

MINUTES OF MEETING OF LAKENHEATH PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT THE METHODIST CHURCH CHAPEL
ON MONDAY 5th January 2009

Present :- Messrs D Gathercole (Chairman)
I Frost
J Ingham
E Morley
R Rolph
I Smith
M Whitehand

In Attendance :- Suffolk County Councillor Colin Noble; FHDC Councillor Simon Flack & Sqdn Ldr Jerry Neild

7 members of the public were present and 1 member of the Press

1.APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

CLLrs Chambers, Gentle & Rissen (sickness & holiday) – acceptable absences and Cllr Lucas.

2.DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Gathercole – Planning & LDF (FHDC), Village Hall & Lakenheath Playing Fields; Cllr Smith- St Mary's Church & Cllr Whitehand – Youth Club

3. POLICE MATTERS

Police were not in attendance.

4.CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 1st December 2008

Cllr Whitehand referring to item 13 on page 485 said he had not raised this as an item, Clerk acknowledged this and said that she had merely minuted what had been stated at the meeting. Cllr Whitehand agreed that the minutes need /should not be amended but just wanted the situation regularised.

The Chairman closed the meeting

5.REPRESENTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

A member of the public said that trees/bushes are causing an obstruction in vicinity of 71-73 Wingfield Road.

Simon Flack (manages Parish Council website) said that he had been contacted by RBL with a view to promoting a DVD that they have produced on history of village and surrounding area. He wished to confirm that there would be no objection to a "trailer" on website. There were no objections.

Cllr Whitehand to liaise with Clerk re exact location so that she can contact owners.

6.REPORT FROM

a)RAF COMMANDER LAKENHEATH

The Clerk confirmed that she had received an e-mail from the Sqdn Ldr's office detailing early (out of hours) flights on 5th January 2009 but due to short timescale had not been able to do much with it. On

arriving at the meeting Sqdn Ldr Neild said that the early flights this morning were operational and, therefore, little notice could be given. He said that the base are keen to let residents know why they (base) do what they do and are looking to have a meeting in the Village Hall either 29th January or 26th February 2009. It is hoped to have a presentation on helicopter activity too. Cllr Smith said that 29th January would not allow for advertising in Lakenheath Times and that the date in February would be better. As Sqdn Ldr Neild leaves for a trip to the Falklands on 11th January 2009, Clerk will liaise this week with his office.

Clerk to liaise with Sqdn Ldr's office re date/advertising of meeting

Sqdn Ldr Neild was thanked for his attendance and he left the meeting.

b) FOREST HEATH DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cllr Gathercole read out a letter sent by FHDC, ST Edmundsbury & Waveney Councils to Hazel Blears, Secretary of State for Local Govt.. Concern is being expressed at conclusions Boundary Committee may reach as they (B.C.) seem to have given more time to SCC "One Suffolk" bid. It is felt that such an authority would undermine "local" government. The 3 councils had asked for a meeting with the B.C. but this had not been granted (in stark contrast to what happened with SCC) and, therefore, the 3 councils are now asking Ms Blears to intervene/reconsider.

On education and proposed 2 tier system all but 1 Councillor had voted against proposal.

c) SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

Cllr Noble acknowledging that Matt Hales, Locality Officer at SCC, has been in contact with the Clerk said that Community Boards are coming and that the Locality Pilot feeds into that.

On education, Cllr Noble personally has had much involvement, there has been a lot of work done, Suffolk, but Forest Heath in particular, has a very poor record on students going into further education. Something needs to be done.

Referring to RBL DVD on history of Lakenheath, Cllr Noble said Locality Budget had gone into production of it – it is a good timepiece and he is hoping schools may get to see it.

There are proposals for 30MPH speed limit extension on Maids Cross Hill.

He thanked Cllr Smith for some suggestions he had made for use of remaining Locality Budget but having already spent money on mobile mirrors for Village Hall for use by Cygnet Ballet and sound system for Carnival Committee there is little left.

For next year he is looking to allocate £4,000 to a new type of Belisha beacon – clearly visible. May help with some of problems village crossing is considered to have.

Cllr Noble has received letter from disabled lady in village who has highlighted several problems in village re disabled access. He would like to see these in Village Plan. Cllr Gathercole said that he had been in office when the lady in question had called in and he knew Clerk had had contact with her since then. Clerk said that she had been in touch with Colin Bird (SCC – holds budget for dropped kerbs – one issue raised) and he should be coming out to village shortly. Cllr Whitehand asked if PC was falling foul of disability legislation – Cllr Noble said no, it is realised that cost is an issue.

Leaflets on Hazardous waste disposal were handed to Clerk – available in Parish Office.

On Precept Cllr Noble said that a new form of Council Tax bill will be coming out – list increases and efficiency savings.

The Clerk said she had received some literature on activities for older people (from SCC) but the same problem is arising – some activities have been on go since November and, in any event, not much in west of the county.

Cllr Rolph asked where gritting lorries were – he had not seen much sign of them. He was told that they had been out but timing has to be right.

Cllr Noble was thanked for his contribution and he left the meeting.

The meeting was reopened

7.MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

Nothing was raised.

8.PLANNING MATTERS

a) TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Cllr Rolph said that 5 applications had been considered and that there were no objections:-

F/2008/0725/FUL- erection 1 detached dwelling,new vehicular access & conversion single storey outbldg. to 2 bedroom dwelling with parking –Holly Lane

F/2008/0636/FUL(amended)- conversion Cromwell Inn – 5 dwellings;demolition Coach-house erection of cartlodge with residential unit in roof space & rebuilding of 1 dwelling

F/2008/0801/FUL (amended) –erection front ext. – 4 Covey Way

F/2008/0766/COU – change of use from offices to farm shop- High Fen Farm, Station Road

F/2008/769/FUL – erection single storey side/front extension – 14 North Road

b) TO CONSIDER- ANY OUTSTANDING APPLICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE

None

9. LAKENHEATH CEMETERY

a) TO RECEIVE REPORT FROM CEMETERY COMMITTEE

In absence of Cllr Rissen, Cllr Gathercole said he had been up there just before Christmas and it looked nice, neat and tidy and a credit to Cemetery Keeper. Cllr Rolph agreed.

b) TO CONFIRM GRANT OF EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS

There were none.

10.CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA – update/work to be done

Cllr Smith stated that renewal of railings around playground area, to tie in with both new railings around newly equipped part of the Playing Fields and change to siting of gate, should be considered. Cllr Gathercole said that cost would be in region of £6,000 and that there would be a 12 week delivery period. There was much discussion around the cost/worth of work to be done. It was pointed out that there had been concerns about the position of the main gate (proximity to road) although others felt that there is a perfectly adequate gate in situ. It was proposed by Cllr Morley and seconded by Cllr Whitehand that the resiting of the gate and the fencing work should be done. An amendment was proposed by Cllr Ingham and seconded by Cllr Smith that the work should not be done under this year's budget as it is a matter of aesthetic value only. Voting for the amendment were 4 and it was, therefore, carried.

Resolved – work as above to be delayed until new financial year.

11.LAKENHEATH PLAYING FIELDS

Cllr Gathercole, speaking as Playing Fields representative on Parish Council said that the project is well on track but that it would help considerably if FHDC could see that the current project has the support of the Parish Council – a letter of support from the Parish Council. It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all that a letter of support for the current project should be sent to LPFA.

The Clerk read a letter from Brown & Co re Undley Road land – undertake valuation in new year and cost will be £600 plus VAT. They would also like any information that there may be on Planning Permission (change of use from agricultural to recreational). Cllr Gathercole gave a very brief resume of history of land since purchase.

Resolved – Clerk to draft a letter of support from Parish Council and Cllr Gathercole will obtain Planning Permission details from FHDC

12.VILLAGE GREEN

Cllr Smith handed out a resume of the history of the village green – was registered as green at West Suffolk Council in 1968 (VG45) (At same time green at Sandpits Corner was registered VG51). No overnight parking is allowed although there is discretionary parking for up to 12 vehicles. On current position – there is only one commercial premise here now but surface is in poor condition. It was proposed by Cllr Smith that the car parking area be resurfaced by FHDC. Cllr Gathercole said that the resurfacing of the car park area is being taken on board by FHDC. In his narrative Cllr Smith proposed that a bylaw be passed (when proposed legislation is enacted later this year) prohibiting parking on the village green other than on the parking area provided. This was formally proposed, seconded and agreed by all with one abstention. Finally, in his narrative, Cllr Smith proposed the erection of an appropriate parking sign. After discussion about the merits, or not, of a sign it was proposed to the meeting and seconded that no sign should be erected – 4 voted for the motion, 1 voted against and 1 abstained. Cllr Gathercole reminded the Councillors about their village walkabout in mid 2008 when they identified the unevenness of the grass on the green which makes good cutting of the grass very difficult. It had been suggested that the area has topsoil put on it to even it and then to reseed. It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all that if there is money left in the current year's precept that this be done. *Resolved – Parish Council to bring in bylaw re parking on village green when new legislation enacted later this year. Further resolved (if money available) topsoil and reseeding of green.*

13.DELIVERY OF LAKENHEATH TIMES

Sorting and delivery of Lakenheath Times to distributors has been identified as an area where Clerk's workload can be reduced. The editor has been asked to get costings, from the printer, on batching Lakenheath Times. Subject to the outcome of this, Cllr Whitehand is willing to undertake the delivery of Lakenheath Times for a trial period of 3 months.

14.WAR MEMORIAL

The item had been requested by Cllr Chambers but in her absence the Clerk said that she thought that it may have been asked for in respect of relettering. On this the Clerk said she thought it was doubtful that funding would be given by the War Memorial Trust as the company who carried out the cleaning work have contacted the Clerk saying that they felt the depth of paint suggested the repainting had been done quite recently but that if letters are to be repainted the cost will be £1.50 per letter. There was discussion as to the number of letters to be done or indeed whether all letters should be done. As a matter of respect to those who had fallen it was proposed, seconded and agreed by all that total relettering should be done.

Resolved – Clerk to ask Fairhaven for quotation on total relettering – to be done in the summer months

15.LIGHTING – CLERK'S REPORT ON ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The Clerk had previously circulated a paper on energy efficiency as a result of a conversation she had had with an officer at SCC. It was also done in response to Cllr Smith's comments re energy efficiency during an earlier Council meeting. She had nothing to add to the paper except to say that in its quest to be the greenest county there would be no reason to doubt that SCC are doing their best on energy efficiency and they have a much bigger resource than the Parish to trial new products.

16. PRECEPT

The Clerk had previously circulated a revised proposed budget, taking into account both some of the figures from the Finance Committee's proposed budget from the December Parish Council meeting and a request for £5,000 to be put forward for the Playing Fields Association. She had also circulated a brief narrative stating that the Finance Committee's figures had not included expenditure on the Parish Newsletter and expressing reservations on sums allocated to lighting; I.T/phone; travel costs; audit fees; insurance; training and newsletter costs. Some of these cannot be lowered and, if, as had been suggested, the Clerk was to undergo training the proposed training budget is insufficient for that one course alone.

Cllr Gathercole drew the Parish Council's attention to various sections of the Village Plan and said there was nothing tangible to show for the effort that had gone into it, adding that about half of the village had responded to the original survey. The current Council, he said, is half way through its term of office. Cllr Ingham said that he had asked, in the past, for it to be an agenda item.

Cllr Smith tabled a response to Clerk's narrative – newsletter costs were included; lighting (energy & maintenance) to remain at £12,500; no formal request for Playing Fields funding prior to this evening's PC meeting and suggesting it might not be a popular move locally and putting forward ways of cutting newsletter costs.

Cllr Ingham, stating that he and Cllr Smith had spent 14/15 hours on their figures expressed displeasure at Clerk's proposed budget – amongst other things 5% had been added across board and that was not acceptable. Acknowledging the Precept needs to be set before next scheduled Parish Council meeting but that more consideration needs to be given to the budget figures it was proposed, seconded and agreed by all that a Budget setting meeting would be held on Monday 12th January 2009 at 6.30pm in Methodist Church Chapel.

17. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(a) PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

A schedule of payments for the month was tabled. It was proposed to accept expenditure as listed, seconded and agreed by all.

(b) BANK RECONCILIATION

A bank reconciliation for month of November 2008 was presented. It was proposed, seconded & agreed by all to accept the reconciliation.

18. S137 REQUEST-ST MARY'S CHURCH – LAKENHEATH LIFE

The Clerk had received a request from St Mary's Church, Lakenheath, for £170 towards publication costs of Lakenheath Life. Cllr Ingham said that St Mary's had had £1,000. Cllr Morley proposed giving St Mary's £170, seconded by Cllr Whitehand. The Chairman asked if there were any amendments – none. The proposition had 2 in favour; 3 against and 1 abstention.

19. CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk said that she had received some information from SCC about "Older People's Charter" – copies in Parish Office and she will put something in Lakenheath Times; FHDC are distributing Forest Heath News over two weeks commencing 19th January – they would like to know about any delivery problems; consultation on "Communities in Control"; Zurich Municipal Court Circular and a list of training dates/opportunities from SALC. Referring to item previously mentioned by Cllr Noble – proposed extension to 30MPH limit in Maids Cross Hill the Clerk said she had received a letter from SCC asking for Parish Council comments. There were no adverse comments to proposal from Councillors.

Action Point – Clerk to respond to SCC re speed limit proposal

20. ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

There were none. The Clerk advised the meeting that Matt Hales – SCC Locality Officer will attend meeting in February so if Councillors would like to read up about Locality Pilot prior to February PC meeting she has literature in Parish Office.

21. TO NOTE FUTURE DATES

Local businesses opportunity, an FHDC/St Edmundsbury Council joint venture at Palace House, Newmarket on 10th February 2009 10am till 4pm.

FHDC Parish Forum at Jubilee Centre, Mildenhall 5th February 7pm – 9pm – Clerk to be advised of attendees.

Councillor Briefing – maximising opportunities for Suffolk from London 2012 Olympic/Paralympic Games at Cedars Hotel, Stowmarket on 9th February 2009 5pm – 6.30pm

22. TO NOTE DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 2nd February Monday 2009

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.00pm