

Caston Parish Council

CHAIRMAN: Mr Chris Cook VICE CHAIRMAN: Mrs Mary Howell

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CASTON PARISH COUNCIL
MONDAY 4 DECEMBER 2023
 AT CASTON VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30 PM**

Councillor's present:- Chris Cook, Mary Howell, Graham Moss, Simon Spanyol, Sarah Fletcher and Rob Trown

Also present:- Two members of the public

1. **Apologies for absence**
None.
2. **To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 November 2023.**
All voted in favour.

The Chairman closed the meeting to permit public discussion.

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

The Chairman reopened the Council meeting.

4. **Guest speakers**
None.
5. **Speedwatch and SAM2 Report.**

“During November the volunteers did two checks. 57 vehicles were assessed and 9 reported for exceeding 35mph. We were joined by the constabulary for one check. Four checks are planned for December.

I have asked for one of the existing volunteers to take over the role of co-ordinator and am awaiting their responses”.

Cllr Spanyol gave a breakdown of the August to October 2023 SAM2 data which he has converted into a readable format. These will, in due course, be placed on the Parish Council website and noticeboards. It was suggested that we should ask the constabulary if there is any other data which would be helpful to include on these reports. Cllr Trown is a Speedwatch volunteer and will make some enquiries. Cllr Trown reported that the constabulary are keen to come back into the community. Cllr Spanyol will send the data to the Speedwatch Co-ordinator for his information.

The latest reports can be accessed here [Caston Parish Council | SAM2 Data](#)

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

Cllrs Howell and Spanyol requested it be recorded that they are residents in Northacre.

7. **Planning Applications:-**

- A. **3PL/2021/0932/VAR** - Cherry Tree Farm Cherry Tree Lane Stow Bedon - Variation of Condition No2 on 3PL/2017/0878/F : Variation to reflect the as-built appearance and layout of the pig sheds, feed silos and manure store cover and proposed amendments including revised external materials and the addition of chimneys. **Stow Bedon application. Undecided.** No update available.
- B. **3PL/2022/0472/F** – Appeal No. APP/F2605/W/22/3308149 – Homefield House, The Street, Caston – Proposed new dwelling. **Undecided.** No update available.
- C. **3PL/2022/0368/F** - Coughtrey Industrial Estates (Units 1 - 17) Church Road - The demolition of Units 1-6 (whole block Western boundary) and Units 7-13 (part of North Block), extensions to units 14 and 15 (large extension to North block), extension to unit 16 (small extension to South Block), external fascia changes, refurbishment to Unit 17. Change of use of whole site to mixed B2 and Class E (offices). The reconfiguration of parking and creation of a new loading and unloading area. **Undecided.**
Cllr Spanyol advised that the Secretary of State has agreed that an Environmental Impact Assessment is required, concentrating on noise, air pollution and smells. There have been two variations filed in this matter one relating to perimeter noise and the other hours of operation. It was noted that the Environmental Health has opposed both variations.

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 November 2023 in the sum of £252.63.
- B. To approve backdated pay from 1st April 2023 to the Clerk, Mrs Joanne Blackman, in the sum of £116.27.
- C. To approve reimbursement payment to the Clerk, Mrs Joanne Blackman, for payment to Hostworld for castonparishcouncil SSL certificate, in the sum of £28.80.
- D. To approve reimbursement payment to Brian Brooker, for Domain renewal for Caston On-Line in the sum of £9.54.
- E. To approve payment to David Bracey for annual Play Equipment Inspection in the sum of £120 (incl VAT).
- F. To approve payment to BT for broadband at the Village Hall in respect of invoice M004 in the sum of £27.54 (incl VAT) – paid by Direct Debit.
- G. To approve payment to HCI Data for disk space in the sum of £12.24 (incl VAT) in respect of invoice number WEB16258.

There was one additional item for payment as follows:-

- H. To approve payment to Glasdon for dog bin in the sum of £312.78 (incl VAT) in respect of invoice number SI875831.

All voted in favour.

9. **Matters to report:-**

- A. **Drainage Improvement Project/Road Closure/Diversion**
The diversion of traffic has now been changed to divert traffic through Watton. It has helped but those that already know they can access Northacre are continuing to do so.

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The drainage works appear to be on schedule and the engineers are hopeful that the works will complete prior to Christmas.

Cllr Spanyol had written to Highways in relation to a low point on The Street (just prior to Dukes Lane corner) which accumulates water as there is no drainage at this point and suggesting that Highways may want to consider resurfacing this at the same time as resurfacing where the works are being carried out. Cllr Spanyol received a response stating that this would be included on next year's resurfacing schedule.

Highways have been sent photographs, by various sources, of the road edges in Northacre which have occurred because of the diversion. The Clerk will write to Highways requesting remedial action. It was also suggested that we should point out that the Parish Council warned Highways, prior to the diversion, that Northacre was an unsuitable diversion route.

Cllr Trown reported a trench in the road where it appears to be sinking outside Hawthorn Lodge. Cllr Trown will provide photographs to the Clerk will report to Highways.

B. Flooding/Mid Norfolk Flood Partnership/Village Meeting

Cllr Fletcher asked whether Highways had ever looked at other parts of the village because when there is heavy rainfall, water flows down The Street to the Attleborough Road, bringing with it lots of debris. This in turn blocks the top of the drains so the water cannot enter the drain causing a lot of surface water on the road.

Cllr Cook advised that the flooding at Dukes Lane has been an ongoing issue for more than 8 years when a fault in the drainage system was identified. The Parish Council have been fighting for a remedy at this location for many years.

It was agreed that reporting needs to be made, by anyone, in all areas which flood in the village direct to Norfolk County Council.

The Save the Rain project was mentioned, and the Clerk advised that she had asked the Clerk at Thompson to confirm who had initiated the drainage inspection in Thompson and she had passed the message on to the Chairman at Thompson who in turn has passed the enquiry on to the co-ordinator of the Save the Rain project, a further response is awaited.

Councillor Howell said the Save the Rain project was described at the MNFP meeting and included Watton and Merton as well as Thompson. In the December Waylander the project contact for Merton is given. The projects aim is to collect water to use for irrigation during periods of drought based on the existing drainage systems for rainwater.

Cllr Howell advised that she had attended the Mid Norfolk Flood Partnership ("MNFP") Zoom meeting arranged by MP George Freeman. There were also representatives from Rocklands and Great Ellingham who have also experienced flooding issues. Henry Cator is the Chair of the Committee.

Caston is not considered a high priority area because there have been fewer reports of floods (water in the home) from the public than other areas. We must keep making our voice heard. We must encourage residents to report matters, even retrospectively, to enable an accurate reading of these events.

Householders who experience flooding inside their property must report to Norfolk County Council to instigate a formal flood investigation.

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A lot was discussed regarding how to find out who owns watercourses etc and their legal obligations. Almost all culverts are privately owned.

The MNFP and Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance are pushing for reform on Riparian rights but this is something in the future.

The main problem we have is that we do not have detailed information on what was in place historically and what is there now. We have to work with the now to make improvements.

Some historic culverts no longer exist namely across the road opposite School View and at The Bakery.

It is acknowledged that some kind of survey would need to be carried out to establish the full extent of the watercourse and drainage. It was acknowledged however that this may be very costly and is likely outside the remit of the Parish Council.

Cllr Howell will speak to a contact at Spooner Row who are contemplating this route and to establish whether any funding is available or whether there is help available from other sources.

Cllr Howell will write a letter to the Norfolk Flood & Water Management Team with a copy to George Freeman MP and to the Chair, Henry Cator.

The Clerk will respond to the member of the public who messaged and attended the previous Parish Council meeting to raise concerns and questions on responsibility about the culvert close to her property.

The Clerk will send a copy of the Riparian owner letter to the Councillors so they can see what it says, and the Clerk will draft a similar letter to landowners.

A question was raised as to who owns the land adjacent to School View. It is believed to be the developer named on the application, but this will be checked.

So far there has been interest shown from two people to hold a village meeting but it was noted this has only just been reported in the Waylander so others may come forward.

C. Dog Bin at Village Hall

The Clerk advised that the new dog bin, as agreed at the previous meeting, had been delivered. Cllrs Spanyol/Trown agreed that they would fit the new bin.

D. Achieving Timely Results/Shared Folder

Cllr Spanyol asked whether, when things arise, whether there is a different mechanism to contact people, rather than email.

Cllr Spanyol advised that in his previous roles, there has always been one central place to obtain information and feels this would be helpful to the Parish Council. This would include all correspondence to and from the Council and other documentation as required. Cllr Cook acknowledged the principle but was not sure whether this was required for a Parish Council. The Clerk expressed concerns that this will create more work which is not necessary as important things are already shared via email.

It may be worth considering for specific items but not all correspondence/documentation.

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The Clerk advised that the only obvious way she could see to have a shared folder would be something along the lines of Google Docs as this was free. Cllr Spanyol agreed to investigate this.

E. Minutes & Agenda

Minutes must be quicker and a goal of two weeks following a meeting was agreed. The Clerk explained that sometimes it is more important to get other matters done before the Minutes but accepted and agreed to try and get these done quicker.

Cllr Howell said that sometimes points which are raised are not further reported on, so it is not clear whether tasks have been completed. It was requested that all action points be reported at future meetings and added as Agenda items. It was suggested that maybe we could have some general headings on the agenda for example, village maintenance. The Clerk agreed to include all action points as Agenda items in future.

The Clerk requested that if anybody needs Agenda items added that she is notified at least 7 days prior to the meeting.

F. Financial Balances

Caston Parish Council £11,159.07/Highway Surveyors £14,823.60

G. Village Gates

The Clerk advised that a quote had been received from C E Clarke Fencing to replace the rotten posts (16) with new pressure treated 4in x 4in posts, including 10 bags of quick set cement, all fixing screws, remove old rotten posts and remove from gates, where needed and all labour in the sum of £897.60 (incl VAT). It was noted that there is £500 in budget towards these works.

Cllr Fletcher proposed that we accept this quote, seconded by Cllr Howell. All voted in favour. Clerk to instruct C E Clarke to carry out the works.

It was noted that R Ives has one of the gates at his property.

H. Playground

The Clerk reported that the Annual Inspection of the playground had been carried out and whilst there were no immediate urgent issues, it had only just been received and she will inspect and report on it further at the next meeting.

I. Website/Emails

The Clerk advised that she had received new email details and passwords and these would be sent to Councillors in due course, once we are live. Calico had reported that the transfer was imminent but it any event should be completed prior to Christmas.

J. Telephone Kiosk

Cllr Spanyol reported that the telephone kiosk near the school had been looked at and it was difficult and expensive to straighten it in its current location and it had been suggested that it is moved to an alternative location.

It was reported that there may be an interested party in purchasing and relocating the kiosk in the village. The Clerk advised that she needs to check whether we are permitted to sell the same under the adoption agreement.

K. Emergency Plan

Ongoing. Low priority.

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L. Noticeboard

Cllr Cook will deal with the Noticeboard but it has been too wet at the moment to do so.

10. **Correspondence**
None.

11. **The next meeting date:** 8 January 2024.

The Chairman closed the Council Meeting to permit public discussion.

12. **Participation and questions from the public – session 2**
None.

13. **Matters for future discussion to be noted.**
Budget/Precept.

Jo Blackman
Parish Clerk

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