

Minutes of the Meeting of Welney Parish Council held at the Parish Hall, Welney on Tuesday 1st April, 2014 at 7 p.m.

Present: Cllr.K. Goodger (Chairman), Cllrs.T.Bray, S.Dobson, G.Rainbird and V. Pratley, Dist.Cllrs. V.Spikings, & D.Pope, approximately 23 members of the Public and the Clerk.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from PCSO Esther Bortz who confirmed that if the Council or residents have any problems, then please contact here direct.

2. Declaration of Interests

None at this stage.

3. Houses in Chestnut Avenue

The Chairman then introduced Mr. Andrew Edmunds and Mr. Robert Clarke from Freebridge Community Housing, to talk about the proposal to demolish six of the houses and to leave two houses in an unfinished state. Mr. Edmunds confirmed that when they first considered the refurbishment of the houses in Chestnut Avenue they discussed the requirements with the Borough Council Homechoice who have the responsibility for finding tenants. It was confirmed to Freebridge that the need for houses in Welney was limited and at the present time Homechoice have confirmed that they do not have any applicants at all that want to live in Welney. Mr. Edmunds went on to confirm that the houses which have been completed or are nearing completion, have already been offered to the five sets of tenants who are still living in the houses which are proposed to be demolished. He also confirmed that Nos.1 & 2 will have the exterior work completed in due course but because there is no internal work to be done to these two houses, they are classed as a different case. He explained that a new tenant had been found for No.7 and one other applicant had been promised a house on the Avenue, and once everything was finished it would leave one house still to be re-let. The Chairman confirmed that before the work started all the homes had been let. Mr. Edmunds confirmed that this was the case, but all tenants had been given the choice to move out temporarily whilst the work was carried out, or to move out permanently to alternative accommodation. Only one tenant had chosen to return to the Avenue.

The Chairman then asked members of the public for any questions and several were asked from those tenants who had been told that their homes would be refurbished and then they would be able to return to them, only to find now that their homes were to be demolished. Mr. Edmunds confirmed that he was in negotiation with all these tenants regarding their move to alternative accommodation in the Avenue. A further question was with regard to the vacant plots left after the houses were demolished and also how the boarded up house would be maintained. Mr. Edmunds said that the sites would be kept clean and tidy and that the unfinished house would be made secure and the garden areas kept tidy. The Chairman then confirmed that the Parish Council would be contacting Homechoice for first hand clarification of the situation regarding these houses and clarification of the process for being considered as a tenant. He expressed grateful thanks to Mr. Edmunds and Mr. Clarke and especially thanked the members of the community for coming to the meeting, expressing their views and asking questions. He also confirmed that the residents had the full support of the Parish Council in this matter as the loss of these houses could have a serious effect on the future of the community and especially the village school.

4. Water Quality on the Ouse Washes.

The Chairman then introduced Mr. Robin Musk from the Environment Agency who outlined how the EA check and monitor the water quality on the Ouse Washes. He explained how the water is tested for pollution and how the samples are taken. He confirmed that during the next two or three weeks monitoring equipment will be put in place once again to check everything. The question of illegal fishing was also raised and Mr. Musk confirmed that if anyone has any concerns at all with pollution, water quality or illegal fishing then they should contact the Environment Agency emergency incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60. Further information could also be obtained at ousewashesinfo@environment-agency.gov.uk. The Chairman thanked Mr. Musk for his visit and for the information which he had given

5. Public Participation

The Chairman then adjourned the meeting for Public Participation.

He confirmed to those present that we currently had four vacancies on the Parish Council.

Questions were asked regarding the dot matrix signs and how they work. It was also confirmed that the three signs which Cambridgeshire have acquired should now be in place. There was also a brief discussion regarding drivers crossing the wash road when it is flooded and what action the police are likely to take.

The question of the new Hall for the Village was also raised. On a previous occasion the question of using the Church had been discussed and the meeting was asked whether the Council are going to get things moving along or wait until some decision can be reached by the Church authorities. Several people had expressed the opinion that they were not in favour of using the Church. It was also explained that following the Workshop held in February, the question of the School being used as a new hall, was no longer up for consideration. There was then a general discussion regarding the new hall, and it was agreed that approximately 7 years ago the village was in favour of a building being erected on the Playing Field. This was still the favoured site and it was felt that the village should have something built that it can afford.

The Chairman then reconvened the meeting.

6. Casual Vacancies

Council were reminded that there are now four vacancies on the Parish Council, following the resignation of Mrs. Freer, and since the last meeting the resignations of Mrs. Barr, Mr. Bennett and Mr. Fleming.

Confirmation had been received that all vacancies can be filled by co-option and Councillors were asked to enquire of anyone they knew who might be interested. The vacancies had been advertised in the Village Notice Board, the Parish Magazine and the Parish Council website but at the time of the meeting no approaches had been received from anyone interested in joining the Council.

Consider the possibility of reducing the number of councillors. The Clerk confirmed that she had contacted the Electoral Services Manager at the Borough Council who would give consideration to the request once a copy of these minutes had been provided. Apparently Welney was allocated 8 councillors with an electorate of 406 under a review which took place several years ago, but had actually requested 9 councillors. Following a discussion it was proposed by Cllr. Bray, seconded by Cllr. Dobson and unanimously agreed that we should make a request to reduce the number of councillors representing Welney to 8, the reason for this being the problems experienced with filling current vacancies.

7. Minutes of the last meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 4th March having been circulated to all councillors were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record of that meeting. A copy of the brief report of the Annual Parish Meeting also held on 4th March was also circulated to Councillors and a copy is also in the Minute Book.

8. Matters Arising

a. Parish Council Newsletter – Following the resignation of Mrs. Barr and Bennett nothing at all is known about the P.C. Newsletter and it was agreed that this would no longer be considered, but that Reports from the Parish Council would continue to be sent to the Welney News as and when appropriate.

b. William Marshall School - Cllr. Dobson reported that the school Fayre held at the end of March had not been well supported by either the parents from the school or residents. The children had held a week of fund raising at the school.

c. Village Litter Pick – Mr. Bennett had confirmed that he would continue with this project and it will now be left to him.

d. Report for Welney News – Congratulations were extended to Cllr. Dobson for the excellent report which she had prepared to inclusion in the Welney News.

9. Finance

The following invoices were received and on the proposal of Cllr.Bray, seconded by Cllr.Pratley and agreed the cheques were signed:

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| Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk | |
| Yearly contribution to maintenance of Upwell Community Car Park | 150 . 00 |
| Clerks Expenses | 34 . 65 |
| Norfolk Association of Local Councils – 2014/15 Membership | 121 . 26 |
| Paid by Direct Debit: | |
| 1.4. 14 Clerks Salary | 255 . 68 |
| 11.4.14 E-on Electric for lights | 62 . 19 |

10. Parish Hall.

The electricity meters were emptied before the start of the meeting and the sum of £18.00 was removed. Nothing further had been heard from Anglian Water regarding the replacement of the water meter and it was agreed to speak to them again.

11. Proposed New Community Centre.

Following the working group meeting on 18th March, all councillors had been circulated with a copy of the spreadsheet presentation prepared by Cllr.Dobson. The two main areas for consideration were the Church and the Playing Field site, and the spreadsheet showed that if anything could be done regarding the Church it would be at least 2 years away. This was discussed at length with various questions being raised again relating to the Church and the School. It is sincerely hoped that the school will be able to continue because of partnership and federation plans with adjoining schools. Cllr.Bray then confirmed to the meeting that following the Workshop meetings proper procedure has been followed and matters now have to move forward.

The Clerk had presented to all councillors a copy of the plan of the proposed layout for the new building received from MRC. The cost of the building shown on the plan would be £115,000 but it was mentioned that an additional unit to make the hall area would be useful. This would add a further £18,000 to the cost.

The Chairman confirmed that he had spoken to Marshall's Charity and a letter had been received from them dated 21st March setting out the rights of the charity and how they see their responsibilities in connection with the grant which had been promised towards the new hall.

Also from the Working Group it had been mentioned that there may be some asbestos present in the pavilion. A quotation for a survey for both the pavilion and the parish hall had been received in the sum of £692 plus VAT, but Mr.,Loveday confirmed that he had an associate who could deal with the asbestos (if there was any) and it was agreed to leave thus for the time being.

Following further discussion:

1. Cllr.Bray proposed that the site for the new hall should be on the playing field to replace the existing pavilion. This proposal was seconded by Cllr.Dobson with 4 in favour and one abstention.
2. Cllr.Dobson proposed that we should include the additional unit in a total cost of £133,000 added to the plan provided. This was seconded by Cllr.Bray and carried unanimously with five in favour.
3. The question of the play area was raised and it was agreed that the most likely site for this would be on the site of the old cricket nets.
4. The Clerk was asked to contact MRC and obtain up to date drawings with the additional bay in readiness for the next Marshall's Charity meeting on 24th April.
5. The question of car parking was also raised and the meeting was informed that there is an area of land almost opposite the hall (which apparently does not belong to anyone) and it was agreed to make further enquiries.

The meeting was advised that the Borough Council had funding available for Village Halls and it was agreed to look into this as soon as possible. It was also agreed to contact Highways regarding a possible TROD footway which might give access to the Playing Field

12. Playing Field.

The Chairman had confirmed that the play equipment kindly donated free of charge from Sutton Parish Council had been collected and was being stored at his premises. Once the development at the Playing Field is underway a decision on siting can be made and the possibility of applying for grant towards additional equipment. The meeting was advised that there is a scheme with one of the waste disposal companies which will allow grants to be made towards play equipment and Graham Redman of Sutton has all the details for future reference.

Mr.Carter had telephoned again regarding the trees and the playing Field. The Chairman confirmed that he would speak to Mr.Carter as soon as possible and make the necessary arrangements.

13. Correspondence

1. Norfolk Rural Community Council – Details of Thinking WISP fast local broadband which is a partnership between Norfolk RCC, AF Affinity and inTouch Systems. This is apparently a wireless internet system that covers the whole of Norfolk and beyond.
2. Cambridgeshire ACRE – 11.3.14 – Heritage Lottery Fund has just awarded the Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership Scheme a grant of just under £1 million. Cllr.Goodger confirmed that he is a member of the scheme representing Welney.
3. A copy of the minutes of the joint meeting of Councils at Emneth on 11th March, 2014.

14. Planning Matters

1. All councillors had been circulated with a copy of an e-mail from PCSO Esther Bortz confirming that the Police had been successful in securing a prosecution against the owner of Old Welney Hotel for the disturbance to the badgers.
2. Councillors had also been circulated with a copy of the Borough Council letter and questions regarding WEL1 the site of the Old Three tuns and Parish Hall, under the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan Preferred Options site. It was agreed to confirm that the Parish Council are not the owners of the land in WEL1 and therefore we cannot answer the questions. However it was further agreed to confirm our disappointment in the fact that no consideration has been given to the request to confirm the VDA boundary north to include land border either side of the A.1101

15. Highway Matters including Wash Road.

The Clerk confirmed that following the last meeting items raised had been reported to Highways. Martin Edmunds had confirmed that he has programmed some patching works on March Road and Wisbech Road. With regard to the trees at Tipps End, he has checked these and confirmed that they are boundary trees and belong to the landowners in the area.

All Councillors had been circulated with a copy of the brief report of the meeting held at Welney on 14th March. A copy is included in the minute book and copies have also been sent to Vicky Ford MEP's office and to Elizabeth Truss MP as well as all those who attended. Copies of an e-mail sent from Vicky Ford to Owen Patterson and his reply regarding Dredging of the Ouse Washes etc. was reported to the meeting.

Mr.Bennett had confirmed in his resignation letter that he would be interested in continuing with the position of Flood Warden. The Environment Agency have been advised of his resignation so are removing his details from their records and will be circulating information direct to the Chairman and the Clerk. Any decision regarding Flood Warden will be discussed at the next meeting.

16. Items for Next Agenda

1. Update of Village Emergency Plan.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.25 p.m. And thanked everyone for attending.

SignedK.Goodger (Chairman)..... Dated6th May, 2014.....