

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)
Ms C Williams (CW) Mr N Patrick (NP)

In attendance: Ms L Roast (Clerk), J Moriarty (Borough Councillor), Toby Coke (County Councillor) and one member of the public.

Apologies: None

87 Co-opting new Parish Councillor

One application received from resident Martin Tate (MT). MH proposed that Mr Tate be coopted onto the Parish Council, seconded by TH. All agreed. MH welcomed Mr Tate onto the Council and he joined the meeting.

88 Public Question Time – No questions.

89 Minutes of PC meeting Thursday 8 December 2016

Proposed by Mr Laurie Fisher, seconded by Mrs Helen Breach. Agreed.

90 Actions from previous meeting:

25 **South Acre Road trees** - waiting for Holkham to proceed with the remedial work.

28 **Orchard Lane parking bays** – waiting on the availability of a mini-digger from Patrick Grange.

Bailey Gate damage and signage – MH is chasing Historic England. The PC has still not seen the portcullis plans nor Highways' proposals for improved signage, though MH understands that there will be an additional sign affixed below the current directional sign on the first turning off the A1065 to Castle Acre, from the Swaffham direction, stating 'No access to village centre for lorries or tractors.' Highways has now agreed to place two large posts on the Bailey Street side of Bailey Gate as a visual deterrent.

48 **Police speed checks** – no results are available from the black box positioned temporarily in Newton Road. The Clerk to ask when next speed checks are scheduled. SAM2 has been repaired at no cost.

55 **Loss of Parish Rights of Way** – the removal of the footpath off Orchard lane was reported to Holkham who has asked their new Rural Surveyor Harry Ballinger to assess.

72 **Mayor's Civic Awards** – no nominations this year – roll over to next year.

81 **School Garden Allotments lease** - waiting for the signed lease to be returned by the solicitor.

85 **War Memorial ownership** – no response yet from the British Legion.

Superfast Broadband – two cabinets are in position. Openreach's formal advice is 6-12 months before going live. The third cabinet is scheduled to be placed where the new large litter bin on Stocks Green opposite Victory House is sited. Cllrs agreed that the other two litter bins should cope with the expected amount of litter and that this bin should be stored in case it is required elsewhere in the village. Noted this would then mean paying an emptying charge to BCKLWN.

91 Health & Safety – No issues raised. MH/TH still to meet on setting up a formal tree inspection structure.

92 Matters requested by Councillors

South Acre Road – part closure each side of the ford. – Councillors heard from Mr Toby Coke (TC) that there had been 55 objections received during the preliminary traffic prohibition consultation in September with only two supporting comments (one from CAPC). Due to the number of objections, officers feel that to proceed with the traffic order could lead to an appeal and a public enquiry which, if lost, could cost Norfolk County Council (NCC) £25,000 - £30,000. NCC are not prepared to go ahead as they feel they would lose the appeal based on the responses. MH expressed surprise that none of the 125 consultees on the list submitted last year by Highways to CAPC had not replied. Had they been consulted? TC assumed so. Given none of the 55 responses could be identified by name or location and they appear to be coordinated by off-roader clubs and ‘green lane’ supporters (South Acre Road is a road, not a green lane or RUPP), how could they be assumed to represent the views of the village and carry more weight than the PC’s submission?

TC stated that, unless CAPC is prepared to underwrite the cost of a public enquiry, the consultation process will be halted. He suggested that if the PC wanted to make a further application, the PC would need to wait for about 18 months, start the process again and then lobby organisations and residents for support. MH clarified that both landowners and environmental groups were lobbied in the past and all expressed support for the traffic prohibition. It is assumed they were equally contacted by Highways in this consultation process?

Cllrs reluctantly accepted the position. It is suggested that resident’s views are canvassed in the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire as to closing the road on Health and Safety grounds. MT suggested that if the section of the road could not be legally closed, an alternative solution might be to tarmac the river bed to a width equal to the adjoining road (two metres) and to enclose it with steel posts to stop off-roaders from exiting out into the river and damaging the river banks. TC did not feel that NCC Highways would support this proposal. CW suggested investigating whether there was a legal precedent to closing off the ford. TH reiterated his long held view that the river banks should be built up with gabions to prevent drivers mounting and damaging the banks on exiting the river. TC agreed to raise this with Highways.

Pollarding Stocks Green lime trees – following the Council’s decision last month to pollard the trees during the week of 13th February (weather permitting), a tree surgeon has been appointed at a cost of £4,850. The extend of the pollarding will be set against agreed limits marked on photos of the individual trees and agreed by Harry Wakefield, Holkham’s Head Forester. Highways has kindly agreed to supply the road closure signs and cones, including diversions to the Ostrich car park. Stocks Green residents will be asked to park elsewhere during working hours. The draft circular to all residents with an explanation of the pollarding and the financial implications is close to completion. 500 A4 folded to A5 will be printed at an approximate cost of £50 and inserted into the February edition of Nar Valley News. Holkham has agreed in principle to allow temporary storage of the brush chippings and corded wood on its field off Priory Lane. The contractor will deliver the wood free to residents for a delivery charge and will clear the field afterwards. The Clerk to contact CAPC’s Insurers to inform them of the impending tree work. The contractor has his own third party insurance.

Five Year Action Plan - proposed amendment – a resident suggested at the December meeting that the Action Plan targets should include the ambition to ‘encourage, support and utilise 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’.

TH is of the strong opinion that, as Parish Councillors, we have a duty to serve the community that elected us. To do this, Cllrs are given guidance from the NALC as to how Cllrs should carry out this duty in a fair and transparent way. Within the NALC ‘Good Councillor’s Guide’, there is guidance in Section 7 - Rules for dealing with public money; within those rules: ‘It is essential that the Council is seen to provide value for money...the aim is to get more Council activity for the least possible expense without compromising quality’.

TH stated that the PC could not favour local businesses if their quotes were more expensive. LF stated that there should be a balance between quality and price. It would be illegal and unethical for the Council to ask for a local business to re-quote after disclosing other quotes it had received. MH proposed that local businesses should always be included at the quoting stage of all contracts. Agreed. MT suggested preparing a tender specification before going out for any quotes to ensure compatibility. The Council agreed not to include the statement suggested by a resident in the Five Year Action Plan.

Parking in the village centre – there have been issues with parking in the village centre and along Priory Road when there are a large number of attendees at church funerals and weddings and other events. This has caused difficulties for local businesses and residents. Problems also occur when The Ostrich pub is used for post-event gatherings. Visitors should be encouraged to use the pub car park rather than leaving the cars around the Green and along roads. Cllrs felt the Church should take a more pro-active stance. Could land adjacent to the church off South Acre Road or Holkham’s field off Priory Road not be used as overflow car parks? Borough Councillor Jim Moriarty explained that the church would love to have its own car park but didn’t get permission from Highways for houses in the field off South Acre Road which would have included a car park. Should the field just be used for parking, it would still need planning permission. The PC agreed to set up a meeting with PCC representatives and the Ostrich to review advance notice of major church ceremonies to the PC and Eagles coaches as well as considering possible alternative parking proposals.

Apart from some peak summer weekends, Cllrs did not feel that, in general, parking in the village was an issue, though the castle car park can become very full. TH suggested that the issue could be looked within the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire and based on the outcomes, Holkham or the church might be approached to offer any land to the village. MT noted that in the past, Councils have resisted too much signage or double yellow lines in the village which might make parking more efficient. He confirmed that parking issue would be include in the Neighbourhood Plan - the community’s view may counter to that of the Council.

93 2017/18 Parish Budget and precept

Second version of the draft budget was sent to Councillors for consideration, prior to the meeting. The only alterations were to increase the budget for street light maintenance and to show the effect of raising the Precept over two years to pay for pollarding Stocks Green lime trees. LF proposed agreement to spreading the rise over two years. SM seconded. All agreed. This would mean that in the next financial year, the Precept would rise by £6.17 above the current £33.16 Band D level. Cllrs approved the 2017/18 Precept of £12,750.

94 Planning

Variation to 13/01630/F Premier Store extension.– MH explained that a structural survey had revealed that the current shop building was not strong enough to withstand an extension. Instead it would be demolished and a timber framed structure put in its place and made water proof within three days, an ecologically sound solution to the problem. The shop’s operation

would be moved to two Portacabins in the car park during building work. CAPC was not asked to comment formally on this variation which was approved the day of the PC meeting.

Update on the extended Local Plan – following new government guidelines, BCKLWN is extending their approved Local Plan by ten years to 2036 and has asked landowners to put forward potential development sites. Holkham has proposed developing the balance of the 508 LDF land to the west of Massingham Road with up to 25 dwellings. It is believed approved sites around the Borough could be eligible for planning application submissions within three years. Borough Councillor Jim Moriarty will raise with Borough officers whether the Local Plan, supported by PC and including eleven dwellings, would be superseded at the next Local Plan Task Force? MT clarified that the Neighbourhood Plan could not restrict the number of new dwellings below that agreed in the Borough's Local Plan. However, it would give potential developers a guide to what type of housing is required in the village.

Water Tower variations – The PC had rejected two of the proposed variations but its views were too late for the 21 day deadline and had not been given weight in officer's planning considerations. However, the applicant had already withdrawn changing the frosted glass to clear glass on the south side window by the dining area. Planners did not uphold CAPC's second objection to siting two containers permanently on site but they will be screened.

Massingham Road development – MH is meeting James Bracey at Holkham on 7 February to view their Vision Document for the eleven dwellings and landscaping as well as confirming that Holkham will be making a full planning application and not just selling the land to a developer.

95 Correspondence

BCKLWN grounds maintenance letter – the Borough Council acknowledges that there were problems last summer with keeping up with grass verge cutting in the villages. Their letter and accompanying map confirms that Castle Acre will have six cuts in the 2017 season – more than 2016.

96 Reports

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

Castle Acre School – no report

Friends of Castle Acre School – no report

Village Hall – taking bookings for 2017

CAPFA – the table tennis table is now in place. A fund raising beach party disco with cocktail bar is arranged on 4 February at the village hall. CW and MH are scheduled to meet with the 2018 Castle Acre Ball committee to agree hire terms, administration and insurance. CAPFA is planning a fete this summer (date TBC) and will be asking for £100 sponsorship from five village businesses to cover the fete operating costs, so freeing up all the income as profit.

Borough Council – Mr Jim Moriarty - nothing further to report.

Neighbourhood Plan – MT, in his capacity as Chairman of the Steering Group, explained that if there are no objections, the Neighbourhood Area submission area and statement should be approved by 6 February. The sub-groups are collating documentation for the Basic Conditions Statement, Consultation Statement and Community Involvement Statements and on how to manage finances. The community questionnaire and consultation arrangements are being formulated. A pre-questionnaire consultation at the village hall is planned as well as a Facebook and village website pages. In the light of the Borough's extended Local Plan,

production schedules and timings need to be adhered to. Working back from a target date for its adoption, MT will be setting completion targets for each phase of the NP

97 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 lights x 3)	£234.00 (£39 VAT)
Parochial Church Council (churchyard maintenance contribution)	£1,000.00
Linda Roast (Clerk's wages for Oct - Dec)	£488.34

98 Village Maintenance

Manhole cover outside the Old Bakery, St James' Green needs Highways attention.

The meeting closed at 9.40pm.

The next full Parish Council meeting is on Thursday 9th February at 7.30pm in the village hall.