

Minutes of the Meeting of Welney Parish Councillor
held in the Parish Hall, Welney on Tuesday 3rd June, 2014 at 7.30 p.m.

Present : Cllr.K.Goodger (Chairman), Cllrs. T.Bray, R.Gilbert, V.Pratley, G.Rainbird, A.Wardle and the Clerk.
Also present: Dist.Cllrs. D. Pope and V.Spikings, Mr. & Mrs. Levesley, Mr.J.Loveday and Mr.T.Bennett.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Parish Council Meeting.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr.S.Dobson, C.Cllr.H.Humphrey & PCSO Claire Law

2. Declaration of Interests

None at this stage.

3. Casual Vacancies on the Parish Council.

Council were reminded that at present there are still two vacancies on the Parish Council. Notices had been posted in accordance with requirements but no one had come forward with an interested in being co-opted to the Council. Confirmation had been received from the Borough Council that the process has been put in motion to see if the number of councillors for Welney can be reduced from 9 to 8 but this process will take sometime. It was proposed by Cllr.Gilbert, seconded by Cllr.Rainbird and agreed that a letter should be sent to all those persons who had resigned from the Council within the last 12 months, asking them if they would be prepared to return for the remaining 10 months until the Elections in May 2015.

4. Public Participation

The Chairman then adjourned the meeting for Public Participation:

Mr. Bennett raised the following matters for consideration –

- a. Houses in Chestnut Avenue – He understood that one of the conditions of the refurbishment work was that nesting boxes should be installed for the house martins – This does not appear to have been done.
- b. The hedge around Clayton's Corner has been cut back by Highways and he had received complaints about the way in which it had been done. The Chairman explained that Haulage Companies had complained about the overgrown state of the hedge, and whilst it was the responsibility of the property owner, Highways had carried out the work at short notice to make the road much safer.
- c. He then gave a brief explanation of the work of thee Norfolk Local Access Forum and funding monies available for work to public rights of way etc. He advised that the footpath around the corner up to Hurn Drove was scheduled for a cut again in July. He also mentioned the path around Sandgate Corner may be cut again shortly and this needs to be kept in better order by the Highways Department as it is becoming very overgrown. He also recommended that the Parish Council should have a strategy in place about how they wish to deal with Rights of Way.
- d. The Review of the Parish Action plan should be given attention as soon as possible.
- e. He then mentioned the post of Flood Warden for Welney. The Parish Council had always understood that they appointed Mr.Bennett as Flood Warden for the village, but Mr.Bennett was adamant that he was appointed by the Environment Agency This needs to be clarified.

Mr.Loveday then asked that all councillors had read the letter from himself and Mr.Cox regarding the new building on the playing field, sent following the last meeting., There was a lively discussion regarding this matter and input from several parties, including Dist.Cllr.Spikings was gratefully received. Propositions were made, seconded and agreed, and are detailed under the heading of new community centre.

The Chairman then reconvened the meeting and continued with the evenings business.

5 Minutes of Last meeting

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council held on 6th May, 2014 having been circulated to all councillors, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.

6. Matters Arising

a. Houses in Chestnut Avenue – Following the last meeting letters had been sent to Elizabeth Truss MP, Vicky Ford MEP. Cllrs. David Pope and Vivienne Spikings and Mr. Ray Harding, Chief Executive of the Borough Council expressing Council's concern over the way that Freebridge are dealing with the properties in Chestnut Avenue. An e-mail had been received from Mr. Harding confirming that he has raised the matter with the Chief Executive of Freebridge and is making enquiries of the Homechoice team to establish whether the levels of demand for social housing in Welney are in fact as low as has been suggested. Elizabeth Truss MP forwarded a copy of a letter she had received from Director of Property at Freebridge as follows:

Thank you for contacting our chief Executive in connection with the Chestnut Avenue Houses and the concerns that have been raised by Welney Parish Council. As I am sure you are aware, housing of a non-traditional build provides some challenges and there are often a number of options that we can consider before deciding on the best course of action. The properties at Welney were considered alongside similar properties at other locations across the Borough over three years ago as we developed our approach to the modernisation of these homes and a plan was put in place. As the works commenced on a property by property basis there have been some significant changes to housing legislation which has culminated in us having to re-assess our financial commitments to these modernisation works. It is essential that we invest in our stock where we can ensure that there will be an ongoing demand for the property, not just the current tenancy. At the present time there is only limited interest in properties at Welney from waiting list applicants. This re-assessment has resulted in us having to make some challenging decisions in respect of continuing with the works without being able to demonstrate a housing need within the area/ We have attended two Parish Council meetings to advise them in the first instance of the works that were to take place and secondly of our reviewed plans. We have not made any decision at this stage as to the outcome as all the options available have yet to be explored. We have met with Cllr. Spikings and Cllr. Pope to outline the issues with housing need in the area and they provided some further suggestions on establishing need with a neighbouring authority which we are currently exploring. Following on from the above and a meeting with officers at the Borough Council it is our intention to undertake some work with the parish in respect of local needs to ensure we have all the facts prior to making our final decision on the outcome of the remaining properties that are occupied at Chestnut Avenue. I hope this provides you with enough information and as we establish our plans we will update you further. We will also keep in contact with local residents, the Parish Council and the Borough Council as information becomes available.

Nothing further had been heard from any parties regarding this matter.

Following on from Mr. Bennett's comments under Public Participation it was agreed to contact Freebridge Community Housing and ascertain the position with regard to the nest boxes for the House Martins.

b. State of the Village Bus Shelter – Following the last meeting, Cllr. Bray had made an inspection of the bus shelter and found that it is leaning backwards by about 17.5 degrees. Mr. Loveday confirmed that he would sort out the problem and level the bus shelter and grateful thanks were extended to him.

7. Finance

The Clerk confirmed that confirmation had been received from Mr. Loveday that the artificial wicket at the playing field had been completed and everyone was delighted with the finished product. In accordance with the agreement at the last meeting, the cheque was duly signed and will be posted off immediately.

a. On the proposition of Cllr Bray, seconded by Cllr. Pratley and agreed, the following cheques were passed for payment and duly signed:

Came and Company – Parish Council and Parish Hall Insurance Renewal premium £1,348.62 but if Parish Council are prepared to sign a further Long Term Agreement up to 7 th June, 2017 then a further 5% discount is available. This was agreed and the Premium for year 8.6.14 to 7.6.15	£1,281 . 19
Anglian Water – Supply to the pavilion	17 . 49
Anglian water – Supply to Parish Hall	64 . 39
Mrs.P.Copeman – Clerks Expenses	23 . 75

Paid by Direct Debit	
Mrs.P.Copeman – Clerks Salary 1.6.14	255 . 68
E-On – Electricity for Pavilion	64 . 58
E-On – Electricity for street lights	60 . 19

b. Annual Return for Accounts to 31.3.14 – All Councillors had been provided with a full set of accounts for the Parish Council, Parish Hall etc. It was confirmed that the accounts had been internally audited and signed and dated as correct. On the proposition of Cllr.Rainbird, seconded by Cllr.Bray and agreed, the accounts were formally adopted and the Chairman and Clerk signed the Annual Return in readiness for it to be forwarded to Mazars, the external auditors by the end of June.

8. Parish Hall

The electricity meters were read before the meeting and the sum of £6.00 was removed.

The Clerk confirmed that she had asked the plumber to call at the Hall as soon as possible because of a leaking stop tap in the gent's toilets.

9. Proposed New Community Centre

The Clerk confirmed that since the last meeting she had received an e-mail from Metcalfe, Copeman & Pettefar regarding the Deeds of the Playing Field. They had asked for an idea of the 4 Trustees and from the information on file, the details were passed over. The names confirmed that everyone was talking about the same land, but the Solicitors stated that if we wished to collect the deeds or do anything with the land then the permission would have to be given in writing from the four Trustees. This would prove to be impossible because at least three of the persons named passed away sometime ago. It was agreed that the Clerk would forward a copy of a letter from the Charity Commission and a copy of the Annual Return for the Playing Field Charity which confirms that the Parish Council are the only Trustees of the Playing Field.

Councillors had been provided with a copy of the final plan of the proposed new building which MRC had provided and instructions were given to Mr. C.Neill of MRC to ask his Architect to contact the Planning Department with regard to a planning application for the new building. The Clerk confirmed that she had spoken to Mr.Neill that afternoon and at the moment there was nothing further to report from his Architect.

Council understood that Mr.Loveday had met Mick Ward a Demolition Contractor at the Pavilion and he had been asked for a price for the demolition of the existing building. A quotation was received from him in the sum of £6,900 plus VAT and the price included full demolition insurance, all labour, plant, skip and haulage charges, risk assessment, method statement, fencing and welfare. The price did not include for the removal of any asbestos and all mains services are to be disconnected by others prior to the work starting. The price would be valid for four months.

Following the last meeting, letters had been received from both Mr.Loveday and Mr.Cox and these had been circulated to all councillors for information., Following the lengthy discussion and advice to push the project forward under public participation, it was proposed by Cllr. Bray, seconded by Cllr. Gilbert and unanimously agreed, that Mr.Loveday sets up a working group of which he will be the Chairman, and he has full control over the people in the group, in order to push the matter forward to completion at the earliest opportunity on a “turn-key” basis. Further that two named councillors are to assist on the group and report back to the Parish Council on a regular monthly basis. Mr.Loveday agreed to this proposition and confirmed that he would contact the parties who had originally agreed to form part of the working group to see if they were prepared to continue. Cllr.Bray also suggested that Terms of Reference for the Group should be prepared so that the matter can go forward amicably for the benefit of the Parish Council and the Action Team

10. Playing Field

The Chairman confirmed that he had not yet had the opportunity of speaking to Mr.Carter regarding the trees but he would do so as soon as possible. The Clerk confirmed that she would be meeting a Mr.Moon from the Borough Council Environmental Health Office at the Pavilion on 4th June, in order to make sure that the facilities at the pavilion are fit for use at the present time.

11. Correspondence

1. Fenland District Council – Inspectors Report, the Adoption of the Fenland Local Plan and Policies Map – May 2014 and consultation on the draft Resource Use and Renewable Energy SPD. Dated 19th May, 2014
- 2.. West Norfolk Sports Council - Annual Meeting – Wednesday 11th June at Lynnsport, King's Lynn
3. Environment Agency – Details of the Annual Programme of maintenance Work on the Ouse Washes.

12. Planning Matters

Following the last meeting, a letter was sent to the Borough Council expressing Council's opinion regarding the Draft Preferred Options for a Detailed Policies and Sites Plan – Draft Policy WEL1 Former Three Tuns/Village Hall, but nothing further had been heard.

The Clerk had circulated all councillors with the following Planning Application, but as no adverse comments were received the form confirming Parish Council support was duly returned:

Ref No. 14/00653/F Miss J.Head

New single storey conservatory on the rear elevation at Croft Farm, Wisbech Road, Tipps End

13. Highway Matters

Following the last meeting, contact was made with Andy Wallace and Phil Hayton of Westcotec regarding the problems being experienced with the dot matrix signs going off randomly when there is no water anywhere near the road.. A copy e-mail was received on 8th May that Phil was looking into the problem and was grateful to us for bringing it to their attention. However on 27th May another call was received that the sign at Littleport was merrily flashing away. The Clerk confirmed that she had spoken to Phil Hayton who realised that there was a problem with the censor which measures the water level and it was picking up all sorts of debris and grass blowing in the wind. They have now ordered a new censor which will be encased in the actual pole and this should completely solve the problem.

On 12th May a News Release was received from Elizabeth Truss MP as follows:

S.W.Norfolk MP Elizabeth Truss said that the possibility of raising the Welney Causeway to reduce the road closures caused by regular flooding is extremely encouraging. In a notice out today, NCC has submitted a bid to the Government's Grant in Aid scheme for a £1.1m project to raise the road so it could be used even when the Ouse Washes are flooded., The 14 mile long Welney Wash Road (A1101) runs across the Ouse Washes flood Storage Reservoir which is part of the Environment Agency's strategic flood management system for the country. Water is released from the Bedford stretch of the river Ouse into the Washes when necessary so the water can be discharged into the sea at the Wash. This can leave the Welney Wash Road submerged forcing motorists on lengthy diversions. Elizabeth first raised the issue of the Welney Causeway with the Environment Agency in 2011 then in March 2013 she called a flood summit at Welney with the Parish Council, local councils, highways and Environment Agency and asked that a feasibility study be done into improvements on the causeway. Elizabeth also supported local councillors in their bid for dot matrix signs at the causeway to give real time flooding heights, She called on NCC to implement additional signage on the approaches to Welney to give early warning to drivers of flooding on the road. Concern had been raised by the number of HGV's arriving in the village only to have to turn around as the road was closed. Elizabeth subsequently convened a meeting on 16th May with the E.A., NCC, Chair of Welney Parish Council and the Internal Drainage Boards to discuss this further.

The Chairman confirmed that he had attended the meeting at Downham Market on 16th May and that meeting was advised that £400,000 was earmarked for 2016/17 to resurface the Wash Road. £700,000 has to be found from private funders to meet the total cost of £1,100,000. It would therefore mean that if they are successful in obtaining the additional funding the work could be done in 3-4 years time.

I also have a copy of a letter from Owen Paterson to Elizabeth Truss regarding this matter, but it does run onto three pages and if you would like to read it, I will bring it along to the meeting.

The Clerk confirmed that she had spoken to Andy Wallace of Highways regarding the possibility of a TROD foot way along March Road leading to the playing field. Mr.Wallace had advised that it could be possible for

this to be done, but he would need to make a site visit to see exactly what the route is and if there is sufficient space. To make the minimum width TROD with a basic surface would cost in the region of £6,000 but if it had a more permanent surface then it could cost more money. It was agreed to ask Mr.Wallace to visit as some time and give Council the benefit of his advice. If funding was required then this is something that the Parish Council would look into themselves.

Confirmation had been received that the Highway Rangers would be visiting Welney during the week commencing 14th July, 2014.

14, Community Emergency Plan

All Councillors had been provided with a copy of the community Emergency Plan ,but it was agreed to leave the updating of the plan until next month.

15. Items for Next Agenda

- a. Houses in Old Bedford Row
- b. Review of the Village Action Plan
- c. Faster Broadband for Welney Village
- d, Report from District Councillors for the Welney News.

There being no further business the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed at 9.15 p.m.

SignedK. Goodger..... Dated8th July, 2014.....