



Caston Parish Council

CHAIRMAN:- Mr. David Blincow VICE CHAIRMAN: - Mrs. Kay Farmbrough

**MINUTES OF
THE MEETING OF CASTON PARISH COUNCIL
MONDAY 6 FEBRUARY 2017
CASTON VILLAGE HALL at 7.30 pm**

Councillor's present:- David Blincow, Brian Brooker, Frank Brown, Peter Chapman, Jaki Porter, Rob Lond-Caulk

Also present:- County Councillor Claire Bowes, District Councillor Phil Cowen
Members of the Public

1. **Apologies for absence:** Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Farmbrough.
2. **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meetings held on Monday 9 January 2017 and Monday 23 January 2017 be signed as a true and correct record. All voted in favour.

The Chairman closed the Council Meeting to permit public discussion.

3. **Participation and questions from the public, session 1.** None.

4. **Guest Speakers:-**

County Councillor Claire Bowes reported as follows:-

School crossing patrols across Norfolk have been saved after the Conservatives proposed that plans to scrap them were abandoned. Proposals to cut the number of lollipop patrols were proposed last year by the Alliance, as part of budget-cutting measures but at a recent meeting of the Children's Services Committee at the County Council, Conservative members made it very clear that the patrols were vital and that they must be saved.

Social care staff in Norfolk are working around the clock to meet demand, with a significant increase in year-on-year referrals. In December, the Council's First Response Service dealt with 524 referrals, up 25% from December 2015. The service helped prevent more than 3,000 hospital admissions in 2015-2016. Demand is increasing year on year and the pressure reflects that seen across the county's hospitals in recent weeks, with health and social care agencies working closely together to meet demand. That demand is likely to increase if there is a sustained spell of cold weather.

The budget proposals for 2017/18 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy for the next three years have now been approved by all the service committees and will be debated by Full Council on 20th February. Norfolk County Council's gross budget spend in 2017/18 will be a total of £1.4billion. The money comes from a mixture of sources. The net budget for 2017/18 is £358.8m and is funded from council tax. The proposed 4.8% increase in council tax for 2017/18 includes a social care precept of 3% and inflationary increase of 1.8%. The increase will bring an extra £16million to the County Council. For a band D Council tax payer, the increase amounts to an additional £1.10 per week.

Savings will be required because the Revenue Support Grant from the Government is being reduced by over £30million in 2017/18, whilst cost pressures and demand for care services continue to rise. There are savings of £44million to be made in 2017/18 and the majority of these savings will come from smart financial management and efficiencies.

CHAIRMAN.....

DATED:

CLERK: Joanne Blackman, Westcroft, Watton Road, Ashill, Norfolk, IP25 7AQ
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The intention in recommending this budget to Full Council, is to set a clean slate for services, taking away forward debt and to establish realistic budgets on a firm foundation that officers can deliver and that councillors can scrutinise and monitor.

District Councillor Phil Cowen reported as follows:-

District Councillor Cowen reported that the precepts for the forthcoming financial year were being considered. The Rate Support Grant received from Central Government is diminishing and will eventually disappear. Breckland Council are to become independent of Central Government and Breckland currently has the lowest Council Tax in the Country at £74 for a Band D property. There will be a full Council debate on the 23 February and it is felt the increase will be de minimus but will advise further in due course.

The strategy up to now has been risk averse as interest rates remain low. The Council will be looking to invest in property and increase rents with a view to driving up revenue to mitigate the reduction.

The Riverside development in Thetford has two restaurants opening shortly. There are three additional units available. The idea of these types of developments is to try and support people who live and work in the District concentrating on niche market towns and to provide a family friendly night time economy, encouraging people to spend money in the District and not larger towns such as Norwich, Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds.

5. **Caston Speed Watch Co-ordinator Colin Bearne – Contact 01953 483961**

Cllr Blincow reported as per the report received from Speedwatch Co-ordinator Colin Bearne. Mr Bearne advised that it has not only been the weather that has hindered their efforts, illness amongst the volunteers has highlighted that there is a shortage of volunteers.

Mr Bearne further advised that there has been an increase in HGVs in the village, especially a pig lorry that comes through twice a day. Mr Bearne asked whether we could approach GPS again and ask them to ensure that vehicles are not directed through the village. Cllr Porter advised that GPS would not go back on previous requests and felt that the problem is more than likely down to the chosen route of certain hauliers. County Cllr Bowes suggested that we should contact the haulier concerned and appeal to their best nature and ask that lorries use the more direct route through to Watton and not through Caston. It was therefore **RESOLVED** that the Clerk would write to the haulier in this regard.

6. **Caston Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator Colin Bearne – Contact 01953 483961**

Cllr Blincow reported as per the report of Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator Colin Bearne.

The Chairman reopened the Council meeting.

7. **Declarations of Interest:-** Cllr Lond-Caulk, items 8A and 8B.

Dispensations from Council Members: - None

8. **Planning Applications:-**

- A. **3PL/2015/0180/F** – The Barn, Dukes Lane – Cllr Lond-Caulk advised that he was pushing ahead and is optimistic that the deadlines set will be met for removal of the storage building.
- B. **3PL/2016/1507/F** – Bilhams Cottage, The Street – The Clerk advised that this application remains undecided.
- C. **3PL/2016/1557/HOU** – Highfields, Stow Bedon Road – The Clerk advised that this application remains undecided.

CHAIRMAN.....

DATED:

- D. **3PL/2016/1532/F** – Land adj Walnut Tree Cottage – The developer, Mr Barnes has employed a firm of consulting engineers to make an assessment of visibility in respect of this application and provided a copy of the Report. The Report deals with the splay and view at the front of the development. The Parish Council's main concern has always been the removal of the service road at the front of the development and the increased density of the proposed planning application. The Report does not address these issues and the Report does not change the views of the Parish Council, which have previously been submitted to Breckland Council. The Parish Council advised the service road and development density remain a high concern. District Cllr Cowen advised that he was unsure whether this matter would go to Committee or not.

DC Cowen was asked whether it was acceptable to convene informal meetings between two or three councillors and a developer. DC Cowen advised that he felt it was a good idea and should be welcomed and can serve to build up rapport within the community and enables the Parish Council to suggest ideas to a scheme. Concerns of several Councillors were raised as to the lack of transparency and non-involvement of residents. DC Cowen suggested that the Parish Council should consider implementing a Policy in this regard and it should be debated as a separate matter at a future meeting. In any event, any discussions which take place informally should be reported to all Council Members. It was therefore **RESOLVED** that this matter would be placed on the next Agenda for discussion.

- E. **3PL/2016/1316/VAR** – The Field, Northacre – The Clerk advised that this application remains undecided and there are no objections from the Parish Council.

County Councillor Claire Bowes and District Councillor Phil Cowen left the meeting at 8.15 pm.

9. **To discuss propose and vote on the following subjects:-**

- A. The Parish Council discussed a request from the Parochial Church Council [PCC] for a contribution towards the maintenance of the churchyard at Holy Cross Church for the financial year 2017. It was noted that the Council had already made a contribution for the precept year 16/17 and that this request would have to be considered in the precept year 17/18. Further the Council is aware that there may have been a recent change in the PCC policy regarding the churchyard and its maintenance and it was therefore **RESOLVED** that the Clerk would write to the PCC seeking clarification of PCC position.
- B. A discussion took place regarding the Caston Fuel Allotment Trustees. The Parish Council has a responsibility to nominate four of the six Trustees and it was therefore proposed that at the Annual Council Meeting to be held in May the Parish Council should reaffirm the existing trustees to hold office for four years.

IT WAS RESOLVED with all in favour, that the following payments should be made:-

- A. Salary payment including holiday pay allowance to the Clerk, Mrs Joanne Blackman, for the month of January 2017 in the sum of £207.61.
- B. Payment to the Clerk, Mrs Joanne Blackman, for the additional hours worked for the period 18 May 2016 to 31 January 2017 in the sum of £550.00.
- C. Payment to Caston Village Hall for hall hire fees for the period October 2016 to March 2017 in the sum of £40.00.

10. **Matters to report:-**

- A. **Update on defibrillator**
The Clerk advised that the defibrillator training had to be cancelled as the person who was to take the session had been unwell. The Clerk will seek to rearrange this training as soon as possible. The Clerk further advised that she had received a request from the School Secretary to be furnished with the defibrillator box code. It was therefore **RESOLVED** that the Clerk would furnish the School Secretary with the same.

CHAIRMAN.....

DATED:

B. **Update on Tree Report**

Cllr Lond-Caulk advised that he had spoken with Andrew Coombes who would be prepared to provide the Council with a full risk assessment on the Beech Tree at Coronation Terrace at a cost of £150. The Clerk was asked to confirm [a] that the tree was not in the village conservation boundary and [b] that the tree was not currently subject to a preservation order. The Clerk advised that she would check the two issues but reminded the Council that Hugh Coggles the Breckland Tree Officer had indicated that if the Parish Council were to seek to remove the tree that Breckland Council would consider attaching a Tree Preservation Order on the tree. A list of Tree Preservation Orders can be found online and the Clerk would look into this further.

C. **Update on original Village Cross repairs**

The Clerk advised that she was still experiencing difficulties in obtaining further quotes for the repairs. A quote had been received from Simon Swann and provided to all Councillors, in the sum of £4,358.75 plus VAT. The Clerk will continue to pursue this matter.

D. **Update on Dog Waste Bin**

The Clerk advised that she has been awaiting further details from the suppliers of the bin as to the various fixings available. Cllr Lond-Caulk has agreed to fix the bin in place and it was therefore agreed that the Clerk would send details to Cllr Lond-Caulk of the various fittings to consider.

E. **Update on Village Appraisal**

Cllr Porter advised that they had received approximately 50 Village Appraisal Returns to date and that a reminder had been circulated. 180 questionnaires were sent out and the final date for return is 17 February 2017. The prize draw is to take place at the March Parish Council meeting. ***Item for next Agenda.***

F. **Financial Balances**

The Clerk provided the Councillors with financial balances to 5 January 2017.

G. **Update on transfer of banking facilities and the implementation of internet banking**

The Clerk advised that we were now using Lloyds Bank for day to day matters and that the accounts at Barclays Bank would subsequently be closed and the balance of funds transferred to the new account. Cllrs Blincow and Brown have still to set-up internet banking access.

H. **Adoption of telephone boxes**

Phil Wells who is co-ordinating the possible adoption of the telephone boxes had circulated a short report. The Council discussed the adoption of the telephone boxes and will consider the matter again when further and better information is provided. The Council therefore requested that Phil Wells provide further and better particulars and documentation to support whatever the interested residents were seeking from the Council.

I. **Matter for the Rangers**

The pavements require sweeping as they are still full of leaves and are slippery. The Clerk will establish when the next visit is due and report any outstanding matters.

J. **Northacre/Village Hall Noticeboards**

The Clerk advised that she was hoping to have a contractor attend next week to look at the Noticeboard in Northacre to obtain a quote for repairs.

CHAIRMAN.....

DATED:

K. **Temporary Road Closure**

The Clerk advised on the temporary road closure on The Street from a point 135m south of the junction with Northacre for a distance of 35m from 13 February to 15 February inclusive.

11. **Agreed the next meeting date Monday 6 March 2017.**

The Chairman closed the Council Meeting to permit public discussion.

12. **Participation and questions from the public – session 2.**

A member of public asked what is the settlement boundary. Cllr Blincow explained the settlement boundary and advised that it was available to view online.

A member of the public asked what was meant by backfill in planning matters, Cllr Blincow explained backfill.

A member of the public had emailed earlier in the day concerning parking on the Village Green, this will be monitored.

A member of the public was concerned regarding the Statement of Confidentiality on the Village Appraisal. Cllr Porter advised that Cllr Farmbrough is the only person with access to both the numbers and addresses to enable her to co-ordinate the collection of any remaining forms with assistance from the working group. Cllr Porter advised that there was no association of the numbers on the Appraisal with names of an individual available to any other member of the working group or public. The numbers are also there to enable the prize draw to take place.

The Chairman reopened the Council Meeting.

13. **Any matters to be noted for next Agenda.** Prize draw. Consider Policy in relation to planning applications.

Meeting closed at 9.20 pm.

Joanne Blackman
Parish Clerk

13 February 2017

CHAIRMAN.....

DATED: