

Caston Parish Council

CHAIRMAN: Mrs Jaki Porter

VICE CHAIRMAN: Mrs Kay Farmbrough

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF CASTON PARISH COUNCIL
MONDAY 2 NOVEMBER 2020
BY ZOOM CONFERENCE CALL at 7.30 pm**

Councillor's present:- Jaki Porter, Kay Farmbrough, Brian Brooker, Chris Cook, Michele Grimsditch

Also present:- 10 members of the public

1. Apologies for absence

None.

2. To approve the Minutes of the Virtual Meeting held on Monday 5 October 2020

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 5 October 2020 be signed, by the Chairman, as a true and correct record. Proposed by Cllr Farmbrough and seconded by Cllr Brooker. All voted in favour.

The Chairman closed the meeting to permit participation from the public.

3. Participation and questions from the public, session 1.

Several members of the public raised the subject of the Book of Remembrance and reiterated comments which had been independently made in correspondence to the Parish Council. The Chairman advised that a formal statement would be made in relation to the Book of Remembrance later in the Agenda.

4. Guest Speakers

None.

5. Speedwatch

"The volunteers completed four checks during October at various times and locations. A total of 301 vehicles were assessed and 13 offenders were reported to the constabulary.

The volunteers were joined by two beat officers during one of the checks. Our engagement officer Paula Giluley was going to join us at another check but unfortunately due to ill health the check was cancelled.

It is anticipated that beat officers will be joining on future speed watch checks, duties permitting.

Most of the volunteers have now been issued with their own high-viz jackets.

There were 9 further checks planned for November, of 30 minutes duration, which have subsequently been cancelled due to the current Covid-19 restrictions".

The Chairman reopened the Council meeting.

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6. To record any Declarations of Interest and to consider any requests for Dispensations from Council Members.

None.

7. Planning Applications

The following updates were provided in relation to current planning applications.

- A. 3PL/2020/0274/F - Proposed Detached House & Garage / Workshop To Garden Plot. (Re-Submission). **Appealed.**
- B. 3PL/2020/0262/O – Land to the North of School View NR17 1DD – Erection of 3no. Two storey dwellings with associated car parking, landscaping and access. **Application Refused.**
- C. 3PL/2020/1000/F – The Barns, Attleborough Road, NR17 1DJ - Conversion of single storey storage building to dwelling. **Undecided.**
- D. 3PL/2020/1147/F - Flat Above Northacre Farm Pool, Northacre NR17 1DG - Proposed Garage Conversion to Create 'Air BNB style' Accommodation at Northacre Farm Pool. **Undecided.**

8. Finance – to approve and report the following expenditure:-

- A. To approve salary payment including holiday allowance to the Clerk, Mrs Joanne Blackman, for the month of October 2020 in the sum of £221.07.
- B. To approve payment to RG Maintenance Services Limited in respect of invoice number [number] for grass cutting in the month of October in the sum of [£271.20] (incl VAT).
- C. To approve payment to Greenbarnes Ltd in respect of the two noticeboards, invoice number 15609 in the sum of £1,140.62 (incl VAT).
- D. To approve payment to Spanglefish for Caston Parish Council website in the sum of £29.95 (incl VAT).
- E. To ratify payment to Plusnet for Broadband at the Village Hall in respect of invoice number 00004758344-015 in the sum of £34.20 (incl VAT).
- F. To ratify payment to 1&1 Internet Ltd in respect of Caston Community Cars in respect of reference 203023418735 in the sum of £7.20 (incl VAT).

All of the above payments were proposed by Cllr Farmbrough and seconded by Cllr Grimsditch, all voted in favour. It was noted that an invoice was awaited in relation to 8b) and would be paid on receipt.

9. To discuss propose and vote on the following subjects

A. Noticeboard at Northacre

Cllr Cook advised that he had inspected the Noticeboard in Northacre and confirmed that it was sound but in need of a rub down and repaint. Cllr Cook kindly offered to undertake the task in the Spring.

B. Telephone Kiosks

The Clerk advised that a request had been received from a parishioner to enable the Garden Club to utilise one of the kiosks for a plant/seedlings swap facility to be maintained by the Garden Club but for use by the Community. It was also proposed that the second kiosk be used as a book swap facility.

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The Council agreed that they had no objections to these ideas, in principal, however, Cllr Cook advised that they are prone to leaks but he would be happy to check them over and Cllr Farmbrough expressed that whilst she was happy for the second kiosk to be used as a book facility whilst the Village Hall was shut, this would need to be reconsidered once the hall is open as they currently have a book stall which is a valuable source of income for the Village Hall.

It was agreed that Cllrs Cook and Farmbrough would set up a working party with the parishioner in question to refine details and present them to the Parish Council in due course.

C. Planters

The Clerk advised that she had received a request from D & Y Nurseries for the annual fee for maintenance of the planters. A discussion took place and it was felt that they had not been as good this year as they had in previous years. It was however acknowledged that this year had been difficult in relation to obtaining plants and that the budget was in fact quite small to maintain all 8 planters. A further discussion took place as to whether the Council could decrease the number of planters and/or increase the budget in this regard. It was therefore agreed that the Chairman would liaise with D & Y Nurseries to discuss the options available to the Council and revert in due course.

10. Matters to Report

A. Resignation of Councillors

The Clerk reported that two Councillors have resigned from the Council and that she was in the process of obtaining the Notice of Vacancy from Breckland Council.

B. Financial Balances

The Clerk reported the current balances to the meeting.

C. The Rangers

The current position with regards to the Rangers is still unknown. The Clerk to continue to chase Cllr Bowes in this regard.

D. Purchase of SAM2

The Clerk advised that the SAM2 sign is now ready for delivery and this is now being arranged.

E. Purchase of Noticeboards for Parish Council/Village Hall

The Clerk advised that the Noticeboards had now arrived and were awaiting installation.

F. Play Area – update re matting

The Chairman advised that she was waiting for NGF to carry out a survey of the matting and she would chase and report further in due course.

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Some peeling paint on some of the equipment has also been reported. Some of the tree branches have been reported as close to the power cables. The Chairman advised that they were in fact not power cables but telecoms cables which are the responsibility of the Parish Council. **Item for next Agenda.**

G. Remembrance Book

The Chairman read the following statement:-

“Statement regarding Caston Remembrance Book

Part 1 - Why is the Book in the Church at all?

1. The Book was created in May 2005 using grant funds of £4997 from National Lottery/Awards for All. There may have been further funding and larger private donations from the Author and or other sources, but there is no documentation remaining in the PC files of the day which to confirm this one way or the other. Generally, the Book seems to be referred to as having been '*funded by a grant from Awards for All*'.
2. According to an article on Caston Online, the book was 'dedicated to the church' in November 2005.
3. When most of the current members of the Parish Council arrived in Caston, the Book had been housed in the Church for more than 5 years. *We assumed this was an agreeable situation.*
4. In 2017 when the Church was closed for refurbishment, The Author offered to provide safe storage for the Book. The Parish Council of the time accepted their offer, and applied for a limited term insurance extension to cover damage to the book and stand.
5. In Jan 2020 the PCC contacted the PC requesting the return of the Book & Stand.
6. The Author found that the new location for the book in the church was unsatisfactory, and declined to return the book to the PC at that time. After further discussion the Author did allow a councillor to collect and replace the stand in February 2020. The PC were reminded that The Author is the only person permitted to handle the Book.
7. The PCC placed the stand in the available location in the Church in February 2020.
8. The Book was not replaced in the church at that time.
9. In the belief (*See point 3*) that the Book was intended to be sited in the Church, the PC once again requested of the Author that the book be replaced in the stand in the Church.

Part 2 - 2020 and the effects of the pandemic

1. The Covid-19 Lockdown came into effect on March 24th. The Book remained with the Author.
2. On June 15th the government allowed Places of Worship to re-open subject to restrictions.
3. On July 7th a member of the PCC advised the Chair of the PC that the Church had re-opened, and enquired about the status of the Book's return.
4. *Regrettably, in the event, the Chair took the statement of re-opening to mean that relatively normal access would resume, unaware of the details of the various Covid-19 related restrictions as applicable to places of worship. Consequently the PC once again asked The Author to replace the Book.*

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5. At some point on/around 1st-2nd August The Book was replaced in the stand in the Church. On 3rd August a churchwarden advised the PC that the Book was in the stand.
6. At the August PC meeting issues of sanitisation affecting the Book and the stand were raised, and a member of the congregation suggested placing an advisory notice on the case, which all felt acceptable. However, the PCC later advised that such measures were not compliant with the Diocese Covid regulations. The PCC taped off the stand and Book as required by the Diocese. (*Refer to the guidelines issued by the Diocese for details.*)
7. On 9th August The Author approached councillors, in a state of distress, to complain about the taping off of the Book and being unable to turn the pages of the Book. The Author subsequently informed members of the PC that families of the fallen were, themselves, distressed at effectively being denied access to the Book.
8. In an effort to combine a solution acceptable to the Author and the affected families, with the limitations posed by the pandemic, councillors conferred on the matter consulting by telephone with among others; Awards for All, The Royal British Legion (whose own Head Office Book of Remembrance is not accessible to the Public), The War Memorials Trust. However, all advice received led us to conclude that for reasons of health and safety and the PC's public liabilities in that regard, it should remain in the Church. A resolution to that effect was proposed and seconded at the October meeting of the PC.

Part 3 - Recent developments

1. Since the October PC Meeting, the PC have received; A freedom of information request, Calls from local press for comment on the 'Dispute over a Book of Remembrance in Caston', 14 letters or emails from parishioners and the families of the fallen, requesting that the Book held in the Authors home where, we are given to understand, they will be permitted unrestricted access to it.
2. We have received a statement from our insurers that we would not be covered for public liability or property damage or loss claims in a private home.

Excerpt from their statement:

1. *In terms of the Public Liability Insurance; your policy would not extend to provide cover at the author's home unless the loss was caused as a result of a defect/negligence relating to the book or stand. The author would need to ensure that they have Public Liability Insurance and Property Owners Liability as part of their home insurance and ensure that the home insurer is satisfied to cover the nature of the premises occupation.*
2. *In terms of the property damage, there would be no cover. Our policy would not deem the author's premises to be 'occupied' by the Parish Council and therefore if a loss were to occur at this location it would not be covered.*
3. On 16th October, the Chair of the PC had a telephone conversation with Mr. Lord at Awards for All, requesting further advice about what is and is not permissible for grant-funded items. He explained that;
 - a.) It would be the view of Awards for All that the grant funded item is 'owned' by Caston PC; BUT
 - b.) given the time elapsed since the award, Awards for All would have no issue with our reassigning the ownership of the item.

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Conclusion

Caston Parish Council has no fully accessible public space of its own in which to display the Book, but our insurance will not cover us displaying the Book in a private dwelling.

Representatives for more than half of the men memorialised in the Book have written to inform the PC that it is either not desirable or not acceptable to them to locate the Book in the Church, and that they want the Book to be held at the Author's private address where they will have unfettered access to it.

Through a combination of circumstances, not of the making of the present council, we find ourselves caught between the pandemic regulations applying to our Parish Church, and the families of those who gave their lives for that same Parish. We have tried to act logically, fairly and with social responsibility in this matter, in the current times. However, in the event, we have been accused of *Bullying and Intimidation* and described as *Petty, Nasty, Shameful and Disgusting* in the communications received about the Book. We Councillors are all unpaid volunteers, who live in Caston. We are strongly disinclined to let this issue escalate any further.

This Parish Council therefore propose to fully relinquish its ownership or claim to the Book of Remembrance, and to legally reassign the Book and the Stand to the Author."

It was **THEREFORE** proposed that the Book and Remembrance and stand be reassigned to the author and the Parish Council fully relinquish its ownership or claim thereto. Four voted in favour, one against. It was therefore **RESOLVED** that the Book of Remembrance and the Stand be legally reassigned to the Author and the Parish Council fully relinquish its ownership or claim thereto".

H. Office Computer

The Clerk advised that the office computer was running extremely slow, the battery will no longer charge and the charging cable has a fault and having discussed the matter with Cllr Brooker it was suggested that it should be looked at, backed up and a possible factory reset carried out. It was agreed that the Clerk should obtain a quote in this regard and Cllr Cook offered to send the Clerk details of a computer engineer in East Harling. **Item for next Agenda.**

11. Correspondence

None.

12. To agree the next meeting date

7 December 2020

The Chairman closed the meeting to permit public discussion.

13. Participation and questions from the public – session 2

A member of the public enquired how the Freedom of Information request made was progressing, the Council were unable to comment.

A member of the public asked about access to the Church when it is closed. The member of the public was referred to the PCC.

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A member of the public expressed disappointment that the Book of Remembrance was being removed from the Church.

- 14. Matters for future discussion to be noted**
Nothing further than listed above.

Meeting closed at 8.40 pm

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