman brought this item forward on the agenda, as residents who had contacted the PC were in attendance at the meeting, and they were invited to address the Council. The residents wished to support the PC in their review of having a dark skies policy, noting its benefits to mental and physical well-being in addition to the positive effects to the natural environment and wildlife. Cllrs thanked the residents for their support and agreed to draft the PC dark skies policy and review the village's street lights in due course.

99. Updates' on actions required from previous meetings

63a. Queen Elizabeth II Memorial – email from resident

The PC received another suggestion from a resident who requested that any memorial should give something back to the community and proposed the idea of a second defibrillator. They also preferred the proposal of a memorial tree rather than a beacon.

72. Parking on St James Road pavement- update

PC decided to issue a letter to the vehicle owner asking the owner not to obstruct the pavement. In addition another resident had contacted the Clerk to complain about the parking and had also notified the local beat officer.

73a. Safety Mirror, Sandy Lane into Newton Road junction – update

The clerk informed the resident, who proposed installation of the traffic mirror, that Holkham Estate had given their approval for the mirror to be erected at the proposed location and that HW did not object to the proposal. The clerk has advised the resident on the details of the mirror that the PC had purchased for the Massingham road and Town lane junction, and offered the PCs further assistance if it was required.

40b. Visitors Car Park - update

Cllr Hickey reported on further discussions with Holkham Estate regarding the lease of the land, following the PC decisions on a revised plan. Holkham had commented on reducing the size of the area that the PC are proposing to lease, however, it was noted that despite the reduction in matted area the all of the current fenced area needed to be leased. Cllr Hickey asked if the PC were content with the offered lease of £250 per annum if the field remains its current size. PC was content for Cllr Hickey to progress the discussions with Holkham.

100. Matters requested by Councillors

a.Review Newton Road Trod cutting schedule

Holkham confirmed that they cut the Trod during their routine maintenance trips. Cllrs agreed they were happy for this to continue and that the Clerk should confirm with TTSR that the 3 Trod cuts per year included on their contract are on a 'request-only' basis from the PC.

b.Review of street lighting electricity supply contract

Cllrs agreed the village street lighting schedule needs to be reviewed and assessed as to whether any amendments can be made to help reduce electricity costs. To be reviewed at the Feb PC meeting.

c.Review of Playing Field ground maintenance contract for 2023

Cllrs reviewed the revised Playing Field grass cutting contract for 2023 with an increase of £300 to cover current increases in fuel prices. The Council agreed that this increase was reasonable in light of current inflationary pressures on all businesses. Cllr Patrick proposed the approval of the new contract cost and Cllr Moister seconded the motion and all Cllrs approved.

d.Review of TTSR contract quote for 2023

Cllrs reviewed the revised contract from TTSR for 2023 with an approx. 11% increase in charges above the previous contract. The Council agreed that this increase was reasonable in light of current inflationary pressures on all businesses. Cllr Patrick proposed the approval of the new contract cost and Cllr Moister seconded the motion and all Cllrs approved.

e.PC 2023/24 budget - final new expenditure review and approval

At both the November and January meetings, Cllr Hickey took Cllrs through the detailed income and expenditure actual forecast figures for the financial year 2022/23 and the draft budget proposals for 2023/24. This minute summarises the details and decisions taken.

2022/23 financial year: total income is forecast at £16,330, £320 below budget. No recycling credits expected. No new CIL receipts. Other unbudgeted income: £200 BC grant towards the 2022

Jubilee celebrations. Total expenditure is £17,059, £319 below budget, due to underspends, particularly a reduced insurance premium for the playing field; in-house production of the Voice but offset by £140 increase in the Borough Council's annual charge to empty the playing field waste bins.

2023/24 budget: income received is +/- £16,650, reflecting both an increased Precept (see below), £200 grant from the BC for coronation celebrations and £2,780 extended grant from the Heritage Lottery fund for extra work on the nonconformist burial ground – removal of tree and construction of left hand gate pier – but set against a much reduced £200 recycling credit from just the paperbank.

The total budget for the PC's regular annual expenditure is forecast at +/- £18,690 - £1,630 above 2022/23. Given the current inflationary pressures, unless pre-advised, all fixed expenditure charges have been uplifted by 5%. Of particular note in the budget are:

Streetlights: The current two year contract with Eon (now Npower) for the 34 street lights (31 out of 34 bulbs are LED) ends on 1 February 2023. Current monthly charge is £75 - £80 pcm at 14.73 kWh x 4,800 kWh units pa = £710; standing charge at 57.81p pd = £210 and 5% VAT. Total £965. The best quote the PC has achieved to date (to be confirmed before 31/01/23) is from SSE for a one year contract at 56.380p per kWh unit and £5.40 standing charge pcm, plus 5% VAT. Total £2,940 pa or £242 pcm – an increase of 202%. This charge may be less subject to lower quotes and possible reduction in night time usage for specific streetlights.

Clerk's salary: raised by 11.1% to £13.70 per hour.

TTSR, the PC's Greens cutting and strimming contractor. The PC agreed to a new three year contract in December 2021 with an increased rate of 3.8% over 2021/2022, due to fuel/wages/inflationary pressures. TTSR's revised quote for the 2023 calendar year, reflecting even higher fuel and other operating costs than anticipated, equates to an 11% increase over 2022 actual and 7% above their three year contract rates. Given TTSR exemplary work for the Council, Cllrs approved their new charges.

The playing field maintenance contractor, is equally facing inflationary material cost increases and has requested a £300 pa uplift (+ 15.8%), on his current £1,904 annual fee. Cllrs approved the revised contract prices.

Trees: £1,000 contingency for any future tree work. Spring and autumn editions of CA Voice, assumes print cost only of £210 each, inc: VAT, with artwork completed in-house. No youth support fund reserve for non-grant funded activities, as agreed at November 2022 PC meeting.

New 2023/24 expenditure: visitor car park off Priory Lane - £250 for annual rent and £150 contingency for directional signage. The purchase and laying of the surface parking matting, ground preparation and associated costs will be funded out of the £15,000 Borough Council grant (approved in August 2022) but this not included in the 2023/24 budget as the Holkham lease and planning permission are still to be settled; £250 contingency for PC contribution to the Coronation celebrations and £2,780 for the approved work at the nonconformist burial ground.

The combined budgeted expenditure to 31/03/24 is forecasted at £21,970, £1,880 above the budgeted income to 31/03/2024, almost all accounted for by the £1,900 higher streetlight electricity charge over 2022/23, net of other cost savings.

Summary: Citing uncertain future inflationary pressures, Cllrs voted to increase the current £15,210 Precept by 7.5% to £16,350. This will result in a +/-£7,050 bank balance at 31/03/24, equal to about 38% of regular annual expenditure (target 50%). The £16,350 Precept would equate to an increase of £3.32 per household on the current £44.34 Band D Council tax rate.

101. Planning

Planning Application Consultation 22/02297/F-

Variation of condition 2 of planning permission 20/00967/F : Proposed extensions to the Pavilion (Club House) to provide a secure storeroom (for liquor), a unisex wheelchair accessible toilet, an ambulant disabled toilet, all to match existing timber frame, decorated timber weatherboard clad, single storey

construction. The proposals are to bring the existing facilities up to current standards and to provide for growth within the membership at Castle Acre Coronation Bowls Club North Street Castle Acre Norfolk. -Cllrs voted all in favour to support the application with no further comment. Cllr Patrick proposed the approval and Cllr Manson seconded the motion.

102. Correspondence

-NLHF Project volunteers wishing to continue investigations in allotments- email

The NLHP Project Manager was in attendance at the meeting and was invited to speak to the council. Cllrs were informed that during the Castle Acre Heritage Project, the Pales Green Allotments were the most productive for medieval finds and the project volunteers would like to be able to look at the surface soil to see if more finds such as pottery fragments can be discovered. The site is particularly important because it's within the Norman planned town, with its boundary bank immediately to the west. The Project Manager wishes for allotment holders to be asked for their permission for the volunteers to assess their plots. Clerk contacted allotment holders with the request.

103. Reports

Highways – Cllr Tate reported that follow-up was needed from HW on the ongoing village flooding issues: damaged outlet in the Castle Moat, proposed plans for the required work on Foxes Meadow, Minns Meadow and the silt traps near the bridge on Newton road. Clerk to follow up with HW.

Village hall – Cllr Breach reported that the funding application for the NCC grant had progressed to the second round of the process.

School - No further updates

CAPFA - No further updates

Norfolk County Council (NCC) – No new updates

BCKLWN (BC) – No new updates

Local Plan- update -Cllr Tate reported on the BC's recent Local Plan examination. The examiner has asked the local authority to provide further evidence for their spatial strategy and housing allocations, requesting additional evidence is required before continuing with the hearings, which are an integral part of the process of examining the plan.

104. Accounts to be paid:

ITEM:	Cost to PC Budget:	Grant funded:
CAPC contribution to Church grounds maintenance contract for 2022	£1000	
Clerk Salary January 2023	£323.70	
Npower invoice IN05834976 December 2022	£92.05 (£4.38 vat)	
Glasdon grit bin order, De Warrenne Place	£230.66 (£38.44)	

-Cllr Moister proposed the approval of the accounts, seconded by Cllr hubbard. All agreed.

105. Village Maintenance.

- Cllrs discussed a report of someone regularly fly tipping, what appears to be their garden waste, on the verge on Archer Lane. Clerk to report the incident in the Nar Valley News and erect a temporary sign at the location if required.

106. Public questions.

- A member of the public, in attendance at the meeting, requested that the PC urge residents to report any dog attacks directly to the police. Cllrs asked the Clerk to include such advice in the next edition of the Nar Valley News, which will be published in February.

The meeting closed at 9.21pm.

The next full Parish Council meeting is scheduled for **Thursday 9th February 2023** at 7.30pm at the village hall.