

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

County Cllr Martin Storey
KL & WN Borough Cllr Colin Sampson

Distribution: Boughton Parish Council, Group 4, Village Pump

<u>No</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Action by/date</u>
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1	<u>Apologies</u>	
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None

2	<u>Declarations of Interest</u>	
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PAG, MPO, DCO and FRE are all members of Boughton Cricket Club, and declared their interest with regard to the planning application to be discussed later in the meeting.

3	<u>Minutes of Meeting 24.07.2014</u>	
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Minutes of this meeting were presented and agreed by all councillors, and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

4	<u>Matters Arising</u>	
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The speed gates will come up in the Highways report

5	<u>Police Community Support</u>	
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PCSO Jane Edwards did not attend the meeting

6 Chairman's report – Frank Reid

Parish Clerk.

We continue to advertise for the position of Clerk. Adverts are in G4 magazine and on the village notice board.

Horse chestnut tree. Village Green.

We have received and circulated, two written, and one verbal quote for the removal of the Horse chestnut tree. Planning permission has been granted for this work. I will be seeking a decision from Council at the end of this report.

Village Green Work party.

My thanks to Tom and Peter for arranging the recent work parties around the Village Green. We have tidied up along the pond edge, cut back some willow re-growth, and removed a number of Ash saplings.

Grass Cutting Public areas.

David Cooper and Paul Heath have very kindly stepped in to help with village grass cutting. Their assistance is very much appreciated.

Playground Hedge.

Victoria McDonnell has very generously donated the cutting of the Playground hedge. I record our thanks for this welcome gesture.

Methwold School Bus route.

The route that the Methwold School bus takes has changed; the bus now comes in from Stoke road, round the green and leaves by Stoke road again.

We have trimmed back some of the overhanging branches of the Copper Beech tree at the request of the Bus company. This in exchange for assurances that they will do their best not to damage verges through the village.

Internal Audit.

This has been arranged for April 2nd. 2015. I will issue invitations to Councillors nearer the time, should they wish to attend. We ought then to be in a position to consider the audit report at our meeting on the 17th April.

Boughton Challenge. 2015.

The Challenge for 2015 has now been set. The best photograph of our village. We have set this early to enable the taking of autumn or winter pictures. Full information has been posted on the notice board, and in G4 news. Geoff and I will of course keep everyone fully informed on our Sunday morning visits round the village. The day of judgement will be set in good time.

The Chairman then proposed that the contractor that presented the lowest quote be invited to remove the diseased Horse Chestnut tree. This was seconded by Dave Cooper. All in favour.

7 Reports from Councillors

Highways – Tom Roberts

My report today deals with the proposal for village gateways to help reduce speeding through Boughton.

The background has been well reported and documented in previous PC meetings. We formally publicised the proposal by putting an article (a two page spread with pictures) in the September 2014 edition of Group 4 News; and we asked for any views or comments from the residents of Boughton.

We received three e-mails and had two telephone conversations as a result of the consultation. I think it is fair to say that all were in favour although some respondents would also have liked lower speed and weight limits.

One of the respondents was particularly clear about his reasons for supporting the proposal and I give an extract here because in my view they are very positive reasons with which I fully agree:

“I think the gates are worth installing. They make a bigger statement than just a 30mph sign, and I'm certain they would at least have some effect. It's like saying "this is our village, folks, and be sure you drive no more than 30!" To me they have more of a feeling of a sincere request, rather than sleeping policewomen, which I have always thought are aggressive and even dangerous.”

Mr Chairman – For your records I pass to you now copies of the consultation article in Group 4 news together with copies of the responses received.

That is my report today.

I recommend we make the necessary arrangements for the gateways – specifically, obtain the necessary street furniture licence from NCC; we make the gateways; order the signs to go on the gateways; and that we arrange for NCC to install the gateways.

Following the report Frank Reid proposed that the Council should proceed with Tom Robert's recommendation; this was seconded by Carole Woolnough. All in favour.

Street Furniture – Peter Agate

Nothing to report

Playground – Andy Beeston

The playground remains tidy and in good order despite the clatter bridge losing one of the end boards due to vandalism, fortunately this does not affect the use and safety of this piece of equipment.

The playground action group is carrying out two surveys mainly to demonstrate the strong local support for this facility enabling us to secure grant funding or local company sponsorship in the future. The village survey has provided substantial support both in the form of ideas and financial aid. The user surveys, currently over sixty five, have proved its value to a considerably wider audience. We have also received several pledges from those users from outside the parish.

The group is currently selling bags of FYM in our local muckathon to raise funds for the play area. My thanks to local farmer, Ed Lankfer, for providing the well-rotted material, which we will be delivering to those hungry gardens within the month. My thanks also, to Helen and Mathew for their help in bagging up.

Chairman Frank has recently embarked on a challenge to rid the play area of moles!! To date, they are still winning, we could be in for an uphill struggle!!

Boughton Fen – Mark Pogmore

The Fen Committee is back to full strength, with eight members, as we have now welcomed Alan Pickering on board.

At present, things are very busy, arranging various contractors for winter work.

Firstly, works are to be carried out the fen bank on Stringside Drain. This work will be funded jointly by Boughton Fen Committee, Natural England and the Environment Agency, and will be carried out by a civil engineering contractor.

Secondly, reed and grass cutting which will be managed jointly by Natural England and ourselves. A specialist contractor will be appointed for this work and will probably be the Hawk and Owl Trust.

Thirdly, further scrub clearance work will continue, which will again be done by a specialist contractor.

As we have now reached our autumn/winter working season, we are having a number of working parties to continue with maintenance of the fen. Already, one successful day has taken place. Alan Pickering will be keeping everyone informed of the upcoming dates.

Thanks must go to our summer path cutting team, who will be doing the final cut in the next few days.

I have been asked if working parties are really worthwhile, and the answer is - very much yes. Since we started, there have been dozens of different people helping out, and seeing what the fen is all about, enjoying themselves and making new friends. The added bonus is they have carried out in excess of £10,000 worth of work, had this work been done by contractors.

Thanks to all those people for your help and support.

Public Footpaths – Dave Cooper

Dave Cooper had nothing to report other than he was having a winter clean up, and doing a little general maintenance to the signs.

Document Review – Carole Woolnough

My starting point for the document review has been to look at legal requirements and the National Association of Local Council's guidelines for Parish Councils, including model documents, such as standing orders.

My approach has been to, first, check that we have all of the required documents and are doing everything we should be doing.

Secondly I have checked to see if the documents and procedures we have in place comply with the requirements.

So, how are we doing? It seems to me that the one significant thing we haven't done is to adopt the Information Commissioner's model publication scheme. I have sent you all the "Model Publication Scheme (Freedom of Information Act)" policy document (which must be adopted without amendment) and the required "Information Available from Boughton Parish Council" document so that residents can see what information we hold and how they can obtain it.

Proposal – "That Boughton Parish council adopts the 'Information Commissioner's Model Publication Scheme', along with the 'Information Available from Boughton Parish Council' document and that both documents are published on Boughton Parish Council's website as soon as possible."

My next task is to review all of our standing orders and policy documents against model standing orders and best practice, and produce sets of documents for you to review between now and next year's election date. The newly elected council will then have a complete set of documents to review next year.

Each councillor will then be given a full copy of all documents in a folder to use for reference when needed.

Carole's proposal was seconded by Peter Agate. All were in favour.

8 Financial Report – Peter Agate

A copy of the accounts up 22nd October has been circulated to all councillors.

- A) Since the last meeting income has been derived from;
 - a. £231.68 Playground Fund donations
 - b. £11.50 wishing well.
 - c. £96.00 Mazar fee contribution from Fen Committee.
 - d. 48p Interest on Business Saver account.
 - e. £2,446.65 HLS instalment to Fen

- B) Since the last meeting (consolidated) expenditure incurred has been;
 - a. £63.03 on mower fuel
 - b. £120 External Audit Fee (Mazar)
 - c. £32.47 replacement laminator.
 - d. £197.50 churchyard grass cutting
 - e. £58.19 Fen fuel and consumables

- C. Payments to be made;
 - a. None

- D. Budget
 - a. The PC Budget is currently forecasting a current year deficit of circa £937 due to i) provision for costs of dealing with diseased horse chestnut tree and ii) possible provision of village entrance gateways, subject to village consultation and approval. The second item may not proceed but is provisionally allowed for.
 - b. The Fen Committee Budget has been agreed and work programme costs forecast.

Current Balances:

Parish Council Community Account £2,747.26

Parish Council Savers Account £1,868.94

Fen Committee Accounts £11,608.11

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

Parish Council Community Account £1,800

Parish Council Savers Account £1,868.94

Fen Committee Accounts £3,000.00

9 Planning – Peter Agate

The Chairman read out the email he had received from Jane Scarrott regarding the planning application from the cricket club regarding prejudicial interest.

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

- a. Ref. No: 14/00091/TREECA 11/08/14. Removal of diseased horse chest nut trees The Old Stables. Permitted
- b. Ref. No: 14/01197/F 14/08/14. Extend beet pad and bund walls/storage tanks adjacent Field Barn Farm. Council recorded a 'No Observations' response. Pending consideration.
- c. Ref. No: 14/01258/F 27/8/14. New cricket pavilion. Council recorded a 'No Observations' response. Pending consideration.
- d. Ref. No: 14/00107/TREECA 10/9/14 Removal of diseased tree on The Green. Permitted.
- e. Ref No; 14/01393/F 29/9/14. Replacement of fire damaged bungalow Bells Meadow. Council recorded a 'No Observations' response. Pending consideration.
- f. Ref No: 14/01426/F Single storey outbuilding Tapestry Cottage. Council recorded a 'No Observations' response. Pending consideration.

10 Verge Damage – Tom Roberts

I am sure many others here tonight are concerned about the continuing erosion of verges in the village. This has been particularly noticeable (but not limited to) areas of Mill Hill Road. There is one area where the verge appears to have become eroded almost to the edge of what appears to be a BT (GPO) telephone junction box bedded in the ground. This box is already shows the start of damage and any further erosion could cause significant telephone problems.

Lots of vehicles often going onto (or parking on) verges seems to be the main culprit - which because of the verge erosion appears to lead to much water puddling after heavy rain.

After some discussion it was agreed that the PC (Tom Roberts) would invite the Highways Team of NCC to see the problems and discuss possible solutions.

11 Electronic Recording of Meetings

Councillors are aware that the digital recording of meetings by the public/press is allowed. Reading the minutes of other PC's meetings they have adopted ways of dealing with this should it arise. At present we have no policy on digital recording by the public and propose that we should prepare a draft policy to be adopted accordingly.

Peter Agate's proposal was seconded by Tom Roberts. All in favour.

12 Village Pond – David Cooper

David Cooper said that he had been looking at the pond frequently since his retirement, and had concerns about the water quality and the wildlife associated with it.

He felt that it may be appropriate for the Council to consult an expert to assess the water quality and its surroundings.

Frank Reid suggested that he ask the EA to review it and make suggestions for improvement, if required. All members were happy with this approach.

Much discussion took place about the ever increasing number of ducks on the pond, and why the population had become so high. No one was sure whether any action should be taken about this. District Councillor Colin Sampson advised that Stanhoe village had experienced a similar problem, and it would be worth asking them how they had dealt with it.

13 Correspondence – Frank Reid

A letter had been received from Norfolk County Council, explaining their budget shortfall for the coming three years, and how they proposed to plan for this deficit by consultation with relevant organisations. It goes on to say that they are finding it difficult to meet their budget for the current financial year, and anticipate a significantly higher than expected shortfall for 2015-16. More information about the projections and consultation process can be learned from www.norfolk.gov.uk/committees.

Magpas had written asking if anyone would sell raffle tickets for them – there were no takers.

14 Reports from visiting officers

Martin Storey – County Councillor mentioned the Parish Partnership scheme and the use of mobile speed signs.

Regarding the plans for Boughton Cricket Pavilion, he suggested that the Borough be informed as to why no comment was made to the planning application, but explain that the Parish Council is in favour of the application, but is unable to say so because of the aforementioned.

District Councillor Colin Sampson reinforced this view, saying that an unofficial letter to this effect would be in order.

Various information was forthcoming from both Councillors concerning the availability of planning officers in the current circumstances.

15 The meeting closed at 08.13pm

The date of the next meeting is Wednesday 14th January 2015 – 7.00pm

Open Questions

A member of the public asked if the PC could intervene with the problems his neighbour is causing, feeding the ducks with large quantities of food in his garden. This leads to many ducks walking up and down the road, causing traffic problems. There are also hygiene issues; vermin are now present, particularly rats.

Colin Sampson suggested that the Environmental Health Officer may be able to advise on the latter, but a second member of the public said that this had been tried in the past, to no avail.

He suggested that the Parish Council write, or email the EHO, copying him in, as this might have more effect than a member of the public.

Frank Reid offered to print off the article that Peter Agate had obtained regarding the feeding of wild ducks, and drop it off to the affected households, and other properties in that area.

He also said he would write to the EHO as suggested.

The parishioner who made the original request commented that the neighbour on the other side of the house concerned was also having problems with rats.