

MINUTES OF MEETING OF LAKENHEATH PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT THE METHODIST CHURCH CHAPEL
ON MONDAY 6th July 2009

Present :- Messrs D Gathercole (Chairman)

Mrs A Chamber s

J Gentle

D Lucas

E Morley

R Rolph

I Smith

M Whitehand

I Frost

Mrs P Rissen

In Attendance :- Suffolk County Councillor Colin Noble & Sqdn Ldr Jerry Neild
8 members of the public were present and 2 members of the press.

In order to facilitate visitors to the Meeting, he varied the order of business without objection from the Parish Council.

6.REPORT FROM

a)RAF COMMANDER

Sqdn Ldr Neild said that things had been quiet over the last week – runway closed due to repair work. It is possible the runway may be closed again for a longer period of time – possibly about a month – likely to be next year. 56 RQS carried out a successful rescue recently in the Atlantic. There were 12 flying complaints in June. 4 were planes from Lakenheath 8 were RAF flights! Answering a matter which had been raised prior to the meeting he said that the work involving the tower is permitted development, has been through correct channels and was not a matter for this Parish Council – falls under a neighbouring Parish Council. Cllr Gathercole thanked Sqdn Ldr Neild for his input regarding C600 in Sedge Fen – a great help in resolving this issue.

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

The Chairman opened the meeting.

1.APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Sizer – meeting

Cllr Flack

PCSO Jason Thomas - holiday

2.DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Gathercole – Planning & LDF (FHDC), Village Hall & Lakenheath Playing Fields.

3. POLICE MATTERS

PCSO Thomas had e-mailed a report to the Clerk which she read to the meeting. He is on leave until 13th July 2009 and in his absence if necessary contact should be made with either PCSO Terry Joynson or Sgt Keith Grant. There were 8 reported crimes between 1st and 24th June. There were 2 cases of criminal damage- both on Playing Fields – damage to field and gate caused by motor vehicles. The investigation is on-going. There were 2 cases of damage to motor vehicles – 1 in Wings Road and 1 in Wingfield Ave. Investigation is on-going. 2 thefts from an unsecured shed. There has been 1 theft from the Co-op – nfi

at this time. Cllr Chambers said that she was aware PCSO Thomas had written an article for Lakenheath Times regarding parking of cars on pavement, however, she said that the situation re cars on pavement in Wings Road is not acceptable – impossible for wheelchair users to get by.

Action Point – Clerk to let PCSO Thomas know of concerns in Wings Road area.

4.CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 1st June 2009

It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to accept the minutes.

The Chairman closed the meeting

5.REPRESENTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Clerk said she had received a call from a resident in Warren Close who was “disgusted” at the fact that school children are being forced to walk on the road to get by 47 Back Street (unoccupied “charity” bungalow). She went on to say that a quick drive past suggested that the hedge is not obstructing the pavement. She had, during the last week, asked Cllr Smith if he would walk past to see what he thought. Cllr Smith confirmed that there is no obstruction to the pavement. The Clerk said that with the agreement of the Parish Council she would not take any action on this.

Agreed by Council – NFA.

Cllr Chambers said that following the flash storm/flooding on 15th June she had a resident go to see her regarding the possibility of getting sandbags to prevent her house being flooded in future - neither SCC nor FHDC had been of assistance. An attendee of meeting, resident in the village, works for SCC and thinks he can be of assistance – arrangements to be made with Cllr Chambers after the meeting.

6b) FOREST HEATH DISTRICT COUNCIL

There was nothing to report. Cllr Gentle noted that a front page article in the current issue of the Bury Free Press seemed to highlight the state of affairs at FHDC – accepting the article as written, he said that £40,000 has been spent on independent arbitration within Planning Department at FHDC. It seems, to him, that because of where we live we do not have democratic representation. Cllr Gathercole said that this issue dates back 3 years and was started with a view to improving the Planning Department at FHDC. Cllr Gentle said that, in his opinion, this could be the reason that Lakenheath has the problem at Lakenheath Hall. On the issue of the Hall, Cllr Gentle said that “workers” at the Hall had today made an attempt to remove plywood from his fence resulting, as expected, in some damage to his fence. Cllr Smith, referring to the issue of felled trees in The Mallards, has said he is referring the matter to the Ombudsman, having failed to get a satisfactory response from FHDC. On a separate matter, he said he had been approached by a resident who asked about the possibility of siting a dog litter bin at top of Broom Road. Cllr Chambers and Frost said that they thought there was a bin near 63 Broom Road. Cllr Smith said that he request is for a bin on the Warren. The Clerk pointed out that the land is private – Elvedon Estates.

The meeting was reopened

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

Cllr Smith said that he had taken up a complaint of the BSE to Newmarket bus not sticking to its designated route. He informed the meeting that he had received SCC “Passenger Transport Newsletter” – although there is not much to interest Lakenheath residents.

Cllr Frost said that he, Cllr Noble, Cllr Smith and 3 others had turned up for quite a successful litter pick on Saturday 13th June 2009. There will possibly be another one on either 5th /12th September 2009.

The Chairman closed the meeting

6.REPORT FROM

c)SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

Cllr Noble apologised for his late arrival at meeting. He wondered if the Parish Council are going to improve the parking area beside the Village Green – SCC have a design service and he is of opinion he could get such work done free. Cllr Gathercole said that plans are afoot and SCC have an involvement. Regarding the C600 Sedge Fen road Cllr Noble said that a “body of work” had been delayed but should now be back on track. As soon as that has been done Cllrs Gathercole & Noble will get together with John Noble SCC to try to get upgrade done. Cllr Gathercole said that action of Sqdn Ldr Neild should help to expedite resolution to this matter.

Cllr Chambers asked if meeting with SCC Highways re parking issues is any further forward. Cllr Noble said that it would be of assistance if he could get something from Parish Council regarding this matter. Cllr chambers asked if it would assist if she e-mailed Cllr Noble re meeting there had been with Anchor Lane residents about 5 years ago and which had not got any further – various ideas regarding traffic issues were to be put before residents for their views.

Cllr Chambers to action this point.

Cllr Smith queried the 30 MPH speed limit on Maids Cross Hill – he is of opinion that it is not well situated – should be complete length of Maids Cross Hill. It is SCC policy to restrict in “built up” area only not “open” road. He also said that there are 3 problem areas on roads – uneven surface/dips – Sharpes Corner; Station Road (just inside 30 MPH limit) and Broom Road. Finally, he has been told that the pavement in Back Street is difficult for wheelchairs due to uneven surface.

Cllr Gentle, concerned about global warming and consequential flooding problems, wondered if SCC are well enough equipped with appropriate appliances in the fire service. Citing a recent fire in his street (neighbour charging a mobility scooter battery in his shed, which went up in flames along with two oil tanks belonging to adjoining neighbours) he wondered if perhaps they should be looking to purchase motorbikes (he has read an article on this) which would transport officers quickly to the scene of a fire rather than having to send out normal sized tender. It was felt that there may be H&S implications if only one or perhaps two officers attended such an incident. Cllr Noble added that Suffolk is acknowledged to be well served by its fire service.

Cllr Smith, referring to flooding possibilities said that there are problems in houses situated at lowest point of sewers – should this be looked at? Several Councillors agreed that with targets of 30 houses per hectare sewage problems are bound to increase.

In closing, Cllr Noble said that following elections he has been promoted to portfolio holder for “Adult & Community Services” - includes such things as libraries and training.

The Chairman congratulated Cllr Noble on his election success and thanked him for his attendance and contribution to the meeting.

Cllr Noble left the meeting.

The meeting was reopened.

8.PLANNING MATTERS

a) TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Cllr Rolph said that 6 applications had been considered – 5 had been objected to.

There was no objection to:-

F/2009/0251/FUL –recladding educational bldg. – Sedge Fen Baptist Church

There were objections to:-

F/2009/0219/FUL – subdivision of ground floor shop with change of use to hot food takeaway – 20 High St

F/2009/0181/COU – continuation of planning permission for kennels & mobile home on permanent basis – 53A Sedge Fen

F/2009/0315/CAC – demolition of dwelling (Conservation Area)- 4 Bays, Back St

F/2009/0316/FUL- demolition of dwelling & construction of 4 dwellings – 4 Bays, Back St

F/2009/0324/FUL-erection 2 single storey front extensions – 51 Caudle Ave

b) TO CONSIDER- ANY OUTSTANDING APPLICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE

There is 1 application in circulation.

c) STREET NAMING SN/2008/0032

The Clerk read out a letter she had received from David O'Reilly FHDC in response to one she had sent as result of the June Parish Council meeting. FHDC want a list of "approved" street names from Parish/Ward Councils to make the process of street naming an easier less costly process. There was much discussion around FHDC policy on street naming – inconsistency re naming streets after people – Newmarket is the only Ward allowed to do this! Mr O'Reilly indicated in his letter that he would be willing to attend the next PC meeting to resolve any issues regarding this matter. This was an offer the Parish Council seemed keen to accept. There was, however, no consensus amongst the Parish Council for name of development in High street opposite St Mary's Church (SN/2008/0032). It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all but 2 (abstentions) to invite Mr O'Reilly FHDC to come to next Parish Council meeting so that this issue can be discussed.

Resolved – Mr O'Reilly FHDC to be invited to August Parish Council meeting

9. LAKENHEATH CEMETERY

a) TO RECEIVE REPORT FROM CEMETERY COMMITTEE

Cllr Rissen said that a number of Councillors had attended a "meeting" at the Cemetery on the evening of Monday 8th June 2009. Minutes have been drafted – the Clerk will circulate to all Councillors on her return to the office. A site, in the New Cemetery, has been chosen for children's graves – at far end of New Cemetery in what was an old rose bed. During their time at the Cemetery Cllr Rolph had said he was not sure that the lime trees were as unsafe as had been first thought. Accordingly, Cllr Gathercole had arranged for the FHDC Tree Officer to inspect the trees. Although he will possibly return in autumn to have another look, his initial inspection suggests that there is only one tree which is not healthy. Should this be confirmed in autumn it would seem that replanting will not be necessary.

Cllr Gathercole said that a note had been received from a resident living next door to the Cemetery concerned that a horse chestnut tree in the Cemetery but alongside her property is shedding bark and may need attention. This has been looked at – the tree is dead. Cllr Gathercole has received a (currently) verbal quote of £250 plus VAT to take down and dispose of the tree. Confirming that the tree is in a sorry state and is in need of attention sooner rather than later it was proposed, seconded and agreed by all that the quote of £250 to remove tree be accepted. Cllr Smith wondered if the tree trunk could be sited against some of the hedges and used as informal rest/seating areas. Cllr Gathercole said that this had been done on the Playing Fields in the past but ROSPA had asked for their removal on H & S grounds. There are a good number of seats in the Cemetery although Cllr Smith is of the opinion that they are all in the one area.

Cllr Rolph expressed concern about trees in the New Cemetery which he feels could become a problem in time – Cllr Gathercole was in agreement, saying that in time a hearse will have a problem accessing graves. It was suggested that the FHDC Tree Officer be asked to look at trees in New Cemetery. Action on trees in New Cemetery is to be an agenda item for December Parish council meeting.

Resolved - quote in sum of £250 plus VAT to be accepted for removal of dead chestnut tree

Action Points – Clerk/Chairman to arrange for inspection of trees New& Old Cemeteries by FHDC Tree Officer

Clerk to put "Trees in New Cemetery" as agenda item for December PC meeting

b) TO CONFIRM GRANT OF EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS

There were none

10. CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA – UPDATE/WORK TO BE DONE .

The Clerk said that inspections of play area have been satisfactory – no work required. Cllr Gathercole said that the fencing and picnic tables (previously agreed by the Parish Council) and have now been put in position. However, the earlier piece of new fencing is out of line. To correct this would cost £250 plus VAT, as quoted by Chase Timber Products. It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to have this work done. Cllr Gathercole said he would give the meeting more food for thought. To complete the fencing around the play area would cost £3929 plus VAT plus £495 plus VAT for labour – perhaps it could be considered at Precept meeting. Cllr Morley requested that it should be an agenda item for next month.

Resolved – Chase Timber Products to be contacted to realign original piece of new fencing.

Action Point – Clerk to put “Fencing” on agenda for next month

11. VILLAGE HALL

Cllr Gathercole, as Parish Council representative on Village Hall Committee, has been contacted by Treasurer of Village Hall, Mr Cross, regarding roofing work and dishwasher. (Letters have been copied to Clerk). Re roof work – the total cost is £4439 and the Hall are able to finance £2239 of this – they, therefore, have a shortfall of £2200 which they are seeking from the Parish Council if possible. Re the dishwasher – a second hand machine was put in about 5 years ago and it is now irreparably broken down. The Hall is seeing increasing numbers of bookings for fundraising events and private functions and a dishwasher is seen as being an urgent requirement. Cllr Gathercole also reminded Councillors that the Village Hall is used by and open to the whole village. In the event of an emergency the Hall would be the assembly point and used as such. The cost of an industrial dishwasher is £2100 but the Village Hall do not currently have funds for this purchase. The total being sought, therefore, is £4300 and Cllr Gathercole asked for Councillors views. Cllr Rolph asked if money from sale of Undley Road land could be used for this. The Clerk said that this expenditure had not been included in this year's Precept so that would be an overspend and, therefore, not really an option – money from land sale is, however, a possibility. There was some support for that idea. In the main it was considered that the roof is the priority. After some discussion Cllr Lucas proposed giving the Village Hall the full £4300 being sought, this was seconded by Cllr Gentle who said the job of the Council is not to “save” money but to provide a well facilitated village. The Chairman asked if there were any amendments to the proposal - Cllr Smith proposed giving the Village Hall the money for the roof and £500. This was seconded by Cllr Chambers. Voting for the amendment was 5 in favour (4 abstentions and the Chairman did not vote). The amendment was, therefore, carried. Cllr Gathercole thanked the Council on behalf of the Village Hall Committee.

Resolved – Village Hall will receive £2200 for roof repairs and £500 towards dishwasher.

12. VILLAGE TOILET FACILITIES

Following on from last month's PC meeting Cllr Gathercole had made enquiries at FHDC re responsibility for cleaning of toilets in Wings Road Car Park. Responsibility is still with FHDC but they are currently looking at usage and costs. Cllr Gathercole said that the Parish Council had expressed an interest in “taking on” these toilets in 2006 – nfa. He is of the opinion that if the Parish Council takes on the responsibility the Parish Council can “dictate the state of them”. The Councillors said that they would want some idea of costings before deciding anything. It was felt that cleaning the toilets is one thing but repairs/renewals is another. Cllr Gathercole will look to getting additional information – costings and whether running AND capital costs are involved. This will be an agenda item next month.

*Action Points – Cllr Gathercole to look into/obtain costings
Clerk to put it on agenda for next month*

13.VILLAGE GRASS/OPEN SPACE AREAS

On a similar vein, Cllr Gathercole asked what the Councillors thought about taking on responsibility for FHDC grass/open areas. Cllr Smith wondered if areas of greens around Highlands/Highfields should/could be turned into wildlife areas – allowing grasses and flowers to grow naturally with only strips by pavements being cut. It was felt that this would, in any event, not allow for savings as contractors would still have to come out and cut those strips on a regular basis. Cllr Chambers wanted to know if FHDC were looking at Lakenheath only – Cllr Gathercole said that they are looking across the District. No resolutions were put forward.

14.PUBLIC FOOTPATHS

Cllr Gathercole said that the Village Keeper had recently got stuck with the tractor on a footpath in Sedge Fen area. There had been a number of complaints about the state of the footpath and as there had been a good spell of dry weather he had attempted to cut it. Cllr Gathercole said that SCC have funded the PC £622 to carry out 2 cuts per year – which is what is expected. The Clerk added that in fact the PC is being paid too much as the bulk of our paths fall into Category 2 not Category 1 (only Category 1 paths are eligible for grants). SCC have agreed to pay the grant this year as we have already carried out one cut but like all other authorities they do not have the money to carry out the programmes they would like. They and the Chairman of the Parish Council are of the opinion that footpaths need to be well used and if they are the grass etc does not grow – that was the situation many years ago. Cllr Gathercole said that without giving the Parish Keeper the proper tools for the job it is impossible to do. He had an “all-terrain cutter” on hire last year and that did the job well – did the Parish Council want to do a proper job and buy an appropriate cutter? Asked about the cost, he felt it could be approx. £1200. The majority of the Councillors were of the opinion that hiring a cutter would be the better option although Cllr Gentle noted that yet again the Councillors are “looking at pennies”. He said that they were there “to serve the community” It was proposed, seconded and agreed to hire a machine to carry out cuts on the footpaths in May and September. There was a request that the Clerk put an article in Lakenheath Times regarding the cutting of Public Footpaths.

*Resolved – “All-terrain cutter” to be hired twice a year (poss. May & September) to cut Public Footpaths
Action Point – Clerk to put article in Lakenheath Times*

15.FINANCIAL MATTERS

a)PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

A list of payments covering the months of June and July was presented to the Councillors. It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to accept them.

b)BANK RECONCILIATION

A bank reconciliation for the month of May 2009 was presented to the Councillors. It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to accept the reconciliation.

16.CORRESPONDENCE

During the month, amongst other correspondence, the Clerk had received an up to date copy of “FHDC Councillors, Committees and Services 2009/2010; notification of road closures at Lakenheath level crossing 30th October to 1st November; 7th November to 8th November and 12th December to 13th December (notification of these will be put in Lakenheath Times); suggestion from a former resident, Raymond Bonnett, of a reintroduction of an event known as “Good Friday Hill” – e-mail read out and Clerk said that perhaps people would let her know their thoughts; Suffolk LINK Newsletter (local health

and social care services) the Clerk did say that she had not seen anything about the PC/FHDC push for better "Out of Hours" services; e-mail from Department for Communities on "Secretary of State's Approach to Decisions in Relation to Proposals for Unitary Structures in Devon, Norfolk and Suffolk"; letter of thanks from Lakenheath Good Neighbours for S137 grant of £250; letter of thanks from Suffolk Family Carers for S137 grant of £100; letter from "West Suffolk Disability Resource Centre" at Papworth House in Bury St Edmunds advertising their services (this will go into Lakenheath Times); Zurich Municipal - News and Views & Public Sector Supply Chain publications and finally Suffolk Passenger Transport Newsletter. All are available in Parish Office.

17. ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Already mentioned above :- "Fencing in Children's Play Area" & "Village Toilet Facilities"
Cllr Morley asked that "Lakenheath Hall" should go on agenda.

18. TO NOTE FUTURE DATES

The Clerk has a list of FHDC committee meeting dates for month of July

19. TO NOTE DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday 10th August 2009

A reminder given that the office will be closed this Tuesday and Wednesday. The Clerk added that the office will be closed for 2 weeks commencing Monday 24 July – will reopen on Monday 10 August at 9.00am

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.55pm