

Castle Acre Parish Council

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Minuted record of Parish Council business conducted at the village hall on 13 January 2022 at 7.30pm.

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

In attendance: Mrs L Firth (Clerk), Mr J Moriarty (JM) Borough and NCC Councillor

98. Apologies: N/A

99. Minutes of the 9 December 2021 PC meeting

MH proposed approval of the Minutes which was seconded by MT.

100. Health & Safety

Tree Report:

TH advised Cllrs on recent reviews of the Parish trees that require work

-Lime Trees on Stocks Green have been addressed and completed as planned.

-3 x Hornbeam on Stocks Green to be trimmed, using funds previously donated to PC for tree maintenance.

-The National Lottery Heritage Fund Project (NLHF) will be investigating the Pye's Lane Burial Ground trees, hedge and wall. PC to work with the project manager on potential maintenance required.

-3 x Ash trees on the eastern access alleyway from North Street to the playing field. One potentially needing to be felled, its split trunk posing a potential hazard.

-TH contacted the Tree Officer at Holkham Estate to seek advice on where the responsibility falls for the trees on St James Green. Both the Cherry Trees and the large Chestnut Tree need some work as well as some smaller trees on the northern side of the Green. TH has approached two companies about the work required. TH to update at a later PC meeting.

101. Updates on actions required from previous meetings

41(2019) Surface water flooding and drainage issues.

- MT is yet to receive any further updates regarding surface water flooding issues in the village. Clerk to contact Breckland HW engineer and appropriate land owners to request update on the outstanding drainage maintenance (and work orders for gullies) adjacent to both village bridges.

54. (2019) Permissive paths on Holkham land and Visitor car park

MH continues to liaise with Holkham chasing for a draft of their proposed definitive statement confirming that the remaining permissive paths on Holkham land around Castle Acre would not be withdrawn for 50 years. Recent communications with the Estate General Manager, for Land and Property, advised MH that the trustees were unlikely to agree to a 50 year term but rather 'for the foreseeable future'. MH has advised Holkham that the PC would consider this to be a very weak assurance and is still looking for a more robust form of wording.

6. Ostrich pub - bottle and paper bank.

The Ostrich Pub management has confirmed that they wish to utilise the full capacity of the pub car park and therefore ask the PC to rehouse the two recycling banks. The PC has been unable to find a suitable new location, with the appropriate surface area, in the village and so cllrs agreed for the Clerk to contact the relevant companies to have the banks removed. Cllrs requested for the clerk to ask the Pub to encourage its patrons and staff to use the carpark and not park on Stocks Green.

-NP joined meeting at 7.50pm

67. South Acre Road TRO.

MH has spoken with the NCC who has confirmed that MP Law still needs to complete a document for the consultation process to move forward. MH stressed the point that their legal team had known of this document being needed for over 220 days. MH requested a date be set for the consultation ASAP and disappointment at the lack of progress.

69b. Priory Toilets signage.

Clerk has placed the order for the new signs and is to invoice the BC's Regeneration and Economic Development Support Officer who has agreed that the cost will be covered by their 'Welcome Back Fund'.

71a. Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebration June 2022 - update.

SM and the clerk attended the FOCAC's Flower Festival meeting on 12 January to help determine the PC's level of involvement. Clerk has agreed to create a display on behalf of the PC, as have many other village groups/communities, as part of the Flower Festival to help celebrate the Platinum Jubilee across the weekend from 3rd June. Cllrs discussed a possible afternoon tea style celebration on Stocks Green during the same bank holiday weekend in June. SM and Clerk to continue to investigate the possibilities and funding options as PC's financial contribution alone will not suffice. Clerk to enquire about a Traffic Restriction Order for Stocks Green on Sunday 5th June 2022.

80b. Erosion in Minns Meadow.

Following further correspondence from Natural England and the Norfolk Rivers Trust the PC has agreed to support the displaying of a 'polite' notice asking dog owners to refrain from letting dogs swim in the meadow but use the ford area instead. Cllrs agreed to signage at either end of the Nar River footpath that runs through the Minns Meadow but as non-experts requested that the PC's name not be displayed on the notice itself.

101. Matters requested by Councillors.

PC 2022/23 Budget and Precept.

At both the December and January meetings, MH took Cllrs through the detailed income expenditure actual and forecast figures for the financial year 2021/22 and the draft budget proposals for 2022/23. This minute summarises the key points and decisions taken:

-Clerk's salary: it was agreed at the previous budget review that the Clerk's current salary and hours. Cllrs agreed in moving the spinal point classification up to from 14 to 15, and increasing from 4 to 6 hours.

-TTSR: the PC's Greens cutting and strimming contractor has increased its rates by 3.8% over 2021/2022, due to inflationary pressures. In light of TTSR's excellent track record Cllrs agreed to award TTSR with a further three year contract (see separate Minute).

-Playing field insurance: expected reduction in the premium from £1,683 to approx £1,000 (through the PC's insurance broker) – TBC in March 2022.

-Bank charges: Cllrs noted with irritation that from 1 November 2021 and without prior notification HSBC reclassified the PC's account as 'Business Current Account', charging £8 fee pcm, plus £1 charge to clear **each** cheque. The PC will move to online banking with HSBC from around January 2022 (see separate Minute).

New 2022/23 expenditure: visitor car park off Priory Lane - £250 for annual rent and £150 contingency for directional signage - surface matting to be funded through external grants; £250 contingency for PC contribution to the Platinum Jubilee celebrations; £200 for an external financial audit, for 2021/22 year only, as expenditure exceeded the £25,000 ceiling for non-audits.

Summary: Cllrs voted to increase the Precept by 4% to £15,210 taking into account the expected inflationary pressures on costs. The 22/23 budget will maintain a bank balance reserve which equates to approximately six months of regular expenditure. The proposed new Precept will equate to an increase of £1.70 pa on the current £42.64 pa Council Tax Band D rate.

Review TTSR quote for 2022-24 for approval.

Following discussion Cllrs were all in agreement to approve of the 3 year quote and contract with TTSR to continue with the village grounds maintenance. Clerk to confirm with TTSR.

CA HP Burial Ground- Tree Management

MH explained that assessing, restoring and conserving the small non-conformist burial ground off Pyes Lane is one of the NLHF projects which has proved very popular with attendees, leading to extra activities led by an expert in his field. He asked the PC to consider the following:

- organise a management plan and budget for the burial ground.
- prioritise objectives – the greatest threat is to the integrity of the wall with the ash stems bearing on the masonry and weathering and ingress of mortar by plant roots which might lead to its collapse.
- Consider removing some ash and other trees impinging on and overhanging the wall. Some specimens should be pollarded to retain environmental benefit.

-MH noted that the production of a conservation management plan is part of the project. There are already two / three volunteers keen to take on the longer-term practical management tasks after the project. There is no specific PC budget allocation in 2022/23.

-Ownership of the burial ground is unclear.

-MH proposed that given the PC make a donation upkeep of the ST James's churchyard, maybe it could also assume responsibility for the Pyes Lane burial ground post the NLHF project.

-LF stated that the PC should not assume responsibility of the burial ground until the potential costs, liabilities and ownership of the ground is established. Agreed the Clerk will conduct a simple search with the Land Registry.

Review signage on Pales and St James Greens

Residents have requested that the PC give some attention to possible new signage on Pales Green to state that the green is open to the public and that people must tidy up after their dogs. Cllrs also discussed the need to revise the current sign on St James Green that states 'Residents Parking only', to also include a 'at your own risk' disclaimer. Clerk to seek quotes and example signs to review at the February meeting.

102. Planning.

- Ref: 21/02472/F

Removal of existing conservatory and bay window to North elevation and forming single storey Living room extension. Alterations to existing garage forming bathroom at Perthceri 3 Back Lane Castle Acre King's Lynn Norfolk PE32 2AR

-Cllrs voted and all were all in support of the application with no further comments. Clerk to submit consultation form.

103. Correspondence.

Feedback from CA litter team regarding the repositioning of the village recycling banks - email from litter Picking team.

The village litter picking team kindly advised the PC that the team often have to tidy up around the Bottle bank, where lots of rubbish and broken glass would often be found. Advising the PC that if the bank is to be re-positioned it should be placed on concrete or hard ground away from any area where children, dogs or animals might pass. Cllrs valued this input and concluded that neither St James Green or the playing field would be a suitable location for the bottle bank.

Request for letter of support- grant application towards the cost of an automated watering system for the Bowls Club - Email from CA Bowls Club member.

The CA Coronation Bowls Club is applying to KL&WN Council for a grant towards the cost of an automated watering system for the Bowls Club and part of the application requires a letter or email from the PC in support of the project. The cost is approximately £10,000 and the Club will contribute half of the cost, hopefully the remaining amount will come in the form of the grant. The proposed new system will save considerable time and effort in the upkeep of the green plus it will help maintain it to a higher standard in line with other top bowling greens around the county. All Cllrs were in approval for the PC to send a letter of support to the Club. LF to email draft to clerk.

Continued dog fouling issues on Stocks Green- email from Wittles Café owners

PC received correspondence from the Wittles café owners who are still falling victim to thoughtless dog owners who are allowing their animals to foul around the café and failing to clean up after them. Clerk shared the direct contact information for the BC's enforcement team to hopefully deter and prevent further offences.

Invitation to attend NLHF Project events.

Cllrs were all reminded of the next few events that will be running under the National Lottery Heritage Funded Project- The Past Is All Around Us and encouraged to take part where possible to help support the project.

-TH shared his thoughts with Cllrs of an ongoing proposal for tree planting within the village. One area identified, is the eastern side of East Green. The NLHF project manager recently met with Holkham Estate's Director of Conservation who surveyed this area of East Green and agreed it is a suitable option for regeneration and improvement. Clearing of the area could be carried out via the NLHF project and if both the PC and Holkham are in agreement, the cleared area could be replanted with a mixture of natural hedge and berry bearing shrubs on the western side of the boundary hedge. TH to discuss with clerk, making contact with the school about the potential possibility of tree planting in the school grounds. TH also suggested that both Minns Meadow and Pales Green may also be suitable locations for further tree planting. Cllrs were asked to consider possible options to be reviewed at a later PC meeting.

104. Reports.

Highways - No further updates.

Village hall - N/A.

School - N/A.

CAPFA - The Chair of the Committee has notified members of their wish to step down and leave the committee.

Neighbourhood Plan - MT reported: The group now waits for the results from the referendum, which is set for 27 January 2022, at the CA village hall.

BCKLWN - N/A

Norfolk County Council (NCC) - N/A

105. Accounts to be paid:

ITEM FOR PAYMENT APPROVAL:	COST TO PC BUDGET:	GRANT FUNDED:
Berrymans Glass Recycling Ltd (URM UK Ltd) December 2021 P122434 (Reimbursement to Clerk, URM no longer accepting cheques) ACCOUNT ON HOLD as of 8 th Dec 2021	£9.60 (£1.60 VAT)	
Npower Energy (electricity) Dec 2021	£109.58 (£5.22 VAT)	
NLHF project- NCC Aerial archaeology workshops invoice 1573037		£2350.80 (£391.80 VAT)
NLHF Project- Archaeology equipment from Past Horizons		£428.46 (inc: VAT)
NLHF Project- The Wildlife Works invoice ww2155		£204 (£34.00 VAT)
NLHF Project- laminated printing invoice 31308		£25.56 (£4.26 VAT)
NLHF Project- Adding in new page to the Castle Acre Village website- Lorenz Design invoice CAL023		£200
NLHF Project grant funded- manager monthly fee- invoice AM3		£780
Clerk salary-Oct to Dec 2021	£636.48	
The Norfolk Arborist Ltd for works done to the Lime Trees on Stocks Green- Invoice 1193	£ 1908 (£318 VAT)	
SPC Printers Ltd- Printing costs for December 2021 NHP leaflet invoice: 31312	£305.16	
Limelight Signs Ltd- 5x new signs to include Priory toilets directions, Amended Quote 94577. NCC to reimburse cost to PC	£511.46 (£85.24 VAT)	

TH proposed and MH seconded approval of the accounts, all Cllrs were in agreement.

106. Village Maintenance.

-NP confirmed that he is waiting until evenings are lighter, and there is no risk of frost before he installs the new litter bin housing for the playing field.

-TH confirmed the Holkham tree manager would be asked when the outstanding hedging work on Orchard and Archer Lane would be carried out.

107. Public questions.

- None.

The meeting closed at 21:10.

The next full Parish Council meeting is scheduled for **Thursday 10th February 2022** at 7.30 pm at the CA village hall. Those wishing to attend are asked to inform the Clerk and adhere to Government Covid safety guidelines.