

Boughton Parish Council Meeting, 14th January 2015 - 19.00pm – All Saints Church

Draft Minutes

Present:

Frank Reid(FRE)	Councillor/Chair
Mark Pogmore(MPO)	Councillor
David Cooper (DCO)	Councillor
Tom Roberts(TRO)	Councillor
Andy Beeston (ABE)	Councillor
Peter Agate (PAG)	Councillor
Carole Woolnough (CWO)	Councillor

Public Members: 3 number (Including Sue Pogmore who minuted the meeting)

County Cllr Martin Storey; PCSO Jane Edwards

Distribution: Boughton Parish Council, Group 4, Village Pump

No Item

1 Apologies

KL & WN Borough Cllr Colin Sampson; Jane Scarrott (NALC)

As both County Councillor Martin Storey and PCSO Jane Edwards needed to leave early, it was decided to rearrange the agenda to accommodate this.

2 Reports from visiting officers

County Councillor Martin Storey informed the meeting that Cory Wheelabrator had withdrawn their planning application for an incinerator on 08.01.2015. This meant that there was no longer a need for a decision from the Secretary of State, and NCC had put incineration as a method of waste disposal to the bottom of the pile at their meeting on 15.12.2015.

He briefly appraised the meeting with regard to the Local Development Framework, and the County's position with their budget.

PCSO Jane Edwards reported that there had been no crimes within the last three months, and only nine calls to the police, all of which were minor in nature.

Tom Roberts asked who he could contact regarding the use of life size cut-outs for speed control. Jane said she would look into this.

3 Dog Fouling, Boughton Fen

Mark Pogmore introduced the subject, explaining that there had been an increased amount of dog fouling on the fen over the past few weeks. It was felt that the problem was caused by some residents in the adjacent properties. David Cooper had made a recent survey of the site, and the situation was poor. As a short term measure, notices provided by the Borough Council would be pinned in prominent places around the fen.

PCSO Jane Edwards was prepared to visit all four properties on the fen and advise them of the financial penalty (£75) that the offenders can be fined if caught. However, she does have to catch the culprit in the act herself. Arrangements will be made for Jane to meet with Mark and Frank to see the extent of the problem.

At this point Councillor Storey and PCSO Jane Edwards left the meeting.

4 Declarations of Interest

None

5 Minutes of meeting held on Friday 24th October 2014

Minutes of this meeting were presented and agreed by all councillors, and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

6 Matters Arising

a) Matters raised in public questions – Feeding ducks in gardens

Frank Reid explained that following the previous meeting, he had decided to go to the house in question and give him the article on the hazards of feeding wildfowl. He was able to discuss the problems being caused with the householder, who seemed in agreement, but nothing has changed. He had also contacted the Environmental Health officer at BCKLWN, but they were unable to assist. It was suggested that the household worst affected by this should keep a record of the problems, and that ‘competitive feeding’ might also help.

b) Pond water quality – covered in Chairman’s report

7 Chairman’s report – Frank Reid

Horse chestnut tree

The diseased tree was removed on Monday 1st December by Treelink. The resultant logs have been stored in Church farmyard, and are available for parishioners to make use of. Very many thanks to Tom, Andy, David and Peter for their sterling help with the work, thanks also to Geoff Proctor for moving and storing the logs. Trevor Howes has reduced his invoice from the quoted £240 to £160 to reflect the help we provided. Trevor has been thanked for his honesty and generosity.

Pond Water Quality.

The environment agency was contacted for advice with regard to our observed visual decline in pond water quality. To summarise, the high population of wild fowl, is in their view, the most likely precursor for water quality decline. When we see what effect the winter has, and the spring breeding season, we may need to examine the options open to us. We are aware of a number of other Parishes that have experienced similar difficulties with wild fowl populations on ponds, and could contact them for information on how they have dealt with this, should we need to.

Parish Clerk.

The continued advertising of our vacancy for Parish Clerk has not resulted in any expressed interest. However Councillor Carole Woolnough has indicated that she would like to undertake this role on our behalf. It should be noted that Councillor Agate will remain Responsible Financial Officer, and Sue Pogmore will continue to take meeting minutes. Carole brings considerable experience to this role, and Boughton Parish Council is already benefiting from that. A resolution will be tabled under agenda item 6.

Churchyard Grass.

J.Adcock has presented his quotation for next season Churchyard grass cutting. At £40 per cut this remains very good value.

Frank Reid proposed that the Council accept Mr Adcocks quotation and offer him the work. All in favour.

8 Consideration of appointment of Parish Clerk

Frank Reid proposed a resolution that Carole Woolnough be appointed as un-remunerated Clerk to the Parish Council. All in favour.

9 Reports from Councillors

Highways – Tom Roberts

My report tonight focuses on progress with the village Gateways. The reasons for the gateways are to help reduce vehicles speeding through the village and the history is well documented in earlier meetings. We made in November 2014 a formal application to Norfolk County Council (NCC) for a street furniture licence (the licence is what is needed for “gateways”). This was approved by NCC in early December.

Since then we have been engaged in manufacturing the gates (many thanks to Andy Beeston for his excellent work) and obtaining the “gateway” signs. To the best of my knowledge the gates are very nearly ready for installation. We had as I think all councillors will be aware considered doing the installation work ourselves as we thought we had all the necessary skills etc to do this. However as Councillors will be aware from the NCC e-mail I circulated recently there is one requirement which we only became aware of recently. This is the need / requirement for the person responsible for the works to be “street works” accredited. Unfortunately this accreditation is not one which any of us have. We could do the work ourselves but should anything, however remote, go wrong as a result of the installation we could be held liable.

If NCC to do the installation for us – this should be at or less than £150 per gateway i.e. a total of £300 for both gateways.

Tom Roberts asked Councillors to agree that the County Council be asked to install the gates for the village. All in favour. Peter Agate confirmed that money was available in the budget for this. Some discussion took place as to how the installation should take place, from both a practical and financial standpoint.

Tom Roberts also mentioned a flooding incident that had occurred near Cavenham Cottages. The County had acknowledged ownership of the ditches in question, and were going to rectify the problem.

Signs, Street Furniture & Communications – Peter Agate

- a. The circular bench has been temporarily removed to facilitate the removal of the chestnut tree, and will be refurbished and replaced in the same position pending removal of the stump, and procurement of a replacement tree.
- b. A general signs and street assets inspection will be carried out in the spring to ascertain if any maintenance works are required.
- c. A PC activity update was placed in the December edition of G4N magazine and on the G4N website.

Playground – Andy Beeston

The playground remains very popular despite the winter weather. It is in good shape with a slight increase in green growth on the timber, this will be cleaned off once some dryer weather arrives. The moles have remained active despite some success in catching the odd one.

The “Muckathon” raised £120 for the fund, thanks to all who supported the event and to Angela for helping deliver the sacks. I’m sure there will be even more support when we repeat it this year.

The Playground Action Group will be analysing the surveys completed last year to see what the general consensus is for any improvements to the area. These can then be evaluated and put before the council. We have an initial fund of £566 plus more generous pledges to collect once we decide how to allocate the monies

Boughton Fen – Mark Pogmore

Over the past few months, there has been considerable amount of activity on the fen.

Contractors, funded jointly by Boughton Fen Committee, Natural England and the Environment Agency have removed scrub and trees from approximately 200 metres of the raised bank next to Stringside Drain, and reconstructed the bank with earth dug from the fen.

This work will slow down the water loss from the fen, and will help to secure this rare wetland habitat for the future. This has also created shallow pools at the back of the bank.

At present, Stringside Bank is rather wet and muddy after the works, so we apologise for the difficult walking in this area. However, come the spring when things start to grow, the scars should heal quickly.

As usual, our scrub clearance programme is continuing through the winter, keeping back the advancing willow and blackthorn.

The reed cutting has been a little problematic, as finding a suitable contractor has been very difficult. However, just before Christmas, we appointed a specialist to carry out a programme of work for this winter.

We will of course be continuing with the working parties through the remainder of the winter, and it would be great to see you there

It was noted that, at the last Fen meeting, Kevin Fisher resigned with immediate effect, and Allan Hale stated that he would retire from the committee at the end of the Parish year.

Public Footpaths – Dave Cooper

Nothing to report

Document Review – Carole Woolnough

I have now reviewed the majority of our standing orders and policy documents against model standing orders and best practice and will begin to send them out to all councillors for review, a couple at a time, when I get back from my holiday up until next year's election date. I am on holiday from 15th January to 28th January.

We discussed the draft Recording, Filming and Reporting policy document at the last BPC meeting on 24th October 2014 and the latest version has now been circulated.

As I have previously mentioned, once all standing orders and policies have been adopted, each councillor will be given a full copy of all documents in a folder to use for reference when needed.

Carole Woolnough proposed that Boughton Parish council should adopt the Recording, Filming and Recording at Council meetings policy. All in favour.

10 PC Web site proposal

All councillors have seen the proposal from Kevin Fisher regarding setting up a new Boughton Parish Council dedicated website. The proposal included an excellent demonstration site designed to give us an idea as to its look and feel.

Carole Woolnough reminded members that Mr Fisher has advised that the cost of the dedicated site will be less than £50 per annum.

She also confirmed that she was happy to volunteer to learn how to upload information on to the site on behalf of the Council.

Frank Reid proposed that the web site be adopted. All in favour.

11 Financial Report, including 2015/16 precept – Peter Agate

A copy of the accounts up 12th January 2015 has been circulated to all councillors.

- A) Since the last meeting income has been derived from;
 - a. £335.00 Playground Fund donations – some pledges outstanding.
 - b. £10.30 wishing bucket. Donation fund now at £47.42
 - c. £250.00 from PCC grass cutting contribution.
 - d. 23p Interest on Business Saver account.
 - e. £2447 HLS & interest payments to the BFC

- B) Since the last meeting (consolidated) expenditure incurred has been;
 - a. £20.06 mower fuel
 - b. £160 Chestnut Tree removal
 - c. £153.36 village entrance way signs.
 - d. £118.50 churchyard grass cutting (final cuts)
 - e. £7,300 for bankworks and headwall on behalf of BFC

- C. Payments to be made;
 - a. Cheque to be signed to IRS Ltd for village entrance signs, included in above figures

D. Budget

a. The PC Budget is currently forecasting a current year deficit of circa £650 due to provision of village entrance gates and tree removal. These costs are being met from reserves. The deficit has reduced from that previously forecast due to lower than forecast tree removal costs, and contribution from PCC for churchyard grass cutting.

b. The BFC budget was last updated mid-December 2014 and showed proposed income & expenditure to end of financial year.

Current Balances:

Parish Council Community Account £2,899.49

Parish Council Savers Account £1,869.17

Fen Committee Accounts £6,756.54

Were all the forecast/budgeted costs to be incurred in this financial year the approximate balances would be;

Parish Council Community Account £2,250 including £567 Playground Fund

Parish Council Savers Account £1,869.17

Fen Committee Accounts circa £3-4k dependent upon level of proposed works that may be affected by weather.

E) Precept 2015-2016

The financial requirements of the P.C. have been reviewed and a new budget drafted. The figures take into account changes to ongoing costs for maintenance of the village, one off items, e.g. replacement tree, and assured income from other sources, e.g. PCC contribution to churchyard grass cutting.

A copy of the draft document has been circulated to councillors and any observations addressed.

The precept requirement is £1,400. This will be mitigated by a grant from KWNBC of £30. The new budget represents an increase of circa 3.5%.

It is proposed the council agrees the precept at a gross figure of £1,400

Peter Agate proposed that the precept for the coming year be set at £1400, taking into account the grant of £30 for 2015/16. All in favour.

12 Correspondence – Frank Reid

The CPRE had sent out a Light questionnaire, which was handed to the clerk for completion.

Correspondence had been received from Norfolk Constabulary asking local communities to assist the Constabulary as their budgets are under pressure. The nub of the communication was that local Councils are being asked to match fund the constabulary for PCSOs in their area. It was clear that the sums of money involved are not viable for small councils such as Boughton, and the response to the letter would reflect this.

13 The meeting closed at 08.05pm

The date of the next meeting is Friday 17th April 2015 – 7.00pm Annual Parish Meeting

Open Questions

There were no specific questions, but David Cooper commented on the hazardous parking around the Doctor's surgery. Debbie Fisher suggested that a litter pick on Mill Hill Road would be a good idea. Frank Reid said that he would organise this.