

CASTLE ACRE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in the village hall on Thursday 10 September 2015:

Present: Mr Sean Allen (SA) Mr T Hubbard (TH)
Mr L Fisher (LF) Vice-Chairman Mr M Hickey (MH) Chairman
Mr Richard Read (RR) Ms Charlie Williams (CW)
Mr Jim Moriarty (JM) Mr Neil Patrick (NP)

In attendance: Ms L Roast (Clerk), 9 members of the public

Apologies: Mrs H Breach (HB)

57 Minutes of PC meeting Thursday 11 July and extra planning meeting of 6 August.

Mr L Fisher proposed, Mr S Allen seconded. Agreed.

58 Actions from previous meeting:

15 Code of Conduct, Pecuniary Interest and Election Expenses forms.

Mr Sean Allen handed over his Pecuniary Interest form – Ms Charlie Williams' form still to be completed.

28 Lease for Pales Green grass strip – solicitor chased and has sent a Possessory Title form as the original deed cannot be found. MH signed and returned. After 12 years this would become a full Land Registry title.

65 Castle Acre Village Sign – now in place, courtesy of Sean Allen and Neil Patrick. £400 received from The Wicken Open Gardens Scheme towards a new sign (this has been ring fenced in accounts).

23 Litter Bins, Stocks Green – BCKLWN has changed its refuse collection team, removing the pressure for immediate action. JM waiting to hear from Nathan Johnson. MH reminded JM to include a larger bin at the Castle car park in his negotiations.

34 School Garden allotments boundary update – proposal to put in boundary fencing ongoing. RR to inspect allotments to see if any compost bins etc had been moved within the boundary.

40 Pruning trees at the playing field entrance, removing vegetation along North Street alley – planning permission being sought

45 Bull in Priory field warning sign; ponies on water meadows - complaint from walker about no warning signs on the footpath by the Priory. Holkham has now put up many 'Bull in field' signs on its field gates around the village but not on that particular gate! Many of these gates have been padlocked to prevent further "Fly-Grazing" that occurred over the summer on the water meadows where five ponies were grazing illegally and then removed after Holkham Estate started legal proceedings. Some 5 bar gates to be replaced with kissing gates.

48 Oddfellows Plaque – Sandles Court Residents Association, Oddfellows Dereham, St James Church and the Village Hall have all agreed that the plaque should go up on the original site of Priory Branch of Oddfellows - now Sandles Court. Residents and Oddfellows are in negotiation.

59 5 Year Action Plan/Through Traffic Plan. The SAM2 flashing speed sign is ready for collection. RR is waiting to hear from the Sporle Parish Council coordinator. Agreed position sites are on Massingham Road, St James Green and Newton Road for a maximum of one month rotation. Awaiting the final Trod footway cost from Highways. Local residents appear pleased with the Trod. Noted one resident has now ceased from parking on the Trod.

The Community Speedwatch Group. RR reported that the group is still disheartened and that two volunteers had resigned, making so-ordination difficult. The Clerk to appeal for four more volunteers in the Nar Valley News – eight in the group would be ideal.

Speedbump and Newton Road parking - MH read out an email received requesting a speedbump along Newton Road. CW suggested that a speedbump would actively deter speeding. JM suggested contacting Highways first to see if this was even an option.

60 Health & Safety. None to report

61 Matters requested by Councillors.

Bailey Gate posts – Highways has positioned these incorrectly. They should be 3.5 metres apart equal to the width of the base of the Bailey Gate arch. MH to contact Highways.

White lines Stocks Green - these now in place to restrict parking at both road entrances to Stocks Green.

Christmas tree on Stocks Green – discussion ensued on the problems and cost of erecting and securing a 16ft Christmas tree on the Green to comply with Health and Safety. NP had experienced helping with the tree in Swaffham and suggested the cost for a heavy base would be too much. It was decided that instead the solar powered Lumify fairy lights should be strung along the lower branches of the lime trees on Stocks Green. The Clerk to find out the size of the recharging solar panel.

62 Planning

LDF Update – JM reported that the Local Development Framework committee had met to discuss the Inspector’s assessment that West Norfolk had not given proper consideration to the environmental impact of housing on the countryside and on rural amenities such as signage, dog bins, walkers. Every new house built will now be charged £50 towards the cost of mitigating the effects on the countryside. The Local Plan examination will recommence at the end of September with Castle Acre to be reviewed on 4th November. Noted that no new large housing developments have been submitted since the Borough Council contacted all the developers not included in the Local Plan proposals.

Village ten year housing development – a policy review. MH summarized his housing paper that he circulated to Cllrs and can be viewed in full on castleacre.info. Noted that in the last village review in 2004, homes for young people and low cost rented affordable housing came out as priorities. Since 2004, CAPC has not discussed a long term housing policy but relied on the Borough Council’s Local Plan of 11 new dwellings until 2026 (plus infills). As all previously proposed LDF sites were now back in play, including Green King’s land to the north of Back Lane, the PC consider that it would be prudent to have a policy on its future housing needs. Points raised by Cllrs and by residents in attendance included:

- CA School has 68 pupils out of a maximum intake of 72. More housing bringing more children could not be accommodated without investment in new classrooms and facilities.
- Anglian Water estimate that the surface water system could handle a further eleven dwellings. Water pressure could still an issue. Sewage treatment would not.
- A large housing estate could damage the status of the village as a tourist attraction.
- How many social housing dwellings should be encouraged?
- Building Foxes Meadow post war had not secured village amenities such as a doctor’s surgery.

JM suggested that producing a Neighbourhood Plan might be the best way to deal with these questions, giving the village a focused plan for housing needs, show a united community and

would hold more weight with BCKLWN on future plans applications. A Neighbourhood Plan includes a consultation process with all residents and once formulated would go to a referendum vote within the village before adoption and takes about 18 months to complete. JM offered to lead on the plan with a small steering committee.

JM referred to a scheme called “homes for locals in the countryside” and awaits full details. The scheme enables local communities to have exemption sites on the edge of development areas for new built housing discounted by 20% below market value and sold to local people aged under 40. The Diocese is interested in building low cost homes for local families on the land it owns behind St James Church, backing onto Chimney Street.

MH brought discussion back to the threat of inappropriate housing schemes in the short term and asked Councillors for their views. TH’s view is that clearly as a village we would want to see organic growth to preserve the community. However a huge expansion of 40/50 houses would not be good and would not enhance the community. The impact on the village would be significant, particularly with no extra infrastructure resources and could change the village detrimentally in the future.

MH asked if the PC can support the suggestions for a Neighbourhood Plan, to resist any development on the land adjacent to the school, to encourage the Diocesan owned land for local family low cost housing and to insist that Holkham Estate applies for full planning permission with detailed housing designs agreed by CAPC rather than just selling the land to a developer. All agreed.

Ms Charlie Williams proposed drawing up a Neighbourhood Plan, Mr Tim Hubbard seconded. All in favour – motion carried.

Mr Tim Hubbard proposed contacting the Diocese about low cost housing, Ms Charlie Williams seconded. All in favour – motion carried.

Hybrid application -15/00942/OM. Amended details to Unit 2 to change from the look of two cottages knocked into one house with one front door. The Council agreed to support the amendment.

64 Correspondence

Letter complaining about HGV’s in North Street. Cllrs were appraised of a letter received about excessive HGV and large farm vehicle traffic along North Street. They all share the concerns, not just there but throughout the village. However, there is little that can be done to restrict them. The PC can only complain if they speed or damage verges.

Remembrance Sunday PC Wreath - in response to the British Legion letter of 9 September, MH confirmed attendance on behalf of CAPC. Wreath cost of £18.50 to be paid by individual Councillors, not by the PC. Clerk to collect.

65 Reports

Martin Hickey – Highways - Archer Lane kerb – chasing.

Castle Acre School – Kelly Scott is now Headmistress with the task of improving the Ofsted rating and adding new staff members.

Friends of Castle Acre School – Quiz and supper on Friday 2nd October. Mike Dwyer will be asking the questions..

Village Hall – only 30 in audience for Windboune concert. Next event StringFillies – harp, cello and Violin on 3rd October. New chairs and tables ordered.

Jim Moriarty – Borough Council – Email about grants passed onto MH and the Clerk.

66 Accounts

The following cheques were signed - payments were proposed for approval by Mr L Fisher and seconded by Mr T Hubbard: FCC Recycling (UK) Ltd £34.90, E.on Energy (electricity) £63.37, village hall hire April 2015 - March 2016 £220.00

67 Village Maintenance

Highways Rangers did not undertake the requested tasks of:

- Strim verge in front of the restored flint wall along Priory Road.
- Sweep Little Lane and scrape the edges back.

MH to insist these tasks are done now.

Overgrown footpaths through Priory field - urgently need cutting back. Clerk to contact Patrick Saunders at NCC.

Dykes Hill Monument (Moat) - planning granted for work on one Ash tree, awaiting a grant for the other works.

Village Hall Sound System – lead to mike broken after last use and not reported. MH suggested that a deposit be left by hirers which may make them take more care of the equipment. Unrestricted use by village hall committee members or Parish Cllrs only.

68 Public Question Time – Patrick Grange noted the poor positioning of the directional sign at the junction of Town Lane and Massingham Road obscuring sightlines for traffic pulling out. The PC said that this issue had been addressed in the past but that Highways had seemed to make the matter worse!

The meeting closed at 9.20pm. The next full Parish Council meeting is at 7.30pm on Thursday 9 October in the village hall.