

# Caston Parish Council

CHAIRMAN: Mr Chris Cook    VICE CHAIRMAN: Mrs Mary Howell

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CASTON PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MONDAY 3 JULY 2023**  
**AT CASTON VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30 PM**

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

Also present:-                Two members of the public

1.        **Apologies for absence**  
Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Howell.
2.        **To approve the Minutes of the Meetings held on 5 June 2023.**  
All present voted in favour.

**The Chairman closed the meeting to permit public discussion.**

3.        **Participation and questions from the public, session 1.**  
A member of the public asked whether the defib was checked regularly. The Clerk advised that it is checked weekly and the pads are monitored at the same time. A member of the public suggested defib training and Cllr Fletcher advised that the WI had someone attend and discuss first aid/defib at a group meeting, possibly the Red Cross, but she couldn't be sure. The Clerk advised that we had previously encountered problems getting someone to come along to a meeting to discuss the defib and the Council had subsequently arranged an evening where videos were played to the audience, with examples of a defib in operation, and Dr Chris was on hand to answer any questions.

It was suggested that it may be worthwhile repeating this and DC Cowen suggested that it may be worth organising a group session with other Councils ie Stow Bedon, Shropham etc.

**The Chairman reopened the Council meeting.**

4.        **Guest speakers**  
DC Cowen apologised for not being in attendance at the last meeting.  
DC Cowen submitted the following report prior to this meeting:-

“DISTRICT COUNCILLORS’ REPORT JULY 2023

Following the elections in May, the council is settling down with the influx of some new members and a number of induction sessions are in hand to give support to members who may not be familiar with the machinations of local government. The leader has confirmed a Cabinet and the summer edition of Transforming Breckland lists all the newly elected members of council and provides a guide as to how to contact members by email.

CHAIRMAN.....

DATED: .....

CLERK: Joanne Blackman, Daisy Barn, 42 Long Lane, Feltwell, Norfolk, IP26 4BJ

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Sarah Suggitt and Phil Cowen both hold cabinet positions. Sarah is Deputy Leader of the Council and the executive member for Strategic and Operational Planning whilst Phil is the executive member for Finance, Revenues and Benefits.

We have spoken in the past about the Local Plan Review, and we have been advised that the Inspector has indicated that they are content with our partial Review that addresses issues and aspects emanating from our current plan, and we are therefore optimistic that when the full review is complete that we will receive a similar response.

The full review has yet to delve into the detail, but officers are engaged in sifting through the hundreds of sites that have been offered up and members will soon be able to interrogate the shortened list and discuss with local communities, their thoughts as well. Thus far, no decisions have been made with regard to any sites that have been put forward through the call for sites.

Our contract with Serco who collect our bins is being fine tuned as the new central operational site in Watton beds in, but we await with keen interest announcements from Westminster regarding a suggested universal waste service that may see many more discrete recycling bins where households may be required to separate recyclables on the 'doorstep' together with a universal national bin colour arrangement and perhaps garden waste being treated in a different manner.

Otherwise the business of running and managing the council continues with officers and members engaged upon the preliminary phases of developing our budget for the next financial year.

#### **Sarah Suggitt and Phil Cowen**

July 2023"

DC Cowen explained that approximately 700+ sites had been put forward for consideration and the 'Railway Village, Beetley' had been reported in the news.

We should hear more in relation to the Local Plan by late Summer/early Autumn. Guidelines will be provided at that time on how to make comments/object to any suggested sites.

It is possible that settlement boundaries could be considered for alternation. DC Cowen stressed that it is important for the local councils to advise on their local areas namely amenities etc. The Enforcement Team also relies on the local community to report any potential planning problems in and around the area.

DC Cowen stressed the need to be objective and not subjective.

#### 5. **Co-option**

This matter was deferred to the next meeting.

#### 6. **Speedwatch and SAM2 Report.**

"Four checks were planned for June but only two were carried out due to unforeseen circumstances. One being the school cycling proficiency tests.

A total of 198 vehicles were assessed and 26 reported to the constabulary for exceeding the 30 mph limit."

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

None.

8. **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.**

DC Cowen explained that the site operates under an Environment Agency permit. The odour emissions have been appalling. The Environment Agency do not advise on such matters but merely monitor. A site in Rocklands have also had a similar problem. The Environment Agency permit trumps the planning authority. They have installed new flus and no doubt a retrospective planning application will be submitted. DC Cowen advised that, as a local resident, the installation has been beneficial although it has not eliminated the odour completely and the effect it may have on a different area is, as yet, unknown. Residents nearest to the site are still experiencing high levels of odours.

Retrospective planning applications are a real problem. The Planning Department is obliged to advise applicants to make a retrospective application and that application is dealt with as if it had not already been built – most do get approved and applicants are aware of this and often try it on knowing it is unlikely the retrospective application will be refused.

- B. **3PL/2022/0472/F** – Appeal No. APP/F2605/W/22/3308149 – Homefield House, The Street, Caston – Proposed new dwelling. **Undecided.**
- C. **3PL/2023/0072/F** – Land at Chase Farm, The Street, NR17 1DD- Erection of Farm Bungalow. **Refused.**
- D. **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.**  
There is no update on this matter and it is effectively 'parked' whilst the Planning Department are waiting for future information.

9. **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 June 2023 in the sum of £236.02.
- B. To approve payment to R G Maintenance Services Limited for grass cutting for the month of June 2023 in the sum of £331.20 (incl VAT) in respect of invoice number 2249549.
- C. To approve payment to R G Maintenance Services Limited for grass cutting for the month of May 2023 in the sum of £496.80 (incl VAT) in respect of invoice number 2249449.
- D. To approve payment to Didlington Nurseries for plants for the village planters in the sum of £145.
- E. To ratify payment to Plusnet for Broadband at the Village Hall for the month of May in respect of invoice number 00004758344-047 in the sum of £26.40 (incl VAT).

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- F. To approve payment to Norfolk ALC (inv 968) in the sum of £45.60 (incl VAT) in respect of Planning for Parish Councillors training, attended by Cllr Moss.
- G. To approve payment to Norfolk ALC (inv 957) in the sum of £36.00 (incl VAT) in respect of Being an Effective Councillor training, attended by Cllr Spanyol.

Two further items were submitted for payment, as follows:-

- H. To approve payment to Norfolk PTS for training for Cllr Howell in the sum of £65.00.
- I. To approve payment to Norfolk PTS for training for Cllr Fletcher in the sum of £52.00.

Proposed by Cllr Spanyol, seconded by Cllr Moss, all voted in favour.

10. **Matters to report:-**

A. **County Broadband update**

The Clerk advised that nothing further had been received from County Broadband but it was noted that Wretham have also been experiencing problems. The item will be removed from the Agenda until such time as we hear anything further.

B. **Broadband for Village Hall – Plusnet ceasing to provide**

The Clerk explained that Plusnet were ceasing to provide business internet facilities from 5 September. The Clerk had spoken to them and had received a quote of £23.95 (from BT, who own Plusnet) per month going forward. All voted in favour to move to BT and the Clerk will liaise with the Chairman of the Village Hall to arrange installation.

C. **Financial Balances**

Caston Parish Council £11,351.91/Highway Surveyors £14,583.03

D. **Bank account/signatories**

The Clerk advised that the signed paperwork had been sent and acknowledged by Lloyds. Further updates will follow.

E. **Communications Policy/Social Media Policy**

A discussion took place following the proposed amendments to the policies. It was agreed that the Council would adopt both policies, with the suggested amendments. Proposed by Cllr Moss, seconded by Cllr Fletcher. Three voted in favour with one abstention. It was therefore **APPROVED** that the Council would adopt the Communications and Social Media Policies, as drafted. The Clerk will arrange for these to be added to the website.

F. **Village Gates**

The Clerk and Cllr Spanyol had been around the village this evening and have measured the village gates currently in situ. It was agreed that the Clerk would obtain quotes for both new recycled gates and a proper refurbishment of the existing gates for comparison.

G. **Training**

Some councillors have completed training, and some have dates booked for the future. It was suggested that it would be a good idea to have a round table discussion after everyone's training, to exchange what they have learnt.

H. **Playground**

NGF Play have yet to visit the site to inspect the leg of the swing and the Clerk will follow this up.

The Clerk advised that a quote had been received for a full clean of the play equipment using low pressure methods. It was discussed at some length, and it was agreed that the play equipment had not had a full clean since installation and could benefit from a clean. It was therefore proposed by Cllr Cook and seconded by Cllr Fletcher to proceed with the clean. All voted in favour.

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I. **Emails**

The Clerk advised that she had been in discussions with Calico to move the email hosting and a further update will be provided in due course.

J. **Rayners Falgate**

It was agreed that this item would be removed from the Agenda unless any issues arise.

K. **Telephone kiosk**

Volunteers have been requested in the Waylander for two months and, as yet, nobody had come forward. It was agreed that if we are to do a refurbishment then it needs to be done properly. If there are no volunteers, we need to establish whether the village want to keep it and if so, what will be its use. The history of Caston was discussed again and it was felt that this would be a good use for it. The Clerk will make enquiries whether any other Council had adopted a kiosk but has subsequently sold/disposed of it.

L. **Road Closure, Dukes Lane corner – October 2023**

It was suggested by a member of the public that we should meet with Highways, prior to any works commencing, to go through exactly what is being done and that there should be a public meeting to go through it. It was explained that we are in contact with the contractors and they have agreed to provide us with a schedule of works once these have been fully set out. Whilst the Council agreed with the sentiment, it is not for us to manage it as we do not have the expertise. It was suggested that we could speak to CC Bowes with any concerns. It was noted that the road closure is also a Highways matter and not something we can manage. It was suggested that once we have more information, consideration would be given to a Village Meeting to explain the works.

M. **Village Planters**

The Clerk had received a request for a representative of the Council to volunteer to assist with the group looking after the planters. The Clerk explained that whilst previously one of the volunteers was also a councillor, this was not a requirement at the time and when the planters were outsourced, no representative was involved. It is not clear whether this is a request because the Council fund the planters or whether it is to oversee the group. Cllr Fletcher agreed to find out what exactly is being requested. The Council do not feel it necessary to have a representative in the group as an annual budget is agreed and it is up to the group how this is spent.

N. **Emergency Plan – request by School to Village Hall**

The Clerk explained that she had received an email from the school regarding their review of the School Emergency Plan. The Clerk advised that some years ago a review was due to be carried out of our own plan (which is now none existent) and given the events of last year in relation to fires in the neighbouring villages, maybe we should consider our own Emergency Plan. It was agreed that this was a good idea and DC Cowen suggested that Norfolk ALC should be able to offer guidance in this regard. The Clerk to investigate further.

O. **Defib**

Following on from the last meeting it was agreed that Cllr Fletcher would be added as a back up for notification if the defib has been used in the event the Clerk is unable to check the same. Emails will be automatically set up to copy them to Cllr Fletcher.

P. **Village Green Noticeboard**

Cllr Cook advised that the top lock appears to be full of mud, but the bottom lock seems ok. Cllr Cook agreed to refurbish the same and ensure the locks are working.

11. **Correspondence**

A message had been received by a resident concerned about speeding. Whilst this continues to be an ongoing problem throughout the village, we have met with Highways and everything available to us has been implemented.

A request was received for a donation for the churchyard maintenance. A budget of £450 had been previously agreed and it was therefore agreed that this should be paid. All voted in favour.

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12. **The next meeting date: 4 September 2023.**

**The Chairman closed the Council Meeting to permit public discussion.**

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

14. **Matters for future discussion to be noted.**  
As above.

Meeting closed 9.25pm

Jo Blackman  
Parish Clerk

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