

MINUTES of a meeting of GREAT PAXTON PARISH COUNCIL held on Monday 13th March 2017 at Great Paxton School, Mount Pleasant, Great Paxton.

PRESENT: Councillors W Bond (Chairman), G R Addison, Mrs J Addison, D Beattie, Mrs J Peters, S Peters and R Widdowson.

IN ATTENDANCE: County Councillor Mrs J Wisson, District Councillor R J West and five Members of the public.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence from the meeting were presented on behalf of Parish Councillor P Goodyer and District Councillor Mrs B E Boddington.

There were no declarations of interests nor requests for dispensation.

2. COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC & DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR

District Councillor R J West

Councillor West referred to the recent changes that had been introduced by the District Council to Refuse and Recycling Collection rounds and the impact this may have had on days of collection in the village. He explained that the new rounds would be a more efficient and effective way to collect residents' refuse and recycling and that the review had taken place to make budget savings. Whilst he was aware that there had been complaints about the changes, he was of the opinion that these would ease once residents had adjusted to the new routines. However, should problems continue to persist, Councillor West requested that any issues of concern should be directed to him to look into.

County Councillor Mrs J Wisson

County Councillor Wisson drew the meetings' attention to the launch of public consultation by Highways England on proposals to improve the Black Cat roundabout and to develop a new route for the A428 to Caxton Gibbet. Councillor Wisson added that three proposed options had been presented and that, currently, only one (the orange route) provided for access to St Neots. Public consultation on the proposals commenced on 6th March and would run until 23rd April. All responses received would be recorded in a consultation report and considered as part of the options selection process. As the timescale to get involved was quite short, Councillor Wisson pointed out that responses to the consultation could be made online, by visiting public exhibitions at various locations including Wyboston Lakes and St Neots Priory Centre or by picking up information from libraries, the District and St Neots Town Councils. It was anticipated that the scheme would start on site in 2020.

Although already available on the Village Website, Councillors requested that details of the public consultation (dates and locations) also be posted on the Parish Council's 'Facebook' page.

Observations from the Public

Concern was expressed by two members of the public that the Parish Council had agreed to proceed with a scheme of improvements to the High Street comprising 'sleeping policemen and chevrons' without having consulted the village. The Parish Council was reminded by the residents that they had, allegedly, previously taken the view that the continuation of 'on street' car parking was the most effective way to slow traffic on the High Street. The residents were also of the opinion that the Parish Council had no authority to commit expenditure on behalf of the village for the scheme and that it would be unreasonable to proceed without having first canvassed the views of every household in the village.

Having received an explanation of the proposed scheme, the reasons for the Parish Council's application and the timescale involved in the LHI process, the meeting noted that the Parish Council was awaiting, in any event, a decision from the County Council as to whether the funding required to allow the scheme to proceed had been awarded. This was expected on 14th March 2017.

Notwithstanding the outcome, the Parish Council explained that there still would be ample opportunity to conduct village consultation over the summer and certainly before the Parish Council was required to formally agree the scheme design should the funding requested be granted.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 9th January 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. PLANNING MATTERS - APPLICATION NO. 16/02700/HHFUL

Having been reminded that the Parish Council had raised no objection to the application for a frontage porch at 6 Rectory Close, Great Paxton at its January meeting, Councillors

RESOLVED

that the decision of Huntingdonshire District Council to approve Application No - 16/02700/HHFUL on 8th February 2017 be noted.

5. DRAFT HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

Having been reminded that submission of a Health & Safety Policy to the Cambridgeshire Community Foundation was a condition of their offer of grant funding and having reviewed the content of a proposed policy, the Parish Council

RESOLVED

that the Health & Safety Policy, a copy of which had been circulated in advance to Councillors, be formally adopted by the Parish Council.

6. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

By way of a report by the Clerk (a copy of which had been circulated in advance to Councillors), the Parish Council was reminded that its Grounds Maintenance Contract was due to expire on

31st March. Consequently, Councillors were advised of the steps taken to invite the submission, from potential contractors, of fixed price tenders for a new 3 year period commencing 1st April 2017. Copies of tender specifications received from two of the six companies contacted had been circulated to Councillors. It was noted that client references and evidence of appropriate insurance cover also had been provided. Having expressed satisfaction with the service currently provided, noted the content of paragraph 11.1(h) of Financial Regulations which permitted the Parish Council to proceed despite receiving less than three tenders for the contract and having reviewed the estimated costs attached to the schedule of groundworks by each contractor, it was

RESOLVED

that the Grounds Maintenance Contract for Great Paxton Parish for the period 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2020 be awarded to K Fergusons Ltd at a total fixed cost of £10,170.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

7.1 Campaign to Protect Rural England

Having been advised that the Parish Council's membership of CPRE was due to expire on 27th March, it was

RESOLVED

that the Parish Council's membership of CPRE be renewed and that a one-off contribution of £36 be made to the Campaign.

7.2 HDC: Town & Parish Council Conference – 30th March 2017

It having been confirmed by Councillor West that the theme of the Conference would be 'Together We Can' (how the District and Parish Councils can collectively work together in the interests of their communities) and given his advice on the importance of the Parish Council's representation at the event, it was

RESOLVED

that Councillor Mrs J Peters be nominated to attend the Town & Parish Council Conference to be held on 30th March 2017 between 9.30am – 1.30pm at the Burgess Hall, St Ives.

7.3 Parking on the corners of Adams and Church Lanes – What Next?

Following advice received from the County Council and PCSO Braddick, the Parish Council agreed, in the first instance, to take an informal approach towards drivers who chose to park within 10 metres of the junctions on the corners of Adams and Church Lanes. The Clerk was requested to arrange for laminated notices to be placed on lamp posts in the vicinity to warn drivers that their action could, because of lack of visibility, pose a danger to pedestrians and other road users and thereby encourage them to park away from the junctions. Parish Councillors undertook to monitor the response to this initiative to enable the action to be reviewed at the May meeting.

8. UPDATES

- i. Paxton Post Editor** – As no positive response had been received from any source for the vacant post of Editor to the Paxton Post, Councillor West undertook to contact the person

who currently performed a similar role in The Offords to see whether they would be interested in taking on the post.

- ii. **LHI Application 2017/18** – It was noted that the County Council’s Highways & Infrastructure Committee would meet on 14th March 2017 to agree those schemes that would be supported for LHI funding in 2017/18.
- iii. **Cycle Path** – Councillor Beattie was pleased to report that the grant of £3000, awarded by Cambridgeshire Community Fund towards the undertaking of a feasibility study into options to provide a safe alternative for cyclists to the B1043, had now been transferred to the Parish Council’s account. The Parish Council considered whether the proposed feasibility study should consider routes to both St Neots and The Offords or focus on that considered to be most feasible. Councillor Beattie further explained that Groundwork would find it difficult to undertake both phases of the project in terms of the feasibility study and engineering works required and that he had concluded that it would be best to combine both elements and pursue the project as one package. Although supporting the suggestion that Sustrans should be asked to undertake both Phases 1 and 2, the Parish Council noted that Councillor Beattie intended to circulate further information to Councillors before making a decision and finalising the statement of works contract by the end of March/mid-April.
- iv. **Community Shop** – Councillor Widdowson reported that, having consulted shareholders, it had been agreed to progress the purchase of the shop unit and that this had been delivered and was now in place. Fund raising had now reached £26,000 and the Committee had secured loans from shareholders and interested persons to meet a shortfall between those funds that were currently available and the original target of £28,000. Continuing efforts were being made to raise the remaining funds. Overall, progress was good but a further £10,000 was needed to make the project feasible and allow, for example, for the purchase of a new fridge/freezer and cash till. The meeting was asked to support the Band Night to be held on 25th March.
- v. **Village Website** - On behalf of the Editor, the Clerk reported that the website was operating satisfactory without major issue and that monthly hits appeared to have increase slightly in comparison with 2016. Improvements had been made to the Parish Council section of the site in response to comments received from a resident.

A comment was made that whilst use of flashing text and images to promote items was understandable, their use was not recommended as they could prove troublesome for visitors to the site who might have certain health and eye conditions. On behalf of the Parish Council, the Editor was requested to consider accessibility issues.

- vi. **Saxon Green** – The Clerk reported that the Annual Inspection of the Play Space was to be undertaken by RoSPA during April. Councillor Beattie reported that other than the need for cleaning, there appeared to be no other maintenance concerns. The Parish Council was disappointed to hear that damage had occurred to the memorial bench.
- vii. **Highways, footpaths, trees etc** – It was reported that K Fergusons Ltd would undertake the Tree Survey, that the agent for the Diocese of Ely was attending to the overgrown tree currently obscuring lamp post No 19 and that the County Council’s Highways Service had recently visited the village to look at potentially hazardous trees. As it was pointed out that there were two trees overhanging the pavement on the High Street (opposite The Bell), Councillor S Peters undertook to verify their location to allow the Clerk to report them to the

County Council. County Councillor Wisson advised the meeting of the availability of the reporting tool for Highways Issues on the County Council website.

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council had received notice that the District Council would continue to maintain the two 'orphan sites' on Towgood Way and that it was their intention to progress adoption of these areas if possible.

- viii. **Tree Planting Scheme** – In view of the response received from the owner of land at Mount Pleasant on the potential for additional tree planting at that location and concerns around further tree planting on Saxon Green, the Council agreed not to take advantage of the District Council's tree planting scheme in 2017.

9. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Having regard to a suggested programme of meetings for 2017, it was

RESOLVED

that the Parish Council would meet on the following dates in 2017 –

15th May (School Hall at 7.30pm); and

**10th July, 11th September, 30th October and 27th November
(Community Room at 8pm).**

10. FINANCE MATTERS

Having noted the financial statement for the period to 28th February, 2017 it was

RESOLVED

that the following invoices and payments be approved –

Jan/Feb – Handyman jobs in village (trees x 2 and repairs to dog bin)	£70
24th January – CPRE Membership Renewal	£36
8th February – CCC (Street Lighting Energy)	£683.79
16th February – Scribe 2000 Ltd (Software Licence Renewal)	£308.40
1st March – ICO - Data Protection renewal Fee	£35
2nd March - Balfour Beatty (Street Light Maintenance Contract) 2017	£572.04
March – Balfour Beatty (Street Light Maintenance Contract) 2016	£564.23
Mrs C Brandon – Reimbursement of expenses (3 x Print Cartridges £55.27, Postage £3.30 and mileage £4.00)	£62.57
Mrs C Brandon – Working from home allowance	£97
Mrs C Brandon – Salary from 13th January to 10th March 2017 (9 weeks)	£368.74
HRMC (Mrs C Brandon PAYE)	£377.40

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 15th May 2017 at 7.30pm for the Annual Parish Meeting/Annual Council.

12. EXCLUSION OF PRESS

RESOLVED

that the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted which contained information of a personal nature and employment related issues.

13. EMPLOYMENT MATTERS: UPDATE

Having considered a report by the Clerk (a copy of which was circulated to Councillors), the Parish Council

RESOLVED

- a) that the action by the Parish Council to complete a declaration of compliance with the Pensions Regulator under the Pensions Act 2008 be noted; and**
- b) that, following further review and a period of monitoring, the hours of employment of the Parish Clerk be permanently increased from 7 to 8 per week with immediate effect.**

Chairman