

Castle Acre Parish Council

Clerk: Mrs Libby Firth, 7 Sandles Court, Back Lane, Castle Acre, Norfolk PE32 2XF
Telephone: 07825229345 Email: libbyofirth@gmail.com

Minuted record of Parish Council business conducted via Zoom video online meeting 9 July 2020.

Present:

Mr M Hickey (MH) Chairman	Mr S Allen (SA)
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, hosting Zoom call), Mr J Moriarty (JM) (Borough Councillor)

- 14. Apologies:** Mr L Fisher (LF) Vice-Chairman, JM advised on late attendance due to an earlier meeting over running. JM joined the meeting at 19:55.

Apologies not received: Cllr G Middleton (NCC)

15. MINUTES of the Zoom online PC meeting 11 June 2020

MT proposed approval and SM seconded. MT to inform Clerk of minor formatting errors found in the June Minutes.

16. HEALTH & SAFETY – reports on any new H&S.

MT reported concerns about a resident repeatedly parking their vehicle in such a way that it obstructs the footway on Back Lane, causing anyone with a mobility scooter or pushchair having to move into the road. Clerk to contact the owner of the vehicle and request they park properly and so not obstruct the footway.

Tree report update from TH: getting quotes for removal of overhanging and damaged branches, also dead wooding, for the seven cherry trees by the playing field entrance on St James' Green. Approval is needed from the Borough's Tree Officer as the trees are in the Conservation Area. MH asked TH to seek quotes for 'shaping' the lime trees on Stocks Green. SA reported a tree on St James' Green with a hanging branch that is potential safety risk. TH confirmed he would review the tree in question.

17. UPDATES ON ACTIONS REQUIRED FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

62. Newton Road speed checks

Clerk has requested our village police Beat Officer to undertake further speed checks on Newton Road in August or September, when possible. Local resident Len Rye has kindly agreed to take over from Philip Lines with organising the SAM2 speed monitor. Cllrs thanked Philip for all his past efforts and expressed their gratitude to Len and wished him all the best with his endeavours.

28. Bailey Street warning sign

The new sign was erected at the bottom of Bailey Street at the end of June, overseen by the landowner. The wording 'Turn round here' was taken literally by some van drivers,

one of whom turned round immediately, knocking over the external posts of the house opposite, rather than turn in the wide area before Cuckstool Lane. MH covered up the 'here' to avoid confusion and remarked that the sign appears to be effective in warning incoming vehicles.

41. Surface water flooding

MT reported: sometime this summer Highways (HW) intend to recut and enlarge the grips beside the playing field and add more, where needed, while also flushing out the gullies at the Massingham Road and Town Lane junction at the same time. Clerk in communication with Holkham and Anglia Water (AW) regarding the clearing of the drainage ditch by Jubilee Bridge. Holkham are seeking permission from Norfolk Rivers Trust and Natural England before proceeding but not before the autumn, given it is within the SSSI and the need to protect the local wildlife's habitat. Clerk to follow up later in the year.

55. Repairing alleyway surface off Foxes Meadow

On joining the meeting, JM confirmed this alleyway is owned by the Borough and that they will deal with the resurfacing work but no date has been set.

6. Garden outbuilding, No.5 Chimney Street

Cllrs agreed with MH's proposal to ask the Church, via the PCC, to plant a native hedge on the church land side of the newly built unsightly brick garden shed, eventually to hide it from view. MH to contact the PCC.

6. Road sign outside Jokers

The HW 'Unsuitable for HGVs' road sign, placed directly in front of The Jokers house sign has still not been re-sited since the original request last March. Clerk to chase.

7. Stocks Green notice board map

HB is waiting for a printer's proof of the new illustrated village map. MH to contact the village's PC volunteer to request repainting the wooded noticeboard frame and clearing the overhanging vegetation.

7. Visitor social distancing and police patrols.

Following a number of complaints from locals regarding thoughtless visitors to the village, in particular at the ford, the Clerk contacted our local Beat Officer to seek advice on what action might be taken. PC Barnes confirmed that they have been carrying out regular visits to the village and on one occasion stopping to speak to a group of youths at the Priory. Residents should be reminded of the police 101 service and that it should be used if anyone feels at risk or in any danger.

7. Nar Valley News

The editor of the NVN advised the PC that publication will now go ahead with a double issue for August/September and will continue with bi-monthly editions, subject to review in the new year.

18. Matters requested by Councillors

Approval Neighbourhood Plan (Reg.15 version).

Post the Reg.14 consultation with stakeholders and residents, MT, MH and their NP consultant met with BCKLWN via Zoom earlier in the week to seek their opinions,

particularly on the site allocations and the Consultee responses. The officers were very congratulatory about the Plan saying it was unique, thorough and 'oozed ' Castle Acre'

MH had e-mailed Cllrs setting out the current Reg.15 criteria whereby the PC take note that the NP Steering Group has: followed the relevant procedures and legislation; produced a document taking into account research, assessment and consultation findings; made judgements and decisions in terms of policy that are reasonable in relation to the findings of the research, assessments and consultations. Proposed by MH, seconded by SA, that Cllrs endorse that the N.P Steering Group has followed procedures correctly and to support the NP as it progresses to Reg.16. All agreed.

Review of Conservation Area Character Statement.

MT explained that Castle Acre's Conservation Area Character Review is in need of updating. For example, the Conservation Area map shows some buildings which no longer exist or have been heavily modified. During a review of the NP, it became apparent that there isn't an effective mechanism in place to alert the Conservation Officers when a planning application has been received for a property within the Conservation Area which would flag up issues earlier in the planning process.

The last review took place in 2009. The head Conservation Officer has acknowledged the need for a review. Such a review would consider the possible inclusion of an 'Article 4 Direction'. This allows the local planning authority to restrict the scope of permitted development rights, either in relation to a particular area or site or to a particular type of development anywhere in the local authority's area. An Article 4 could help protect the character of the village's Conservation Area. MH and MT requested support from Cllrs to move forward with the process. All agreed.

Key Service Centre.

MT explained that the Borough's 2011 Core Strategy review, in preparation for the Local Plan to 2026, had identified Castle Acre a Key Rural Service Centre, meaning that the village offers a range of services including a school, good bus route, a shop, pub, employment, etc. Such categorisation could lead to the village being allocated a greater amount of new developments than its local infrastructure and roads could cope with and which is now the opposite to many residents' wishes for the village, as expressed in their NP questionnaire feedback. Agreed to undertake further research and to review at a later PC meeting before asking JM to approach the Borough Council.

Trod down Newton Road.

MH reminded Cllrs that they agreed at this January's budget meeting to support a bid for a trod down the grass verge of Newton Road, from the eastern edge of East Green to Sandy Lane, on the assumption the NCC Parish Partnership Scheme would continue. This has now been confirmed for 2021/22 (deadline 4 December, decision in March 2021). In November 2018, Highways estimated the cost of laying the trod at £11,000, now revised to £11,700. The PC's 50% division of the cost (£5,850) would be made up of £1,179 CIL from the new house on Cuckstool Lane (already paid into the PC account this April), £2,237 CIL from Holkham's Massingham Road build and £2,434 from PC's bank reserves. As previously, Highways underwrites the whole cost and then calls on the PC to pay the 50% to NCC, an internal transfer without incurring VAT.

CIL is paid to the PC in April and October each year. The uncertainty is when Holkham will start the Massingham Road build. If it is this September, this will release the CIL transfer in October 2020; if it starts next March, the CIL transfer will be made in April

2021. If Holkham postpone to next April or later, the PC won't have sufficient funds to finance its share without depleting its bank reserves further (£9,400 at 31/03/20, forecast at 31/03/21 - £8,500 at budgeted income & expenditure levels or £6,400 net of PC's expected trod contribution). Cllrs also need to bear in mind the potential high cost of trimming the lime trees on Stocks Green in winter 2020/21 or 21/22.

To complicate matters, CIL must be spent on infrastructure within 12 months of receipt, otherwise the Borough Council claws it back. JM may be able to argue on our behalf to retain the first CIL transfer to add to the second, should that be due in April 2021, possibly even in October 2021?

Learning of the financial conundrum facing the PC with its CIL transfers and anxious that there is no delay to installing the trod next Spring, a resident and his partner have offered to loan £2,200 to the PC on the following conditions:

- The funds being used for the Newton Road trod project, and that alone.
- The funds to be used in the event that the Holkham Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is not received in the current financial year.
- The funds are returnable should Holkham commence their development in September or thereabouts, as anticipated, or in the event that the application for the matched funding is declined.

While welcoming and appreciating the generosity of this loan, Cllrs had conflicting opinions on how best to proceed. TH raised his concern over the legality of the PC accepting a loan from a member of the public. Clerk to seek guidance from NALC. Some Cllrs are of the opinion that the PC should pay back the loan, even if the Holkham CIL isn't received until October 2021. In the meantime, MH proposed drawing up a simple written agreement between the PC and the residents concerned offering the loan, for Cllrs to review and then be signed by MH and LF, should there are no legal impediments. SA seconded the proposal and all were in agreement.

Revised PC Standing Orders.

MH explained that during the process to elect a new Cllr onto the Council, he noted that there was no guidance in the current Parish Council Standing Orders (SO) on either how to proceed or on candidates' eligibility. The SO were last revised in 2011. Many of the clauses do not reflect current practices or national guidelines. Accordingly, MH used the NALC Standing Orders template which covers all Councils, from County, District, Towns and PCs, and contain clauses and procedures that don't apply to a small Parish Council. MH then adjusted the template to reflect practices in Castle Acre. A draft of the new SO was e-mailed to Cllrs ahead of the July PC meeting. MH asked for observations. MT requested for additional clarification to be added to the section on Voting stating that 'Any vote not made by one or more Cllrs for or against a motion should be recorded as abstaining, including that of the Chairman'. There were no other objections to or proposals to amend the draft new SO. Agreed MH would send the revised draft to Cllrs, copy to JM, for further consideration. If there are no further changes, the revised new SO will be on the September PC agenda for adoption. It will then be uploaded onto castleacre.info, replacing the current SO posted in PC Archives and will be publicised in the next Nar Valley News.

19. Planning

20/00682/F - second story extension to the rear of the property at Herb's Cottage, St James' Green.

SA declared an interest in the application and abstained from comment and did not vote. Cllrs were content to support the application. SM proposed and NP seconded. HB, MT, LM, TH supported the motion. MH abstained.

20/00501/F- AMENDMENT-Proposed single storey, flat roofed, garden room rear elevation extension at Willow Cottage, Stocks Green

SM declared an interest in the application and abstained from comment and did not vote. Cllrs were content to support the application. NP proposed and LM seconded. HB, MT, SA, TH supported the motion. MH abstained.

20. Correspondence

Consulting Parish Councils on BCKLWN Planning Sifting Panel.

Having lost a motion to the Borough Council in October 2019 that it should consult Parish Councils on the planned review of its Sifting Panel of planning applications, JM has now contacted all Parish Councils in his Ward informing them of the new review and inviting their contributions. Noted that the Sifting Panel considers whether any outstanding planning application on which Officers recommend approval, contrary to a Parish Council's objections to it for good planning reasons, should be sent onto the Planning Committee for public review. JM is concerned the process is flawed. No agendas are issued and posted online in advance of a Sifting Panel meeting; Parish Councils are not informed in advance that their 'Object to' a planning application is to be considered by the Sifting Panel; Parish Councils do not have the right to attend and make their case; summary Minutes do not give the reasons why an application is either referred to the Planning Committee or back to officer delegated powers; Parish Councils have no right of appeal if its 'Object to' planning application is not referred to the Planning Committee; Parish Councils are not directly informed that their 'Object to' planning application is being referred back to the officers, the decisions are just posted on the same day as the sifting meeting on the Borough Council's website.

Cllrs agreed MH could draft a response to JM's request which would use some of the objections the PC sent to the Borough in 2019 following the first review. Cllrs to respond quickly to allow a final version to be sent to JM by e-mail to meet his deadline of 23 July.

UK Power Networks damage to South Acre Rd verges.

A resident contacted the PC to express his dismay at the damage caused by a contractor, hired by UK Power Networks to install a new electricity pole near the bottom of South Acre Road, whose tractor/trailer drove over the verge outside their property destroying plant life and drainage pipes. More damage was caused by the same vehicle at the junction between Blind Lane and Chimney Street. Before the Clerk was able to get a satisfactory response, the resident met the contractor who then returned and made good both damaged verges.

Orchard Lane street light brightness.

The recent change from the orange SOX light to the brighter LED bulb in the street light opposite the cottages in Orchard Lane has led to a resident complaining the brighter light is disrupting their sleep and could it be reduced or turned off at some point in the

evening? MH explained there are already 11 out of the 34 street lights in the village on timers which turn off at midnight. There is a budget for street light bulb replacements and for timers. Cllrs agreed that Health and Safety would not be affected by adding a timer to this particular light or possibly just to shield the bulb which is a cheaper option? Clerk to respond to resident and contact K&L Lighting.

21. Reports

Highways- No new updates.

Village Hall - HB reported: no plans to open as of yet, Covid-19 restrictions still apply.

CAPFA - NP reported: construction of the new play area is underway for completion within six weeks. Plans for an opening celebration to be confirmed. Funding was not allocated to replace the chain link fencing facing Massingham Road, though it might be considered in future funding bids.

Neighbourhood Plan - nothing further to report.

BCKLWN - JM reported: meetings have recommenced and there was a full Borough Council meeting today. The Local Development Framework Task Group has also started meeting again, following indications from government that the new Planning White Paper could change the way Local Plans are developed.

22. Accounts to be paid

Berrymans Glass Recycling Ltd (URM UK Ltd)	£36.00 (£6.00 VAT)
E.on Energy (electricity)	£66.09 (£ VAT)
Clerk's expenses - Zoom monthly account	£14.39 (£2.40 VAT)
Compass Point - NP consultation	£280.00
Bin bags for litter picking team, Paul Slocombe	£23.82 (£3.97)

TH proposed approval of accounts to be paid, SM seconded.

23. Village Maintenance

Village entrance gate vandalism and graffiti

The Massingham Road village entrance gate was vandalised with graffiti earlier in the week. The PC wishes to thank Len Rye who painted over the graffiti.

Bus shelter graffiti and repairs

Frank Moister has already painted over some large obscene graffiti. One of the Perspex windows in the bus shelter was punched through, the other window is already damaged. SM reported that to replace both with 4mm Perspex would cost £27 inc Vat. Replacing five pieces of broken feather edge boards will cost £20 to replace, repainting both in and outside will cost of £132, giving a total cost of £179. While the PC budget for bus shelter repairs is £100, MH proposed this work be approved and thanked Frank Moister for offering to carry out the work this summer. Cllrs agreed.

Complaints of excessive noise at bus shelter in the early hours

Following complaints about youths hanging out at the bus shelter over several consecutive nights and making a lot of noise up to 3.00 am, the Clerk contacted our local

Beat Officer who confirmed a car patrol would make extra checks but stressed that they do already patrol the village both day and night, although there are times when they are unable to make it but will endeavour to do their best. The resident making the complaint was also advised to call 101 should another instance should occur.

Potholes

No new updates from HW. Clerk to chase up the remaining potholes on North Street and Orchard Lane, again. Clerk to follow up the works ticket raised to request clearance of broken glass at the start of Common Lane, first raised eight weeks ago. TH noted the directional road sign at the Massingham Road/Town Lane junction is still missing some letters. Clerk to chase Highways who have been aware of this since September 2018!

Green litter bins on the playing field

NP asked whether JM knew of any second hand bin housing which the Borough may have in storage that could be used to house the two bins? Uncovered bins or behind new picket fencing might be considered unsightly next to the new play equipment. NP offered to repaint bin housings, if deemed necessary.

Castle Litter bins

Clerk and MH to contact English Heritage to inform them of the annual cost of emptying the bin on the edge of the Castle carpark and request whether EH is prepared to pay for this service from their new source of income from the car park charges

24. Public Question Time

- JM again requested that the PC give some consideration to moving banks from HSBC following the negative press the company has received.
- JM wished to reiterate the topic of tourism and its negative impact on the village, highlighting that little or no benefit comes from the increased influx of visitors when set against the increased cost to the Parish of dealing with the knock on effect of overfull litter bins and dog waste bins as well as thoughtless parking. MH asked Cllrs to stay vigilant this summer and where possible, take photos of any witnessed parking issues caused in the village.

The meeting closed at 9.14pm.

The next full Parish Council meeting is scheduled for **Thursday 10 September** at 7.30pm via Zoom video communication unless government Covid-19 restrictions permit safe and easy use of the village hall.