

Minutes of the meeting of Welney Parish Council held in The Parish Hall, Welney on Tuesday 8th July, 2014

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

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr..S.Dobson, Dist.Cllr.V.Spikings and C.Cllr.H.Humphrey

2. Declaration of Interests

The Chairman declared an interest in Item 19 on the Agenda – The Old Croft River.

3. Casual Vacancies

Following the last meeting the Clerk confirmed that she had written to six persons who had resigned from the Parish Council during the last 12 months to see if they would be interested in rejoining. Replies had been received from five persons. Two persons confirmed that they were not interested in rejoining at all, and the other three might consider the possibility again at sometime in the future. It was confirmed that the Parish Council are quorate as although we should have 9 councillors, we actually have 7 at present and a quorum is 3. Continued efforts would be made to fill the two vacancies although council were reminded that a request had been made to the Borough to reduce the number of councillors from 9 to 8.

4. Public Participation

The Chairman then adjourned the meeting for Public Participation, and as no members of the public had any items to raise, the meeting was duly reconvened.

5. Minutes of the last meeting

All Councillors had received a copy of the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd June, and two Councillors raised objection to a part of the minutes under Paragraph 9 – Proposed New Community Centre. Cllrs.Gilbert and Rainbird were concerned that the matter had not been minuted correctly with regard to the Terms of Reference for the Action Team, but after lengthy discussion it was agreed that the last line of the fourth paragraph should be amended from....."for the benefit of everyone.." to read"for the benefit of the Parish Council and the Action Team"..... This amendment was duly made, initialled by the Chairman and the minutes were then confirmed and signed as a correct record of that meeting.

6. Matters Arising

Houses in Chestnut Avenue – Nothing further had been heard from the authorities regarding the properties in Chestnut Avenue although work is still progressing with regard to the houses which are to be occupied by those having to move from the houses that Freebridge are no longer intending to modernise. Contact had been made with Freebridge regarding nest boxes being installed for the House Martins and it was confirmed that this was never part of any agreement. The required bat boxes had been installed but even if boxes had been put up for the birds it is extremely unlikely that they would ever use them. Heidi Cowls had also contacted the Clerk and the Chairman with a roughly drawn plan of an area of land extending into the field adjoining her garden that she might like to take over as a temporary garden when she moves into No.33. She had been advised that this is something the Parish Council might consider – as they of course rent the field. Cllr.Gilbert then confirmed that he had spoken to Heidi about this and also to Dist.Cllr.Spikings and had everything in hand. The Clerk was instructed to speak to Ms.Cowles to find out the current situation with regard to her move.

7. Finance

The following invoices had been received for payment and the proposition of Cllr.Bray, seconded by Cllr.Wardle and agreed, the cheques were duly signed:

Westcotec – Street Light Maintenance for May and June	115 . 76
Norfolk Playing Fields Subscription	20 . 00
Norfolk Rural Community Council – Subscription	20 . 00
Mrs.P. Copeman – Clerks Expenses	43 . 75

The following accounts were paid by direct debit

Mrs.P.Copeman – Clerks Salary 1.7.14	255 . 68
E-On – Electric for lights 11.7.14	62 . 19

8. Parish Hall.

The electricity meters were emptied before the start of the meeting and the sum of £10 was removed
A visit from the plumber was still awaited with regard to the leaking pipe in the gent's toilet and this would be followed up immediately. Anglian Water would be visiting to install a new water meter in the Kitchen on Wednesday 9th July.

9. Proposed New Village Hall/Pavilion

Following the last meeting, confirmation had been received that the Action Team had held one meeting and booked the pavilion for meetings on the third Wednesday of each month until December.

Terms of Reference – Following the last meeting Mr.T.Bray (acting as a private individual) had prepared Terms of Reference for the Action Team and these had been forwarded to Mr.Loveday, the Action Team Chairman, in time for their first meeting on 18th June. All Councillors had received a copy of the TOR. Following the Action Team meeting, some amendments had been made to the TOR and all councillors had received a copy of these, together with a copy of the comparison which had been prepared by Cllr.Bray. **Following brief discussion it was proposed by Cllr.Gilbert, seconded by Cllr.Bray and unanimously agreed that the TOR received from the Action Team should be adopted.** Cllr.Bray confirmed that he would reformat the document and then it could be signed by both the Parish Council Chairman and the Chairman of the Action Team as soon as possible – without waiting until the next Parish Council meeting. Grateful thanks were extended to Cllr.Bray and apologies were extended to those Councillors who felt that they had been kept in the dark with regard to the TOR.

An e-mail had been received from Cllr.Wardle on behalf of the Action Team raising some points for Council attention:

1. It is believed that the PC underwent a tender process before choosing the preferred contractor. Is it possible to have copies of the paperwork relating to the tenders. *The clerk confirmed that two additional companies were contacted for a quote and copies the replies and quotations have been supplied for their files.*
2. At the PC meeting we discussed who owns the land where the new pavilion is to be built. Has this now been resolved? *The Clerk replied that she was still waiting to hear from the Solicitors but have confirmed to them that the four original trustees are no longer with us but that in 1998 the field was vested in the Parish Council as Trustees, and this is confirmed in a letter from the Charity Commission. A request for an update has been sent to the Solicitors.*
- 3 It would be useful if the Action Team could have copies of all information regarding the project so far. Is this possible. The team would find the copies of the large scale plans particularly useful. *The Clerk replied that she would go through all the files and copy what is relevant for the Teams information. The only large scale plans of the proposed building from MRC are slightly out of date as the layout of the proposed building has changed several times – No large plans of the latest layout have been made available but it is certain that MRC would be happy to provide these if asked.*
4. Is there a process for the Action team to claim day to day expenses for such things as travel and stationary etc. I assume this will need to be discussed at the PC meeting. *This matter was discussed and it was proposed by Cllr.Bray, seconded by Cllr.Gilbert and agreed that the Action Team should have a Petty Cash float of £50.00. A cheque was drawn and signed and the clerk agreed to get the cash from the Bank and ensure that it was handed over to the Action Team Treasurer. The Secretary of the Action Team would contact the Clerk for such things as paper, and envelopes etc.*

Cllr.Wardle confirmed that there had been an excellent response from all members of the Action Team and all their different skills and experiences would be used in due course. The Chairman of the Parish Council also confirmed that if an additional council meeting is required for anything this can be arranged a short notice. He also confirmed that the services of the Parish Clerk are available for information etc. at any time.

10. Playing Field.

Following the last meeting, the Clerk confirmed that she had met Mr.Moon from the Borough Council Environmental Health Department at the Pavilion on 4th June. He appreciated that the building is old and in need of replacement but provided that no food is prepared on the premises, he is happy that it is fit for purpose in serving food that has been prepared elsewhere. Mr.Loveday confirmed that there is a plumbing problem with the gents toilet at the rear of the changing rooms and Cllr.Gilbert agreed that he would have a look at the problem. The Clerk confirmed that the Charity Commission Annual Return for the Playing Field had been completed on line.

11. Correspondence

1. Norfolk Rural Community Council – Details of the NHS Complaints Advocacy Service
2. Norfolk Rural Community Council – Details of the AGM which took place on 30th June and a copy of Signpost the NRCC Newsletter.
3. E-mail from the Environment Agency with regard to the post of Flood Warden for the Village, and confirming that they have never appointed Mr.Bennett to that position. A letter would be sent to Mr.Bennett confirming this and answering the other questions he raised under Public Participation at the June meeting.

12. Planning Matters

The following planning application had been received from the Borough Council for consideration Ref No. 14/00782/F – Mr.N. Spellar, Erection of a single storey workshop and gallery at Lady Fen Cottage, Hundred Foot Bank, Welney. The plans were handed round for inspection, and some councillors confirmed that they had visited the property and talked to the owner about his proposals. Following brief discussion it was unanimously agreed that the Parish Council support the application.

13. Highway Matters including Wash Road.

An e-mail had been received from Elizabeth Truss MP and Steve Barclay MP to Tom McCabe at Norfolk County Council as follows:

We are delighted that Norfolk County Council and the Environment Agency are working together to produce a feasibility study into raising the Welney Causeway to help reduce the number of road closures caused by flooding.. As I am sure you know, we are keen for this study to commence as soon as possible. Local residents and road users do not want to have to endure more months of closures if we have major flooding again in the area. We appreciate that there are a number of factors to consider. However we understand that initial funds of £50,000 are available now from the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee to commence the study and call on both Norfolk County Council and the environment Agency to make this a priority so that progress can be made onto the next step of the scheme. We are keen to assist so please do contact us if there are issues that are causing unnecessary delays.

Cllr.Wardle then advised members of an article in the Norfolk RCC newsletter confirming that around £94, million has been allocated to the New Anglian Local Enterprise Partnership. Part of the allocation would be for the European Regional Development /fund and the majority of their funds will be invested into business support and innovation and will underpin this with support to the low carbon economy. Measures which will help businesses and communities become more resilient to the devastating impact of flooding and other natural disasters, to which this area is very susceptible. Following a brief discussion it was proposed by Cllr.Wardle, seconded by Cllr.Bray and agreed that letter should be sent to the District Councillors, County Councillors and Elizabeth Truss MP and Steve Barclay MP to see if some of the money could be earmarked towards the cost of raising the approximately 1 mile of road across the Welney Wash.

As previously advised the Highway Rangers will be visiting the village week commencing 14th July.

A telephone call had been received from Mr.P.Singletery to say that he had fallen quite badly on the uneven footpath on Main Street between the Almshouses and the Bridge and it was agreed to contact Mr.Wallace as matter of urgency.

14. Community Emergency Plan

The Community Emergency Plan was last updated in 2012, and after making some alterations and amendments, the clerk was asked to amend and update the document and forward it to all councillors, together with an updated telephone cascade, so that it could be considered further at the next meeting, and hopefully approved and signed by the chairman.

15. Houses in Old Bedford Row

Cllr.Gilbert had asked for this item to be included as he was concerned about the state of the access road to the Houses. The Chairman explained that before an item is included in the Agenda, the Clerk should obtain as much information as possible so that council were aware of what they had to consider. He then went onto explain that without direct contact from the residents, the Parish Council were not able to act, but if all or some of the residents wrote expressing their concerns then the Council could offer support and point them in the right direction.

16. Review of the Parish/Village Action Plan

The original Parish Action Plan was first published in 2008 and had been reviewed twice since then in January 2010 and October 2012. After a brief discussion it was proposed by Cllr.Bray, seconded by Cllr.Wardle and agreed that any review should be held in abeyance until October 2014 so that progress with regard to the new Pavilion/Hall could be included along with any other updated information.

17. Faster Broadband for Welney

Cllr.Wardle gave details of information she had obtained relating to Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire and the possibility of faster broadband being available. At present there were no proposals for anything to be done to improve the situation in Welney. Cllr.Wardle confirmed that she would be prepared to continue with investigations into this matter and on the proposal from Cllr.Bray, seconded by Cllr.Pratley and agreed, she confirmed that she would try and make arrangements for a representative to come and talk to the Parish Council..

18. Reports from District Councillors for Welney News

Dist.Cllr. Pope confirmed that himself and Cllr.Spikings had been requested to write an article for the Welney News in the past, but so far it had not happened. It was suggested that perhaps Cllr.Pope might like to write something for the next issue and then Cllr.Spikings might like to do something for the following one.

19. Old Croft River

A request had been received from Cllr.Gilbert to include this on the Agenda. He is concerned regarding the cleaning out of the river and the removal of all sludge from the river and the cleaning under the bridges and allowing flow of water. He stated that the river is contaminated with human waste so sludge must be completely removed from the site. Apparently the Environment Health will be writing to the Drainage Board
The Chairman declared an interest and went on to give a short history of the Old Croft River., The middle of the river is the boundary between two drainage boards and the Upwell Drainage Board do most of the maintenance work. There are 36 culverts in total on the length of the river and all are the responsibility of the land owners to keep clean, not the drainage board. He did confirm that it might be possible to clean out specific stretches of the river in order to make them more pleasant and he advised that if there were any issues relating to the river at all, to ring either himself or the Upwell Internal Drainage Board.

20. Items for the next agenda

- a. Possibility of arranging an In House Training Session for the benefit of all councillors.

There being no further business the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed at 9.21 p.m.

SignedK.Goodger (Chairman)

Dated5th August, 2014.....