

Minutes of the Meeting of The Welney Parish Council
held in The Parish Hall, Welney on Tuesday 7th July, 2015 at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Cllr.K.Goodger (Chairman) Cllrs: L.Bombata, H. Cowles, K.Cowles, P.Edmunds, J.Elliott, R.Gilbert and G.Rainbird, Dist.Cllrs, D.Pope and V.Spikings, approximately 9 members of the public and the Clerk.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that various letters and e-mails had been circulating and that no debate between parties should take place by e-mail. He explained that when Councillors sign their Declaration of Acceptance of office they agree to be bound by the Code of Conduct and that some actions could bring the whole council into disrepute. He confirmed that he had taken advice and that he was intending to include an item entitled Communications Policy, on the agenda for the next meeting

1. Apologies for absence

P.C.S.O. W.Parker, Downham Market Police

2. Declaration of Interests

None at this stage.

3. Public Participation

The Chairman then adjourned the meeting for public participation. A report was received that the footpath from Wisbech Road leading through the farm buildings to Hurn Drove is extremely overgrown. Highways would be asked to inspect and cut back. Mr.Loveday raised the matter of an e-mail which was sent to him by Cllr.Gilbert in respect to a letter he had sent from the Action Team and asked that the allegations should be retracted and an apology should be made in writing. He also mentioned an e-mail from Cllr.Rainbird which had come to his attention and felt an apology should be forthcoming for this also. Mrs.Pratley also asked for copies of all the e-mails which were circulating following the letter from the Action Team. The Chairman then reconvened the meeting.

4. Minutes of 9th June, 2015

All Councillors had received a copy of the minutes of 9th June and these were duly signed as a correct record of that meeting.

5. Matters Arising

a. Parish Council Website – Cllr.Bombata declared an interest and left the meeting. Following discussion the Chairman declared that he had taken advice and the proposed new website should be able to be used by the Clerk and should not be under the control of any one councillor. It was then proposed that a request be made to the Norfolk Association of Local Councils and ask them to put the advice in writing. 6 Councillors voted in favour with 1 abstention. Cllr. Bombata then returned to the meeting.

b. Parish Council Newsletter – Nothing further at present

c. Houses in Chestnut Avenue – A letter from the Borough Council addressed to Cllr.Lawrence had been circulated to all Councillors. The letter confirmed that Freebridge will be completing Nos.9 and 10 and the tenants who are presently living in 11 and 12 would then move back. Nos.11 and 12 had both been advertised and were under offer to new tenants. Nos.21 and 22 were to be completed and relet. However no decision had been reached with regard to Nos. 13,14,15 and 16 although it was possible that consideration might be given to demolishing them and replacing with 8 smaller units. However discussions would take place with the Parish Council when these plans were formalised – possibly 3-4 months. Freebridge were requested to keep council informed.

d. Tour of the Parish – The Chairman confirmed that the Tour had taken place on 30th June and most of the parish boundaries had been visited. All agreed that it was a useful exercise. One point which arose was

that the Environment Agency should be reminded that the weeds are badly in need of control on the far bank of the tidal Bedford River.

Following interruptions and various comments, and having been warned already, one of the members of the Public was asked by the Chairman, to leave the meeting.

6. Finance

The following invoices had been received for payment and on the proposition of Cllr.Edmunds, seconded by Cllr.H.Cowles, with Cllr.Gilbert against and Cllrs.Rainbird and Bombata abstaining, the cheques were signed

Westcotec – Street Lighting Maintenance for May and June 2015	115 . 76
Mrs.P.Copeman – Clerks Expenses	15 . 72

Paid by Direct Debit – Mrs.P.Copeman – Clerks Salary – July £255.68

Street Lighting Maintenance Contract - No Councillors had been able to obtain alternative competitive quotations for the street lighting maintenance and on the proposition of Cllr.K.Cowles, seconded by Cllr.H.Cowles it was unanimously agreed that the contract with Westcotec should be renewed for a further three years.

Molly Dancing – Following the last meeting, a copy of the application paperwork for the £2,000 grant from the Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership had been received and circulated to all councillors. It was confirmed that £1,000 has already been received and paid out to the company organising the classes and talks, and a further cheque for £1,000 would be received towards the end of July. After discussion it was confirmed that individuals **MUST NOT** apply for grants/money in the name of the Parish Council.

Accounts – The Clerk had supplied all councillors with a spreadsheet of the years accounts from April to the end of June, and a copy of the Cash Book entries. However, it was confirmed that this was not the information that had been requested. Cllr.Bombata agreed to give more specific details to the Clerk so that hopefully the correct information would be available for the future.

7. William Marshall School Report

Councillors had received a copy of the report prepared by the Parents Group together with a copy of the letter from Children's Services confirming that the School will stay open for at least one more term until Christmas 2015 The Chairman extended many congratulations to all members of the Team for all the hard work they had done in getting the closure stopped in the immediate future.,

8. Parish Hall

The sum of £1.00 was removed from the electricity meter

An e-mail had been received from the Environment Agency confirming that the terms of their previous e-mail were still in order – to extend the lease for a term of 10 years at a rental in the region of £400 per annum. However it was pointed out that the E.Agency had been approached by the Borough Council with regard to the possible development of the hall site, as the request had been made by the Parish Council to ensure that the site was included in the Village Development Area.

9. Proposed new Hall/Pavilion.

An e-mail from the Action Team dated 23rd June had been sent to all councillors setting out the current situation and the fact that they would not be holding further meetings until September.

Action team – Constitution and Progress – All councillors had been sent a copy of the current Terms of Reference for the Action Team. Cllr. Rainbird asked why the Parish Council had not been informed of all the action Team meetings, as the Chairman and Vice Chairman were entitled to attend if they so wished. All information and dates should be received 7 days before the Parish Council meetings so that it can be included for discussion at the meeting. There then followed a heated discussion regarding the Action Team and the Chairman proposed that Cllr Bombata should not be heard because no respect was shown to the chair. The proposition was seconded by Cllr.H.Cowles, but following the vote when Cllrs.Edmunds, Rainbird

and Gilbert voted against the motion, and Cllr.K.Cowles abstained, it was lost. A similar proposition was made by the Chairman against Cllr.Rainbird. This was seconded by Cllr.Elliott, but again was lost when Cllrs.Bombata, Edmunds and Gilbert voted against the motion and Cllr.K.Cowles abstained. Following the discussion, the Chairman adjourned the meeting for 15 minutes. Once the meeting was reconvened, it was agreed to hold an extra ordinary meeting of the Parish Council on Tuesday 14th July when Cllr.Bombata could present the letters relating to the planning application which council were not aware of.

The Action Team confirmed that a cheque for £224.00 had been received from Waitrose following the company's green token collection for the month of June at their Ely Shop.

10. Playing Field.

a. Charity Commission Scheme – An e-mail had been received from the Charity Commission setting out the requirements for the amendments required to the Charity Scheme. The Clerk had supplied all councillors with the information, and it was agreed that this matter would be dealt with at a Trustees Meeting to be held after the extra meeting on 14th July.

b. Dogs on the Playing Field – Information supplied by Cllr.Gilbert had been circulated to all councillors and a formal resolution would need to be prepared in readiness for approval at the August meeting. Cllr.Edmunds confirmed to the meeting that R.U.G. would be allowing dogs on the Sandgate Corner Field.

c. Grass Cutting on the Playing Field – All councillors had received a copy of the quotation for the grass cutting from Giles Landscapes but it was proposed by Cllr.Elliott, seconded by Cllr.H.Cowles and unanimously agreed that we continue with our current arrangement that the Welney Croft Cricket Club should cut the grass on payment from the Parish Council of £850 per year.

11. Correspondence

1. Environment Agency – re Trail Bikes on the Banks – E-mail from E.A. Dated 23/6/15 circulated to councillors. E.A. Confirm that they are aware of the problem – please advise of any further problems.
2. Various e-mails from the Environment Agency regarding Water quality – circulated to Councillors for information.
3. e-mail from Paul Fox – The person who offered to contribute towards wooden gates for the verges on the three roads entering Welney has offered £50 towards the project. He understood there was a scheme whereby the Parish council can claim back 50% of the cost of these and he wondered if the council would like to consider funding the rest of the project. The Clerk had explained to him that the 50% is the Parish Partnership Scheme (which is fully subscribed until April 2016) but the Council would still have to find £850 to £900 to pay for their half of the cost, if they were successful in obtaining the 50% funding from the PPS. Mr.Fox also mentioned the street lighting which was discussed at the June meeting. He considers the Parish Council should opt for LED street lights which would not only save money in the long run but also be a good step to take in terms of lowering our carbon footprint and thereby lessening our contribution to global warming.

12. Planning Matters

Nothing to report.

13. Highway Matters

The points raised at the June Meeting (Items 1-4) were reported to Highways with a copy to C.Cllr.Humphrey, A reply was received from Mr.Andy Wallace answering the queries raised:

Flights End – Highways are investigating most appropriate treatment following failure of previous repair.

Footpath Old Garden Centre to Stockyard Farm – Has been inspected and work is being arranged to improve the footway.

Footpath along New Road – Programmed for 2017/18 financial year. Highways to be informed that the footpath is in need of attention now not in 3 years time, otherwise it could become a Health and safety Issue.

Classification of Hurn Drove – Highways confirmed that Hurn Drove is a restricted byway and therefore

classed as carriageway and it is their responsibility for the surface. The properties will own the land but highways rights exist over it. The surface would only be kept to a standard of a soft road so if the residents wished to improve the land it would fall on them to do so. Council were grateful for this information, but requested clarification of who would be responsible for the slope leading from March Road onto Hurn Drove, and possibly the cost of repairs to make it safe and accessible.

E-mail from Darren Arnold at Pisces Caravan Park – This was circulated to Councillors on 19th June and it was agreed that Council would given their further consideration to this once a planning application had been submitted to the Borough Council to extend the number of units on the site.

E-mail also from Laura and Anthony, High Hill House, Welney re Speeding in the Village circulated to councillors on 25th June, at 12 noon. The contents of the e-mail had been noted and it was agreed to forward the information to Cllr.H.Humphrey to see if there was any help or advice he could give with the problem of speeding traffic.

14. Consider request for number of councillors to be returned to 9

Following a brief discussion it was agreed that this item would be withdrawn.

15. Councillors with Portfolio

Following the raising of this item at the last meeting, councillors were asked to prepare a list of specific ideas that could be looked at, in readiness for the next meeting.,

16. Items for the next Agenda

a. Communications Policy

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed at 8.53 p.m.

SignedK.Goodger.....(Chairman)

Dated 4th August, 2015.....