

Caston Parish Council

CHAIRMAN: Mr Chris Cook VICE CHAIRMAN: Mrs Mary Howell

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CASTON PARISH COUNCIL
MONDAY 11 MARCH 2024
 AT CASTON VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30 PM

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

Also present:- Five members of the public

1. **Apologies for absence**
 Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Trown.
2. **To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 February 2024.**
 Proposed by Cllr Howell, seconded by Cllr Cook. 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 February the volunteers undertook three checks. 118 vehicles were assessed and 4 were reported to the constabulary for exceeding 35mph. We have one new volunteer who is awaiting training. Five checks are planned for March. I await the volunteers to respond to see if we can fill all the dates.”

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

Cllr Spanyol has reviewed the latest data and advised the prime times for vehicles travelling through Stow Bedon and Northacre, are as follows:-

Stow Bedon – 4pm to 7pm – 13% of vehicles travelling over 35mph

Northacre – 7am – 9am – 8% of vehicles travelling over 35mph

It was acknowledged that Speedwatch can only operate in daylight hours so earlier/later times will be accommodated as daytime hours become longer.

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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:-**

- 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/2022/0368/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.**
- C. **3PL/2023/1055/VAR** - Coughtrey Industrial Estate Church Road IP25 6QB – Removal of planning condition 3 on 3PL/2003/1585/F - Coughtrey Industrial Estate Church Road IP25 6QB. **Undecided.**
- D. **3PL/2023/1054/VAR** - Coughtrey Industrial Estate Church Road IP25 6QB - Removal of planning condition 4 from 3PL/2003/1092/F. **Undecided.**
B/C/D – A member of the public attended the meeting and spoke on behalf of the Griston Residents Group in respect of the forthcoming Planning Committee Meeting. He advised that he will be speaking on behalf of the Group, as will Griston Parish Council, in opposition of this application (3PL/2022/0368/F).
He gave a brief update on the position. Following a legal challenge, the Applicant was required to provide a full Environmental Assessment of the site. To date this has not been provided and Breckland cannot legally approve the change of use application. It therefore defers to the default position. The two variation applications, whilst small, could set a dangerous precedent for future development. The Group have been pushing to have the two matters (C/D) discussed together.
The Group are expecting an appeal or second application to be filed in the future. This is likely to cost the Applicant in the region of £50K and it will likely be a difficult challenge.
- E. **3DC/2023/0322/DOC** - Land to the North of School View NR17 1DD - Discharge of Conditions 5,6,7,8,12 on 3PL/2020/0262/O. This application relates to Condition 5 – Drainage, Condition 6 – Construction Management, Condition 7 – Biodiversity and Ecology, Condition 8 – Trees in Countryside and Condition 12 – Access to site. **Undecided.**
A member of public and neighbour spoke regarding concerns for the discharge of conditions application, along with the reserved matters application. Work has started on site without the conditions being satisfied. Some damage has been caused to surface roots of some of the trees which are subject to Tree Preservation Orders and a culvert has been built across the watercourse. The Council are aware, and these matters are currently under investigation with the Planning Enforcement Department.
With regards to the Reserved Matters application (3PL/2024/0067/D), various concerns were raised, namely:
- Aspect and size of the dwellings which are much larger than those originally proposed and face directly into the rear of Meadows End.

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- Large windows and doors which face due North, which is contrary to Breckland's own recommendations to minimise heat loss and light pollution.
- External downlighters are proposed which are more suited to an urban setting and are known to have a detrimental impact on wildlife.
- Invasion of privacy to neighbouring properties.

The Council discussed the three applications and concluded:

Discharge application (3PL/2023/0322/DOC) – the Council object to the discharge of conditions as unlawful development has already begun on the site and is currently under investigation.

Reserved matters application (3PL/2024/0067/D) – the Council object to the reserved matters application for the following reasons:-

- Aspect and size of the dwellings which are much larger than those originally proposed and face directly into the rear of Meadows End.
- Large windows and doors which face due North contrary to advice to minimise heat loss and light pollution.
- External downlighters are proposed which are more suited to an urban setting and are known to have a detrimental impact on wildlife.
- Invasion of privacy to neighbouring properties.

Variation of conditions application (3PL/202/0262/O) – the Council object to this application as follows:-

- The Applicant is in direct breach of several of these conditions. Specifically, but not limited to, the clearing of trees and installation of an inadequate culvert to provide access to the site, which has already resulted in significant flooding on The Street.
- Caston Parish Council are of the opinion that no further work on this site should be permitted until the pre-commencement conditions have been met.
- We understand that the site is already under investigation with the Enforcement Team and they should also conclude their investigations before any decisions are made.

- F. **3PL/2024/0050/HOU** - Lupin Cottage, The Street - Single storey extension with flat roof and glazed lanterns. **Withdrawn.**
- G. **3PL/2024/0073/VAR** - The Barns, Attleborough Road NR17 1DJ - Removal of Condition 13 on 3PL/2019/0518/F. **Undecided.**
The Council have submitted their objections to this application.
- H. **3PL/2024/0180/VAR** - Land to the West of School View - Variation of Conditions 5, 6, 7 & 8 on 3PL/2020/0262/O - amend the wording of the conditions to be varied from "no development shall take place/commence" to "no development shall take place beyond slab level". **Undecided.** See E above.

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 February 2024 in the sum of £252.63.
- B. To approve reimbursement payment to the Clerk for printing expenses (£9.99 per month October-December/£11.99 per month January-March) for the months of October 2023 to March 2024 in the sum of £65.94.
- C. To approve reimbursement payment to Brian Brooker for SSL Certificate for Caston On-line in the sum of £28.80.
- D. To approve reimbursement payment to Brian Brooker for mailbox for Caston On-line in the sum of £12.32.

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- E. To approve payment to Caston Village Hall for Hall Hire during the financial year 2023/24 in the sum of £99.00.
- F. To approve payment to Westcotec Limited for replacement batteries for the SAM2 machines in respect of invoice number 15651 in the sum of £210.60 (incl VAT).
- G. To approve payment to BT for broadband at the Village Hall in respect of invoice M007 in the sum of £27.54 (incl VAT) – paid by Direct Debit.

Proposed by Cllr Cook and seconded by Cllr Moss. All voted in favour.

9. **Matters to report:-**

A. **Flooding / Mid Norfolk Flood Partnership.**

It was noted that George Freeman had recently circulated an update on the Mid Norfolk Flood Partnership.

Cllr Howell had reported and circulated notes from the meeting with the Flood Water Management Team ("FWMT"). The meeting was felt to be helpful and the FWMT have assured the Council that matters are in hand in relation to the recent flooding at the new School View site.

The FWMT have advised that the ball is very much 'in our court' in relation to reporting any issues and reminding residents and landowners of their riparian obligations but if the Council encounters any problems, they may be able to assist. The Team was distributing cards with their contact details and information in relation to flooding. A card will be supplied to the Clerk for posting on to the Village Facebook page.

It was identified that the flow of water coming into the village is largely from farmland and the Council were encouraged to speak to landowners to identify any areas of concern. It was however noted that the water levels are at the highest they have ever been. Cllr Howell had reported on the flooding in the latest edition of the Waylander magazine. It was agreed that the Clerk will place the Waylander reports on to the Council website.

In a personal capacity, Cllr Spanyol wrote to the new Director of Highways following further flooding in the Village. In particular four areas had water across the road. A response is awaited.

B. **Riparian ownership letters.**

Cllr Howell advised that she was halfway through the draft letter which will be sent to landowners. This is a separate letter to that being sent to residential riparian owners. Using the information from the FWMT it is recommended that we personalise the letters to identify the location of the watercourse relating to each property.

It was suggested that it should be included in the letter that if anybody has any problems they should contact the Parish Council.

The finalised version of both letters will be circulated before the next meeting.

C. **File storage.**

Cllr Spanyol suggested that the Parish Council should have viewing rights to the Parish Clerk's email account so that they can see all incoming and outgoing emails rather than having lots of emails being sent through. The suggestion was that if anybody wanted to look at old emails/attachments they would be able to search for them. The Clerk advised that the email account may contain personal emails relating to the Clerk and attachments are saved to the Clerk's computer and backed up to the external hard drive. We do not have the capacity to save everything within the email account. The Clerk also reminded the Council that at the previous meeting it was agreed that it was not necessary to have

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an additional space for storing documents etc. It was therefore agreed that this would not be implemented.

Cllr Spanyol suggested that when responding to Planning Applications the Councillors are not aware whether this has been done or not unless they look on the Breckland website and it would be nice to review the emails to see what had been submitted. The Clerk advised that responses are submitted on Breckland's website and they would not be available for viewing in emails in any event. Cllr Spanyol then asked the Clerk to notify Councillors, with a link to the Breckland page when posting comments.

D. Financial Balances.

Caston Parish Council £8,578.19/Highway Surveyors £14,971.06

E. Village Gates.

The Clerk advised that she had received a quote for painting the village gates, including materials, in the sum of £780. Wash and clean, prime and prepare new posts and two coats of exterior paint. It was suggested that we ask for volunteers to paint the posts. The Clerk expressed concerns regarding health and safety as it is roadside. Cllr Fletcher felt that it was important to get a company to do the work to ensure we were not having to repaint them every year or so. It was suggested that we add repainting of the gates to the annual budget in future years so we can have them repainted/maintained regularly. The Clerk advised that there is £500 in the budget for the forthcoming year and also for the year 2023/24. It was agreed that further quotes should be obtained. The Clerk will arrange for quotes to be supplied. The Clerk will also enquire how long we should expect a repaint to last.

F. Playground.

Cllr Spanyol advised that he did not have any bolt covers appropriate. The Clerk will arrange to order some.

Concern was raised about two protruding bolts under the bench within the play area. The recent playground inspection reported splinter potential on some of the picket fencing and an access point into the telephone exchange. Cllr Spanyol will visit the play area and report back to the Clerk. The Clerk will then obtain a quote from somebody to carry out the odd jobs.

The Clerk reported that she has identified two potential funding opportunities for the play area floor, The Big Lottery Awards for All and Aviva Community Fund. The Clerk felt the Big Lottery Awards for All looked positive and it was agreed that an application would be prepared.

G. Website/Emails.

No problems have been identified but the Clerk reminded the Councillors to delete emails no longer needed and to also remove them from the trash folder as we are already at 65% of storage capacity since transferring the email accounts. It was acknowledged that we would likely require additional storage going forward. Cllr Howell will be assisting Cllr Trown to access his email account.

H. Emergency Plan.

Ongoing.

I. Village Green Noticeboard.

To be addressed in drier weather.

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J. Road Closures.

The Clerk advised that she was unable to add the road closure plans to the website so they were in a readable. Cllr Moss advised that the road closure did not cause any problems.

K. County Broadband.

The Clerk had received an updated wayleave agreement which had been sent to all Councillors. It was agreed that this should now be passed to solicitors for checking. The Clerk will arrange this.

The Clerk further advised that in discussing the wayleave with the new project manager, Andrew Roberts, he advised that the pole on the Village Green is to be removed. It is unclear whether he meant the pole itself or the wires that are attached to it. This will be clarified.

I. Handling Planning Applications.

Cllr Fletcher asked for clarification as to what we are looking for specifically when we receive planning applications to consider. Cllr Fletcher was aware that as a consultee we are required to review each application on its own merits but asked whether there were any specific guidelines. It was confirmed that we should be looking at Breckland Council's policies, whether there will be any contravention of those policies and local knowledge which the Planning Department may not be aware of.

J. Liaison with School.

The Clerk has contacted the school and passed the contact details to Cllr Howell. Cllr Howell will now liaise directly with the school.

10. Correspondence

None.

- 11. The next meeting date:** 8 April 2024. This is a week later than normal due to the bank holiday.

The Chairman closed the Council Meeting to permit public discussion.**12. Participation and questions from the public – session 2**

A member of the public reported a blocked drain next to School Lodge. The Clerk will report accordingly.

13. Matters for future discussion to be noted.

As noted above.

Meeting closed at 9pm.

Jo Blackman
Parish Clerk

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