

CASTLE ACRE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in the village hall on Thursday 8 December 2016:

Present: Mr M Hickey (MH) Chairman Mr L Fisher (LF) Vice-Chairman
 Mr S Allen (SA) Mr T Hubbard (TH)
 Mrs Sheila Moister (SM) Mrs H Breach (HB)

In attendance: Ms L Roast (Clerk) and five members of the public

Apologies: Ms C Williams (CW), Mr N Patrick (NP), J Moriarty (JM)

76 Public Question Time

Old School – resident questioned whether the purchaser, who intends to convert the Old School into a private residence, has made a change of use application. Clerk to ascertain.

5 year Action Plan – resident suggested that a new statement be added to the agreed targets: ‘To encourage, support and utilize village businesses. This would encourage support of businesses within the parish and promote community spirit - the PC would not necessarily be guided by the lowest price quotation’.

77 Council Members

Mr Jim Moriarty’s resignation on 12 November – in his statement, JM cited the forthcoming calendar year as showing considerable conflicts between his responsibilities as a Parish Councillor and his role as the Borough Councillor for Priory Ward. When business and other aspects of life are added, it is clear to him that he should resign from his role on the Parish Council. Mr Moriarty’s role as the Borough Councillor for Priory Ward (and thus Castle Acre) is unaffected by this.

MH stated - on behalf of CAPC: ‘Thank you for all your dedication, commitment and hard work for the village. You will be missed’.

The resignation leaves a vacancy on the Council. The process has started and the Borough notified of the vacancy.

78 Minutes of PC meeting Thursday 10 November 2016

Proposed by Mr Laurie Fisher, seconded by Mr S Allen. Agreed.

79 Actions from previous meeting:

25 **South Acre Road trees** - Holkham’s head forester has assessed the trees and agrees that they are in bad condition and will need remedial work.

28 **Orchard Lane parking bays** – waiting on the availability of a mini-digger. Patrick Grange offered the possible loan of one during the building of the four new houses on Massingham Road.

Bailey Gate damage and signage – last week, two out of three large tractors/trailers squeezed through Bailey Gate, the third had to reverse back down Bailey Street. All were enroute to Narford Hall Farm after taking a wrong turning in the fog. As the vehicles exceeded the legal 6.6ft width limit, their registration numbers were passed to the Police. After the Clerk sent a strong email to the company involved, assurances were given never to use this route again. One of the posts was knocked down, although the company had denied liability. Bailey Gate itself was undamaged. PC still waiting for portcullis notification and Highways proposals for improved signage.

43 **Minns Meadow / Nar River restoration** – the path along the river is now wider. The PC received an email complaining that the whole meadow looks devastated. Cllrs consider the vegetation will regrow during next summer.

- 48 **Police speed checks** – no results yet from the Police installed black box speed recorder in Newton Road. SAM2 currently out of use and at the manufacturer for repair.
- 55 **Loss of Parish Rights of Way** – correspondence received insisting the footpath running along the bottom edge of the field to the east of Orchard Lane, which was ploughed over some months ago, should be reinstated as residents have been using that footpath for over 30 years. It is also recorded on various old maps going back at least a hundred years. This information has been passed onto John Roff to assess. Cllrs agreed that the Clerk should ask Holkham to reinstate the footpath once any crops have been lifted.
- 62 **BT public phone box repair** – done
- 72 **Mayor’s Civic Awards** – nominations by next meeting.
- 75 **Paperbank move** – The Ostrich has agreed it can go in their car park while the shop extension is built.
- 75 **South Acre Road closure** – the initial consultation is still underway. Yet again, the Fishing Club posts in the river bed (to prevent people driving up the river) have been knocked down.

80 **Health & Safety** – No issues raised.

81 **Matters requested by Councillors**

Pollarding Stocks Green trees – the Council requested Holkham’s Head Forester Harry Wakefield to give impartial advice after getting various emails from concerned residents. In his view, all five trees, while in better condition than the lime trees on Holkham Estate that he has successfully pollarded, were stressed with one tree suffering from water ingress within its trunk that can weaken major branches, while all have too many buttress roots exposed and the trees struggle to gain nutrients, given the limited width of the Green abutted by the adjoining roads.

He recommended the Council commissions ‘English Pollarding’, which take the trees back to their major limb knuckles rather than ‘French Pollarding’ which just leaves a small crown. BCKLWN’s tree officer had suggested that the tree heights are reduced to roof level of the adjoining Ostrich pub. Mr Wakefield concurred that the tree height should be kept level to maintain a visual uniformity, but could be higher than the roof and that Limes were usually responsive to pollarding. In the light of this advice, MH proposed that the five trees should be pollarded during the week of 13 February 2017. Cllrs all agreed.

TH is coordinating the various quotations from tree surgeons and will decide on the best value for money and skill once one further contractor Heritage Trees, recommended by Mr Wakefield, had quoted.

Highways has already agreed to close the road and at no cost. Planning permission had been granted by BCKLWN.

Agreed to MH’s proposal to inform residents about the tree pollarding and the Precept increases through a detailed circular in the February Nar Valley News.

The Council reviewed the threat of a maximum 2% rise on the annual precept. MH summarised the Norfolk Association of Local Council’s Chief Executive’s view that this would not apply to any Council with a turnover below £25,000. Agreed to finance the cost out of this year’s reserves that would be replenished by raising the Precept incrementally over the next two or three years. MH to circulate the financial figures with the amended budget notes in time for the January PC meeting.

School Garden Allotment Lease – Cllrs have seen the draft lease with explanatory notes. The main aspects are: annual rent of £200 exclusive of VAT, paid on 11 October and 11 May each year; twenty years contractual term, backdated to 11 October 2016; permitted use only as allotment gardens currently existing at lease date; Council to care for the grounds and leave them in a clean and tidy state; Council to insure; landlord to have access at any time.

HB asked if twenty years was a standard term. Noted the allotment rents were raised to £8 this year to cover the new rental charge. With no other queries, MH proposed that the lease be signed. LF seconded. Agreed.

2017 village Greens and verge cutting contract – Two companies asked for quotes – the current contractor and one other specifying: seventeen mowing and strimming per season of St James', Stocks and East Green; twice cutting Pales Green Green hedge; six times strimming North Street alleyway and twice Priory Road verge. The present contractor, based in North Pickenham, is still the cheapest. MH proposed that the 2017 contract be awarded to the current contractor. LF seconded. Agreed.

NALC AGM – MH attended the AGM. NALC represents over 10,000 Parish Councils. Neighbourhood Plans were reviewed– 1,600 plans are approved or in the pipeline. Both the Government and NALC wishes to see all Parish Councils run efficiently and for each to have the backing of a Neighbourhood Plan. NALC also is lobbying for the CIL levy to be increased from 25% to 35%, ensuring Parish Councils received more money from large building developments.

82 **Planning**

Massingham Road hybrid development - variation of condition 34 of planning permission 15/00942/OM – plans were displayed and the Councillors considered the changes for each property that include two extra rooms in the loft space with new dormer windows to the rear. The PC agreed to support the application.

The developer updated Cllrs on the building schedule for the four dwellings. The site is being cleared, the two cottages will be demolished on 4th/5th January with the first property erected by the end of that month, the others following with two completed in 2017 and the others in 2018. Highways is scheduled to change the road width in time for the first occupation.

Borough Council - call for development sites to 2036 – following new government guidelines, BCKLWN is extending their approved Local Plan by ten years to 2036. All landowners are asked to submit their proposals for new sites for assessment. It is understood those approved for development could be accepted for planning permission within three years. Cllrs noted Holkham has submitted plans to extend the Massingham Road development (plot 508) of eleven houses to twenty two. The PC felt they had worked hard to get the Massingham Road development restricted to just eleven houses and are disappointed that Holkham has proposed to extend the site so quickly. Holkham has also submitted developing the out buildings at Lodge Farm, Rougham Road. MH has asked our Borough Councillor, Jim Moriarty, to clarify the new Local Plan parameters at the next PC meeting. Noted how important the village's Neighbourhood Plan is becoming.

82 **Correspondence**

War Memorial– Historic England Grade II listing - their citation states: 'Castle Acre and Newton War Memorial is an elegant example of the wheel-head cross type of war memorial, displaying a high level of craftsmanship with a Sword of Sacrifice carved onto its front face. The memorial has a distinctive architectural quality and serves as a striking and evocative memorial to the fallen local men. It has group value with the adjacent listed parish church and cottage as well as the castle which is a scheduled monument. An inscription was added to the memorial commemorating those who lost their lives in the Second World War and this adds to the historic interest of the memorial. Overall, it is considered that the memorial has special architectural and historical interest and meets the criteria for Grade II listing.

A question was raised as to who owns the actual memorial - the PC, The British Legion or the Church. The Clerk to contact the Legion first for clarification.

83 Reports

Highways – Highways’ work to relieve the flooding on Archer Lane by lengthening the ditch has still not started. Orchard Lane surface not yet leveled. Pyes Lane drain is scheduled for work.

Castle Acre School – the Chair of the Governors reported: ‘Castle Acre School has recently undergone a SIAMS Inspection via the Diocese of Norfolk which identified that the school is rated as Good in its teaching and behaviours especially in regard to our Christian Values. The report will be available on the school website in due course. We also has a visit from a lead HMI (Regional Schools Inspector) who has yet to file a formal report but rated the school as “Good” in all aspects and “Strong” on its Leadership. At last we are getting formal recognition for the good work and improvements across the Federation and in particular for our school in Castle Acre. Just a further point: we are anticipating that new applications for enrolment in September 2017 will exceed our new intake capacity but we won’t be in a position to confirm this until March 2017 when Norfolk Council provide us details on applications.

Friends of Castle Acre School – no report

Village Hall - Community Payback Unit still working on improvements to the hall including painting the bar. The new seat is installed outside the front as is the advertising board.

CAPFA – the committee has approved expenditure of £380 to flush out the drains under the playing field. Quotes to be obtained for re-surfacing the car park with different options under consideration. A new fixed outdoor table tennis table is now in place with bats and balls for purchase from CW. CAPFA want to survey village opinion of the future uses for the playing field. They may attach their questions to the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire.

Borough Council – no report.

Neighbourhood Plan – Martin Tate, Chairman of the Steering Group, reported that the group will be meeting on a regular monthly basis. The Neighbourhood Area submission area and statement goes out for the six weeks consultation from 12 December to February 6th. The Borough Council sends this out to main stakeholders and puts links from their website. Notices to be placed around the village. Funding applications currently being looked at. The Steering Group has split into smaller groups to concentrate on different areas.

84 Accounts

The following cheques were signed - payments were proposed for approval by Mr Laurie Fisher, Mr Tim Hubbard seconded.

Berrymans Glass Recycling Ltd (URM UK Ltd)	£34.90 (£2.42 VAT)
E.on Energy (electricity)	£71.21 (£3.39 VAT)
K&M Lighting (street light repair)	£156.00 (£26 VAT)
Gary Lake (playing field 2 nd installment)	£950.00
TTSR, Greens etc. cutting – second yearly invoice	£751.85 (£125.31 VAT)

85 Village Maintenance

Better Broadband – new cabinets are now in place at St James’ Green and Foxes Meadow/Back Lane. No date yet when these will go live.

Street Lights – Two lights reported to have failed. The 2015/16 budget estimate was for five repairs but this is increased to six. 14 out of 34 now have LED bulbs.

West end of Priory Road – the bank was unavoidably damaged by Eagles Coaches because of difficulties caused by the parking for a church funeral. The PC to write to PCC to ask if they could inform the PC when any large wedding or funeral is scheduled, so appropriate no parking measures can be put in place.

86 2017/18 Budget and Precept

Cllrs considered the draft budget and precept. The 2016/17 income includes forecasted recycling credits at £1,430, 19% above budget. The clothing bank collection rate remains poor. The £835 VAT reclaim covers the usual year end to 31/03/16 (budget £300) and the first seven months to 31/10/16. The allotment income is for the 29 garden allotments only at the new

annual rent of £8 each plus £12 for two new registrations. NCC delayed repaying the £364 Trod refund until this financial year. Adding the £216 of CPR training fees and the website grant of £350 resulted in a total income of £1,704 above budget. The latter two income gains are almost matched by the CPR training costs and payment to the webmaster.

The 2016/17 forecasted expenditure is £500 below budget mainly due to postponing spend on a new dog bin and a bench for the bus shelter.

2017/18 budgeted income includes the BCKLWN tax base refunding for 2017/18 which is reduced again to £339 – central government cuts, quoted by BCKLWN – compared to £530 in 2016/17 and £630 in 2015/16. The £185 VAT refund covers 01/11/16 to 31/03/17 only (annual refunds claimed in arrears). Net income without a ‘one-off’ Precept charge to finance the lime tree pollarding will be £12,917.

2017/18 budgeted expenditure allows all fixed expenses uplifted by an inflationary 3% ,unless stated. Clerk’s salary – uplifted from spinal point 17 to 18 = + 4.3%. £750 tree management budget is suggested (as 2016) – too high? There is a suggested seed funding reserve of £150 to cover some of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group’s initial outlays until their national grant funding is received. Total expenditure, with the new dog bin and bus shelter reserves, totals £12,992. CAPC ‘standard’ annual expenditure, without specific one-off capital or operating expenses, totals +/- £11,650 (of which grass/verge/hedge cutting, including church maintenance, equals £4,550 or 39.0%).

Cllrs will make a final decision on the budget and Precept at its January meeting and in particular whether to spread the £4,000 rise in its Precept – a 37.2% increase - over two or three financial years.

The meeting closed at 9.45pm.

The next full Parish Council meeting is on Thursday 12th January at 7.30pm in the village hall.