

# STOW BEDON & BRECKLES PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of Stow Bedon & Breckles Parish Council on Monday, 16 September 2013 at 7.30 p.m. in Caston Village Hall.

Present: Councillors Phil Childs (Vice-Chairman), Rachael Garrod, Paul Howe,  
Lee Pilkington, Sue Tanner.  
Julian Gibson (Clerk)

- 1 **Apologies for absence.** It was **resolved** to accept the reasons for absence provided by Mr Morfoot.
- 2 **Declarations of interest.** None.
- 3 **Dispensations.** None.
- 4 **Public participation session.**
  - 4.1 **Mere Road drainage.** There was considerable discussion about the issue of drainage in the central part of Mere Road, where it was reported that sewerage was getting into the water course from an unknown source, and also traps and settlement chambers in various properties were regularly blocked by silt and other debris coming from the drains in the road. This issue was due to come up under agenda item 13, but in view of the number of public present with concerns, this was fully discussed under this section. Following District Councillor Phil Cowen's intervention (as both representative and affected party) an Officer from Norfolk County Council's Water Management team had visited, and then written to the various owner/occupiers setting out the general responsibilities with they have, as a Riparian Owner, which did not help matters much. In order to move things forward, the Council **agreed** to write to the Environment Agency, asking them to investigate the properties involved and to try to identify where the sewerage was coming from, and then to require that the necessary remedial work be carried out. It was also **agreed** that the Clerk would write to NCC Highways, asking them to clear out the silt and debris from the drains in the road (which has not been done for many years), and investigate whether there are any traps present and whether they are large enough for purpose. The cleaning work should then be added to the regular work of the Highway Rangers on their visits. The Clerk will also write to all owners/occupiers of the affected properties to tell them of the action the parish council is taking. The matter will be monitored by the Council at its future meetings.
  - 4.2 **Maintenance of the Churchyards.** Representatives of the two Parochial Church Councils asked the Council to consider including grants towards the cost of maintaining the two churchyards in its budget for the coming year. The Chairman asked them to put the request in writing, and said it would then be considered at the next Council meeting.
  - 4.3 **Speeding Farm vehicles.** A member of the public said that she had reported a further instance of speeding by the same driver to the police. As people were reasonably certain which farm the vehicle belonged to, the Clerk was asked to write to the owner asking him to have a word with his employees. On a related subject another member of the public asked who the Police representative was for Lower Stow Bedon, as it was understood that this village came under the Attleborough Safer Neighbourhood Team rather than the Watton one which covers the villages of Stow Bedon and Breckles. The Clerk said he would get a definitive answer and pass the name on.
  - 4.4 Breckland District Councillor Phil Cowen said that Mark Stokes, the Deputy Chief Executive of Breckland Council was leaving to be CEO for the Police and Crime

Commissioner, which might be useful in strengthening connections with the Police. William Nunn has stepped down as Leader of the Council, and been replaced by Councillor Michael Wassell, who represents Watton Ward. He also mentioned the proposed meeting with Elisabeth Truss, MP, about her support of the TNP applications at Breckles Heath (see item 10). Ms Truss had recognised that she might have been a little more tactful and balanced in her comments, but unfortunately the dates she had offered to come to meet the three Parish Councils involved were well after the likely date that the decision will have been taken by Breckland Council.

- 5 Minutes.** The minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 19 August 2013 were **confirmed** and **signed**.

*It was agreed to bring item 11 on the agenda forward to this point.*

- 11 Casual Vacancy.** Mrs Dawn Jessett was elected to fill the casual vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr Mills. Mrs Jessett signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and joined the meeting.

- 6 To report matters arising from the minutes not on the agenda: for information only.**

- 6.1 [7.3] **Land adjacent to Gay-Dene.** In June Breckland Council's Planning Enforcement Officer said she had spoken to the owner who had said that the site would be cleared by 15 July. It now contains more wrecked cars than previously. However, the site has been assessed by the Team Leader, whose initial opinion is that the public amenity is not sufficiently adversely affected so as to warrant formal enforcement action. The team will, though, contact the owner/tenant to request they tidy the land to an acceptable level. Mrs Garrod offered to pass this on to the complaining residents.
- 6.2 [9.1] **Blocked Drains outside Church Cottage, Breckles.** The jetting team finally arrived, and cleared the first gully outside the house, and down to the second one. However this was blocked solid, as presumably is the pipe-work to the third gully and that gully itself. He has promised to return and work from the bottom of the hill upwards.
- 6.3 [9.2] **Speeding farm vehicles.** PCSO Rob Coote reported that the owner of the speeding tractor has been tracked down, and a colleague from the Thetford Safer Neighbourhood Team has been asked to "have a chat" with the driver.
- 6.4 [10.8] **Footpath from Waters Edge towards Prince of Wales Feathers.** Following the Clerk's letter the land owner has emailed to say that he was not aware that Norfolk County Council had stopped maintaining public footpaths, and as they had always done it in the past he hadn't worried about it. He said he has attended to the section of the path which belongs to him, and that this now allows free passage. He is unaware who owns the following section, but says that he has inspected this and that it is passable.
- 6.5 [6.1 Meeting on 17 December 2012] **B1111 at Spinney Farm.** Norfolk County Council Highway technician has said that work should start on the east side of the carriageway today (16<sup>th</sup>).

- 7 Correspondence.** The following correspondence was **received**:

- 7.1 Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner for Norfolk: *Rural Round Up*.  
7.2 Norfolk Constabulary: *Parish/Ward Crime Statistics* – 1-31 July 2013.  
7.3 Norfolk County Council: *Highway Boundaries and costs*.  
7.4 Norfolk Rural Community Council: *Letter re membership*.  
7.5 Norfolk Rural Community Council: *Our Score Card 2012/13*.

- 7.6 Norfolk Rural Community Council: *Signpost* – August 2013.
- 7.7 *Clerks & Councils Direct* – September 2013.
- 7.8 Norfolk Parish Training Partnership: *Initial Training for Clerks and Councillors*.
- 7.9 Norfolk Association of Local Councils: *Norfolk Link* – August 2013.
- 7.10 Norfolk Association of Local Councils: *Stone-Curlew Soiree*.
- 7.11 Norfolk Association of Local Councils: *Recycling Morning & Pathways Afternoon*.
- 7.12 Norfolk Association of Local Councils: *Coffee and Chat!*
- 7.13 Norfolk Association of Local Councils: *A morning seminar on “Green Burial”*.
- 7.14 Community Land Trust East: *Inspiring Communities*.
- 7.15 Local Government Boundary Commission: *Electoral Review of Breckland*.
- 7.16 Norfolk County Council: *Hazardous Waste Amnesty Days*.
- 7.17 Dereham, Watton & Holt Citizens Advice Bureau: *Re: CAB Annual Appeal*.
- 7.18 Barclays Bank Plc: *Community Account Statement* – 1-30 August 2013.
- 7.19 Barclays Bank Plc: *Active Saver Account Statement* – 1-30 August 2013.
- 7.20 Norfolk Association of Local Councils: *Annual General Meeting* – 5 October 2013.

8 **Freedom of Information Request.** Following the Councils request for information from Breckland Council Paul Jackson, Planning Manager, has said that no minutes or indeed any record was made of the meeting between the former Leader of the Council, himself, and the representatives of Traditional Norfolk Poultry, which the Council felt was remiss and exposed the District Council to considerable risk. Mike Brennan, Head of Development Management, said that no records were maintained relating to the costs incurred by the council or its solicitors in defending his Council’s position against the Appeal lodged by TNP. So the Council’s attempt to gain information under the Act has been thwarted.

9 **Planning.**

- 9.1 **3PL/2013/0764/F: Chapel Farm, Mere Road, Stow Bedon.** Application for Erection of two-storey dwelling and detached garage, new access and change of use of land to domestic garden. It was **resolved** that the Council had no objection.
- 9.2 **3PL/2013/0567/CU: Land adjacent Mere House, Mere Road, Stow Bedon.** Change of use from Agricultural to mixed use of agriculture and recreation. Planning Permission dated 22 August 2013 was **received**. This includes a condition that “the site shall only be used for the personal enjoyment of the applicant and his family and shall at no time be used for any commercial events including but not exclusively weddings, parties, corporate events.”
- 9.3 **3PL/2013/0584/F: Mere Lodge, Watton Road, Stow Bedon.** Replacement Dwelling including retrospective Change of use of agricultural land to domestic garden. Planning Permission dated 6 September 2013 was **received**.

10 **TNP planning applications at Breckles Heath.** As mentioned by Councillor Phil Cowen, Elizabeth Truss MP has offered to meet the three Parish Councils on 11 October or 8 November. It was felt that neither of these dates would be much use as the decision will probably have been taken by then, but that if time were not an issue the November date would be preferable. The Clerk explained that he had expressed the Council’s disappointment that Natural England (NE) had supported the TNP applications, and they had asked whether this should be regarded as a formal complaint. Mr Pilkington said that he had spoken with a local NE contact, who had confirmed that NE was only concerned with the impact on statutorily protected sites, so it was **agreed** that this should not be regarded as a formal complaint. The Clerk said he had also received an offer from Simon Guise of TNP to meet with the Council. It was **agreed** that he should be invited to the next Council meeting.

Finally, the Chairman and Mr Pilkington reported on the meeting Phil Cowen had held with representatives of the three affected Councils. The Clerk had circulated a proposed joint response, but it was pointed out that the intention was that this should go to the Breckland

Planning Committee members with a copy of this parish's objection letter. The Clerk said he would revise this.

- 11 **Casual Vacancy.** See above.
- 12 **Website & Email Account.** The Clerk pointed out that these were set up by Mr Mills when he was Chairman, and so he has access to and overall control of the IT. It was **agreed** that he should be asked to continue that role until he is ready to move away, when some other person would have to be found to take over.
- 13 **Drainage in Mere Road.** This item is covered in 4.1 above.
- 14 **Clerk's annual appraisal.** The Chairman reported that he had assessed the Clerk's performance as fully satisfactory. His recommendation that, in accordance with his contract, he is awarded an additional Spinal Column Point to SCP18 was **agreed**. This makes his rate of pay £9.009/hour (an increase of 17.4p/hour), equivalent to an annual salary of £1,945.94 (an increase of £37.58 p.a.), with effect from 20 September 2013. This is planned in the budget.
- 15 **Budgets.** It was **agreed** to vire the following amounts from the Contingency fund to other budget lines: £13 to Publications to cover the full cost of the book purchased, £55 to Other to cover IT and heating costs.
- 16 **Finance.**
  - 16.1 **Clerk's salary.** It was **resolved** that cheques numbered 100623 & 100624 totalling £554.27 (salary for 1 July 2013 to 30 September 2013 including back pay: £481.84; Mileage Allowance Payment for 24 May 2013 to 6 September 2013: £72.43 of which £2.33 is the VAT element) to the Clerk and HM Revenue & Customs be signed. (*Local Government Act 1972 s. 112(2)*)
  - 16.2 **Clerk's reimbursement.** It was **resolved** that cheque number 100625 for £105.49 (Postage & Telephones £52.37, Other (IT) £44.20, VAT £8.92) to the Clerk be signed as reimbursement for items paid on behalf of the Council for 6 June 2013 to 6 September 2013. (*Local Government Act 1972 s. 111*)
  - 16.3 **Monthly Financial Report.** The report for the month ending 31 August 2013 was **received**.
- 17 **Matters for consideration at next meeting.**
  - 17.1 Drainage in Mere Road.
  - 17.2 Maintenance of the burial grounds in the parish.

*Before the end of the meeting both Mrs Garrod and Mrs Tanner submitted their resignations from the Council. The Chairman expressed the Council's regret and thanked them both for their service to the Council and the Community.*

- 18 **Next meeting.** The next meeting of the Parish Council, was **confirmed** as **Monday, 14 October 2013** at 7.30 p.m. in Caston Village Hall.

**Confirmed:**

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**Phil Childs, Chairman**

14 October 2013

**Scheduled future Meeting dates:**

Monday, 18 November 2013      Monday, 17 February 2014

Monday, 16 December 2013      Monday, 17 March 2014

Monday, 20 January 2014\*

\*If needed

