

Boughton Parish Council Meeting, 17th April 2015 - 19.15pm – All Saints Church

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: 4 number (Including Sue Pogmore who minuted the meeting)

County Cllr Martin Storey; District Councillor Colin Sampson

Distribution: Boughton Parish Council, Group 4, Village Pump

No Item

1 Apologies

None

2 Declarations of Interest

None

3 Minutes of meeting held on Friday 14th January 2015

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

4 Matters Arising

None

5 Chairman's report – Frank Reid

Looking back over the past four years :-

We started in May 2011 with 6 Councillors and a new Clerk, Mr David Horkan, who did much to improve our administration. A new approach to internal audit was established with the appointment of J.Cross. These now involve full process, documentation, and fiscal audit.

Following the resignation of Tim Madgwick our numbers dropped to five members. We were then very fortunate in managing to attract Tom Roberts and Andy Beeston, returning us to a full Council of seven. Authority from the KL&WNBC electoral office was granted for both to be co-opted.

Andy and Tom have brought much to our gathering. Playground ongoing maintenance and improvements, and material action to address the problem of speeding through our village.

Then unfortunately David Horkan had to leave us due to a change in his work circumstances. Following which Councillor Peter Agate took over the role of RFO providing an excellent input to our fiscal management and control

Whilst advertising for a new Clerk a method of working was established without a Clerk. This system is now documented for future use if required.

Subsequent to the resignation of Geoff Proctor, the mandatory election option was posted for the statutory number of days, following which we were granted authority to fill the vacancy by way of co-option. We approached Carole Woolnough, and were successful in returning to a full Council.

Carole subsequently indicated an interest in the role of Councillor / Clerk. We have now filled this position with a very competent and experienced person, who is taking on the task of reviewing our current documentation, and ensuring that we as a council keep up with any new local Government legislation, ensuring we remain in compliance.

I am grateful also to Sue Pogmore for recently undertaking the vital role of minute secretary.

The high standard of maintenance around our village has continued. I am very grateful to the number of volunteers that extend a great deal of effort to keep Boughton one of the prettiest villages in our area. Grass cutting and village green upkeep, tree trimming, litter picking, preservation of our signs and furniture all go along way to preserving our village scene.

I acknowledge the efforts of Councillor Mark Pogmore and our Fen Committee for their achievements. This Natural habitat has been enhanced further over the past four years, and is enjoyed by a large number of visitors.

I also wish to record my thanks to Councillors Storey and Sampson, and Jane Scarrott our NALC. Representative for their continuous support , advice and regular attendance at our meetings. I wish them every success in the future.

We have continued to perform as a vibrant council, and have always acted, in what we believe to be, in the best interests of our parishioners.

I wish to record my appreciation to my fellow Councillors for their unstinting support over the past four years. I am very proud of what we have collectively achieved.

An election is approaching, and I wish those sitting round this table after May 7th. great success.

6 Mazars Audit Form – Signing and Submission

- a. As part of the Audit Commissions external review of our accounts the council have to affirm that the Council maintains a sound system of internal control. The Chairman completed the governance schedule accordingly.
- b. Upon completion of the governance schedule the Chairman and Clerk signed accordingly.

7 Reports from Councillors

Highways – Tom Roberts

Speeding

This is a continuing problem and as I note in my “Highways” report we have taken action to install village gateways to help reduce speeding. However “gateways” may not be the total solution. Other possibilities include further local police action (laser detection devices etc); installation of “data collection tubes” (Norfolk road traffic police would do this) to enable accurate data to be collected to help provide evidence to the authorities of the need for further action; and the use of Static policemen (StaticP). The use of “StaticP” in road traffic policing is not supported by Norfolk police because of the risks. For example, if a driver was distracted by one and had an accident it is possible that whoever put the “StaticP” up might be held liable for damages. Consequently the use of “StaticP” is not something that I could recommend to this council. However I recommend we ask Norfolk Police to install the “data collection” tubes; and to carry out further checks. Council agreed to the above recommendations.

Highways

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. The manufacture of the gateways is complete and they together with the mounting poles are ready for installation. I hope that NCC will be carrying out installation imminently.

Separately the Highway Rangers are due in the village during the week commencing Monday 20th of April.

Signs, Street Furniture & Communications – Peter Agate

- a. The circular bench has treated twice for algae staining and will be finished in the next week or two for re-siting in its original position temporarily.
- b. An inspection of signs and street furniture has been carried out and apart from the church direction signs on The Green, which have been cleaned, no actions identified.
- c. A PC activity update will be placed in the June edition of G4N magazine and on the G4N website.

Playground – Andy Beeston

The play area has been in regular use especially over the Easter holidays and remains a focal point for many families.

Members of our group have attended two courses run by the West Norfolk Voluntary and Community Action with reference to applying for funding and grants. This has highlighted, identifying need, evidencing need, aims and outcomes for the eventual refurbishment of this play area. With this in mind, we would be interested in working with the fen committee to build on the educational and environmental aspects, involving the whole family in a “Boughton Experience”, and so increase public awareness of this valuable feature.

Only last week I took a couple of young families from the village for their first visit down the fen. We enjoyed a lovely morning’s walk through a couple of the fens, showing even 3 to 7 year olds can benefit from the experience, making use of the information boards around the paths.

We have been in contact with three playground equipment suppliers to gain information on which to base our funding needs. We have a long way to go, but we are planning well ahead.

The fund raising will continue with me running in the GEAR 10K on Sunday 3rd of May, I have a sponsor form with me!! Also, we are holding a “Family friendly afternoon tea” here at this church on Saturday May 9th, with activities for the children and refreshments for the parents, details will be in the next G4 magazine.

Boughton Fen – Mark Pogmore

The work on the fen has now been concluded for both our fiscal and seasonal year.

The most noticeable part of this work was the clearing of trees and scrub, in order to consolidate approximately 200 metres of the raised bank adjacent to Stringside, with the work being funded jointly by the Environment Agency, Natural England and Boughton Fen Committee. Along with the work, we have also been able to construct an outfall to control water levels on the fen, should the bankworks retain too much water.

Further clearance of other areas of scrub has been carried out, to maintain and increase the area of reed.

Our reedcutters, Steven Eyles and Tim Bennett have cut about four and a half acres of reed on Middle Fen, including a specialist habitat cut. The reed has been burned on site by the cutting team and our own volunteers. Small amounts of reed have also been stacked to form micro habitats.

We have had several new volunteers this year, and this has enabled us to carry out some further clearing and tidying up, as well as the construction of a number of new benches around the site. As always, we are grateful for their help.

On behalf of all the committee and those who have been involved over the past few years, a big thank you to Kevin Fisher and Allan Hale who are retiring from the committee. Their help has been invaluable over the years.

A lot of work has been carried out on the fen over the past few years using various contractors, and we would like to thank them for their input. They are WR Chapman and son, West Dereham Plant Hire Ltd, Thos B Bonnett, Greenfingers Countryside and SJ & LJ Eyles; all of whom are very local businesses, with Greenfingers being the furthest away, travelling all the way from Hilgay!

We finish the year on a good note with the fen having been upgraded from the forth to the second level of five by Natural England, a healthy bank balance and plans to take the fen forward with more conservation work in the new financial year.

Public Footpaths – Dave Cooper

The footpath has been cut, brambles cut back and the path is safe and in good order.

Document Review (Including internal audit report) – Carole Woolnough

Carole Woolnough read out a letter from the auditors, received 4th April. All councillors then voted in favour of adopting the Terms of Reference for the Fen Committee.

8 Financial report including Fiscal Audit report and adoption of Accounts

A copy of the year-end accounts up 31st March 2015 has been circulated to all councillors.

The accounts have been internally audited by John Cross and a letter of satisfactory record keeping issued.

Year-end Balances:

Parish Council Community Account £2,605.04 (2013-14 £2,227.62 - Playground fund)

Parish Council Savers Account £1,869.39 - (2013-14 £1,868.46 – interest)

Fen Committee Accounts £7,691.87 - (2013-14 £9,327.01 – additional funding and bank works)

Audit

Our accounts have been audited internally by John Cross again this year and we have received written confirmation that our accounts are well documented and in good order.

Adoption and signing of Accounts.

Proposal made by Peter Agate that the council adopts the accounts as audited by John Cross. All in favour.

As part of the Audit Commissions external review of our accounts the Responsible Financial Officer and the Chairman signed that the accounts present fairly the financial position of the Council.

Accounts 2015-15

An up to date set of accounts has been issued to councillors reflecting opening balances, income from the precept and early outgoings for NALC subscription, mower fuel, J Cross audit costs and stationary. Two cheques were signed for NALC subs and stationary.

9 Planning

Since the last PC meeting (January) the following planning applications have been submitted.

- a. Ref. No: 15/00152/F. Amended plans to Bells Meadow previously submitted. Approved.
- b. Ref. No: 15/00049/TREECA. Reduce Trees at Hillside and Casa Mea, Mill Hill Road. Tree Officer decision pending.

Frank Reid explained to the meeting that Mr Bill Miller had asked that he get the Council's view for a proposal he has to develop some affordable housing in the village. This will be discussed after the election.

10 Correspondence – Carole Woolnough

The CPRE had sent out the results of the Light Pollution Survey

11 Reports from visiting officers – County and Borough

County Councillor Martin Storey commented on the professionalism, of Boughton PC, and said that he felt they should be congratulated on the way they conducted themselves.

He gave some information regarding a grant NCC have received of almost £12,000 to restore a WWII brick shed at Coltishall – it is apparently the only building of its type to survive the war.

Norfolk Connectbus has been awarded the Park and Ride contract in Norwich.

The County Budget was not cut as badly as anticipated, and was approved following some negotiation.

District Councillor Colin Sampson echoed Martin's kind words about Boughton PC, and said that he often used it as an example of good practice.

He explained that on a local note, one of the County Budget improvements was to retain the transport for Aspires at Fincham. It seems that the Borough Council staff find dealing with people in this area more satisfactory than many others.

Frank Reid ask Colin to pass on his regards to the Clean-up Team for their continuing excellent service.

12 Meeting closed at 7.50pm

Open Questions

None

Other Business

Frank Reid thanked everyone for their efforts, as this was his last meeting.

Dave Cooper then said he had something to say, and went on to thank Frank for leading by example. He then recounted some of his achievements over the past eight years, and presented him with gifts from the other Councillors to thank him for his contribution to the Council, and the village during his time as Chairman.