

Caston Parish Council

CHAIRMAN: Mrs Jaki Porter

VICE CHAIRMAN: Mrs Kay Farmbrough

MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF CASTON PARISH COUNCIL
MONDAY 1 FEBRUARY 2021
BY ZOOM CONFERENCE CALL at 7.30 pm

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

Also present:- County Councillor Claire Bowes and 7 Members of the Public

1. **Apologies for absence**
None.
2. **To approve the Minutes of the Virtual Meeting held on Monday 4 January 2021**
It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 4 January 2021 be signed, by the Chairman, as a true and correct record. Proposed by Cllr Farmbrough and seconded by Cllr Cook, all voted in favour. -by

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

3. **Participation and questions from the public, session 1.**
A member of the public raised the question of the broken drain cover on the Attleborough Road. This has been reported by two members of the public and the Clerk. The Clerk has also advised County Councillor Bowes. CC Bowes advised that she was aware of the same and that hopefully somebody from Highways should be out to look at it shortly. They are currently still very busy but she is aware and will chase them accordingly. Concerns regarding the danger it posed were noted.
Another member of the public raised the damage which had recently been caused to the village green by a lorry turning round. The Clerk advised that she had been notified of the details of the vehicle in question and that a letter was being sent to the company concerned.
4. **Guest Speakers**
CC Bowes reported as follows:-

"The County Council Cabinet have agreed extra resources to fund extra staff for the flood and water management team and to set up a task Group or Flood Liaison Group to bring all authorities together, Environment Agency, Anglia Water, LLFA, and District Councils. This will be headed by General Lord Dannatt. It is envisaged that the Group's first meeting will be mid Feb and it will report/make recommendations to the Council's select committee for infrastructure and Dev and to Cabinet.

1.5 million has also been allocated in the next financial year for flood resources.

I attended last week's meeting of the Infrastructure and Development Select Committee at which this was reported and committee members specifically asked that landowners be approached and asked to keep ditches and drainage routes clear and Highways to prioritise

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DATED: 1 MARCH 21

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the ones they are responsible for. Following the flooding the clear up operation continues with cleansing and jetting out of systems and investigation has started into the event.

Following your last meeting I spoke with the Highways Director and he advised that the Flood & Water Management Team will make contact with Jaki and arrange a meeting and that once the new Highways Engineer has started they will make contact with the Parish Council. Flooding related issues will be one of their top priorities as both Breckland and South Norfolk were heavily affected on the 23/24 December.

South Area Highways team are still picking up and actioning issues in the interim, including repairs to drainage systems where required and cleansing/jetting out of existing systems as the flooding brought with it a considerable amount of debris.

I was contacted by Bridgett Hall about the broken manhole cover in the village at the weekend and reported it and have been assured that a member of the team will very shortly be out to assess it and have it mended.

The Council has extended its free school meal voucher scheme for February half term. A child from a family that receives benefits is eligible for a £15 voucher for the week. The last time the voucher scheme ran over the Christmas period, Norfolk County Council issued more than 27,000 vouchers and is estimating the uptake will be similar this half term.

A new campaign which aims to ensure every school age child has a digital device and internet connection to learn remotely at home was launched last week.

Norfolk County Council is working with Norfolk Community Foundation to make sure no child is left behind in their learning because of digital disadvantage.

- Businesses and organisations can give pre-used corporate devices to the County Council for refurbishment and distribution to schools. To donate email devices@norfolk.gov.uk
- Individuals and businesses can give funding to the NCF to be spent on new laptops and tablets and internet connections. To donate visit the NCF website.

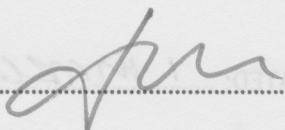
The County Council has already co-ordinated the sourcing, prioritisation, and distribution of approximately 2,000 laptops and tablets, either directly to youngsters or to their schools – 500 of which have been directly provided by the council.

After the campaign for laptop donations was launched, Hethel-based Lotus made a huge donation of 625 brand new Chromebooks which will bring families up to speed with home learning."

DC Cowen emailed his report which was read by the Clerk.

"Breckland has proposed a draft budget that will be taken to the setting the council meeting on Feb 25th when we shall also debate the proposed Council Tax for Breckland District.

I am pleased to advise that despite the Covid implications on the Council, residents and businesses alike we are able to set a balanced budget for the coming year and moreover that we are not reducing any services but instead providing in some areas an enhanced service provision such as the improved waste collection service, additional officers to deal with fly tipping, business support, COVID compliance, animal welfare, climate change and vulnerability programmes and officers to support an improved digital service.

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The draft budget proposes that a Band D Council Tax payer will pay an extra £4.95 per year (circa 10pence/week) bringing the district portion Council Tax of a Band D property to £98.73 per year or £1.90/week.

We discussed flooding last time we met and I am sure you will be aware that General Lord Dannatt has been tasked with leading a task force to look at flooding issues in Norfolk and that the Mid Norfolk flood forum initiative set in train by George Greement will be feeding into the task force. Norfolk CC is the Lead Flood Authority and I am sure that Claire Bowes will be able to develop this theme and answer any questions you may have."

5. Speedwatch

Speedwatch sessions are cancelled during the National lockdown. Cllr Farmbrough did advise that the Police had been in attendance doing speed checks at some point over the last couple of weeks.

The Chairman reopened the Council meeting.

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

Cllr Brooker – 8B

7. Planning Applications

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

A. 3PL/2021/0075/F – Kings Landing Dukes Lane NR17 1BL - Proposed Residential Development of 2 Detached Dwellings with Integral Garages. *Undecided.*

A discussion took place and whilst the Parish Council has no objection, in principle, there was some confusion over the extent of this application and whether it was a resubmission of a previously expired application or entirely different. This will be further investigated before our response is submitted. Cllr Brooker advised the only point he would like to make is that the road leading to the site is narrow and care will need to be taken with large vehicles delivering to the site and would suggest a condition to ensure that any damage caused to the verges will be put right before occupation of the properties.

B. 3NM/2021/0002/NMA - Orchard Cottage, Northacre NR17 1DG - Non material amendment to 3PL/2020/1214/HOU - Re locate entrance porch. Revise internal layout to reposition bedrooms and en-suite facilities. *Undecided.* Comments have already been submitted.

C. 3PL/2021/0002/F - Chase Farm, The Street NR17 1DD - Construction of new farm house. *Undecided.*

A discussion took place and whilst the Parish Council has no objection, in principle, some concerns were raised in relation to the Public Right of Way and would request that a condition be imposed to ensure that the Right of Way remains accessible at all times.

D. 3PL/2020/1293/HOU – Foxhall Cottage, Dukes Lane – Single storey extension to rear. *Permission.*

E. 3PL/2020/0274/F – School Lodge, The Green, NR17 1DB - Proposed Detached House & Garage / Workshop To Garden Plot. (Re-Submission). *Appeal Refused.*

F. 3PL/2020/1000/F – The Barns, Attleborough Road, NR17 1DJ - Conversion of single storey storage building to dwelling. *Refused.*

G. 3PL/2020/1431/LB - The Mill, The Street NR17 1DD - Temporary removal of the windmill cap to carry out repairs by Smithdale Millwrights, crane off the existing cap and replace it with a temporary cap whilst repairs are made. *Undecided.*

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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 January 2021 in the sum of £221.07.
- B. To ratify payment to Brian Brooker in respect of Voipfone invoice number [XXXXXXXX], in respect of Caston Community Cars in the sum of £3.60 (incl VAT).
- C. To ratify payment to Plusnet for Broadband at the Village Hall in respect of invoice number 00004758344-017 in the sum of £34.20 (incl VAT).

The above payments were proposed by Cllr Grimsditch, seconded by Cllr Cook, all voted in favour.

9. To discuss propose and vote on the following subjects

- A. **To approve and adopt Freedom of Information Policy**
The Council Member had been supplied with a copy of the proposed Freedom of Information Policy. Proposed by Cllr Brooker, seconded by Cllr Grimsditch, all voted in favour. It was therefore **RESOLVED** that the Freedom of Information Policy, as drafted, be approved and adopted with immediate effect.

10. Matters to Report

- A. **Co-option Update**
The Chairman advised that we were in receipt of 2 applications with another expected shortly. The Council members will consider the applicants and report further in due course.
- B. **Financial Balances**
The Clerk reported the current financial balances.
- C. **The Rangers**
The Rangers are still not operating in the usual way and are very busy but Cllr Bowes assured us that they are aware of outstanding matters in Caston. Cllr Farmbrough advised that a road sign (directional) had fallen into the ditch at the end of Northacre, quite possibly during the recent flooding. The Clerk to report.
- D. **Play Area**
Cllr Porter advised that she will be ordering the duck springer for the play area but it will not be installed until the Summer as the company is not currently working given current guidelines.
- E. **Coronation Terrace Green**
Cllrs Porter and Farmbrough inspected the site and have confirmed that the original suggestion of installing a hedge at the location is not viable given current access routes. It is a problem which is very hard to solve as the original road is not wide enough for two vehicles to pass or for larger vehicles such as refuse lorries to access. The only possibility may be to widen the road but this is extremely expensive and outside of the remit of the Parish Council. A suggestion was made to contact the residents of Coronation Terrace and seek their suggestions.

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F. Flooding

The Clerk advised that she had spoken with the Water Management Alliance Eastern Drainage Boards and they have confirmed that they do not manage this particular stretch of the stream and that it is the responsibility of the Lead Flood Authority, Norfolk County Council and riparian owners. However, they did agree to meet with the Clerk to carry out an initial observation and suggestion of where problems may be. To be arranged.

Cllr Grimsditch suggested that we may be jumping the gun in obtaining a report and it is more important to educate residents to individually report any flooding issues to the correct authority. Cllr Grimsditch suggested that there is a perception that flooding affects insurance and this then comprises reporting as residents are less motivated to report issues. Some insurance policies have riparian cover included and offer competitive prices.

Cllr Porter advised that a recent forum she attended to discuss flooding, it was apparent that part of the problem is that so many bodies are involved that it is difficult to know where to go for support and it is sometimes confusing.

Cllr Porter advised that she had written to George Freeman MP in relation to the flooding in Caston. **Item for next Agenda.**

G. Damage to Verges

There have been several reports of damage to the verges due to HGV lorries and farming activity. It was noted that this is a seasonal problem which will occur as the roads are simply not wide enough. The Clerk advised that she will write to the haulier responsible for the damage caused to the village green although it is noted it is unlikely that we will receive a response.

11. Correspondence

None.

12. To agree the next meeting date

1 March 2021

The Chairman closed the meeting to permit public discussion.

13. Participation and questions from the public – session 2

A member of the public mentioned that he had viewed an Ordnance Survey Map which showed fields marked 'drain'. He has contact details of the owner and will be contacting him in due course.

A member of the public reiterated the importance of the Right of Way being available at all times during the construction of the new house at Chase Farm, should the planning permission be approved.

A member of the public mentioned that some of the ditch along The Street has branches and debris in it which, when flowing, carries the debris further down that road. Specific mention was made of the ditch at the Griston Road end of Caston but it is unclear who owns the land in question. The ditches are silted up due to run off from neighbouring fields.

A member of the public asked if the Play Area was shut. The Clerk advised that there had been no guidelines issued that suggested that the play area should be closed.

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A member of the public advised that County Broadband did sign up sufficient applicants for them to deliver the service to Caston but wanted to know who is responsible if they should start digging up roads etc. It is understood that the cables go overground not underground so this should not be an issue.

14. Matters for future discussion to be noted

Parking at School and as above.

Meeting closed at 9.45 pm

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