

MINUTES of a meeting of GREAT PAXTON PARISH COUNCIL held on Monday 31st October 2016 at Great Paxton School, Mount Pleasant, Great Paxton.

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs J Addison (Vice-Chairman in the Chair), G R Addison, D Beattie, P Goodyer, Mrs J Peters, S Peters and R Widdowson.

IN ATTENDANCE: District Councillors Mrs B E Boddington and R J West and four Members of the public.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from the Chairman, Councillor W Bond and County Councillor Mrs J Wisson. There were no declarations of interests nor requests for dispensation.

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

District Councillors Mrs B E Boddington and R J West

District Councillor Mrs Boddington reported that she had been appointed to serve temporarily on the District Council's Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Customers).

Further to her report to a previous meeting, Councillor Mrs Boddington updated the Parish Council on the decision of Network Rail to cancel a proposal to close the level crossing between Buckden and The Offords (with a bridge replacement in mind). This would result in the continuation of delays to traffic flow on a busy route which increased when the A14 or A1 were closed or disrupted. She added that during an average week the crossing was used by over 20,000 vehicles, 560 cyclists and 100 pedestrians. The approach to the crossing was difficult in both directions and on The Offords side traffic frequently tailed back in both directions. The District Council had approved a Motion at their recent meeting to lobby Network Rail and the Secretary of State to accelerate the removal of the crossing at the earliest opportunity. Councillor Mrs Boddington undertook to keep the Parish Council informed of developments.

Councillor Mrs Boddington also described a visit she had undertaken to Alconbury Weald to view progress on the 700 acre mixed development site. The first phase was currently under construction and 5000 houses would ultimately be built on the site over 25 years. The first house was occupied and 14 children now attended the new school. Other local leisure and community facilities would be built and employment opportunities created for around 8000 new jobs. Councillor Mrs Boddington also had the opportunity to tour the former nuclear bunker which would be retained although at this stage no decision had been made as to how it would be used in the future.

In general discussion on local planning development in the village and adjacent to The Offords, it became apparent that the Parish Council would find it useful to refer to a large map of the village and surrounds at future meetings. Mark MacDonald, present for an item later on the agenda, undertook to send an A1 sized map through to the Clerk for this purpose.

District Councillor Richard West reported that it had given him great pleasure, in his capacity as Vice Chairman of the District Council, to present a Community Chest Grant to those involved in the Community Shop Project. Councillor West reminded the Parish Council that he would be participating in important discussions on the District Council's budget for 2017/18 as part of the relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel and appointed focus groups and that he would continue to

lobby to protect the future of Tree Service. Councillor West also indicated that he would shortly be delivering leaflets around the village on the HACT bus services and reminded the meeting that these were available for group as well as individual use.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 12th September 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Vice-Chairman.

4. LOCAL HIGHWAYS INITIATIVE

i. Proposed Improvements to the B1043, Paxton Hill - Progress

The Parish Council was pleased to hear that the scheme of improvements to the B1043 Paxton Hill should commence over the next two weeks. The County Council was awaiting a start date from contractors and for signs and posts to arrive. It was the intention to co-ordinate signing and lining such that all works would be undertaken at the same time.

ii. Application Process 2017/18

Further to the last meeting, the Vice Chairman welcomed Mark MacDonald, Project Manager, County Highways Projects and Road Safety to the meeting to advise on a potential application for LHI funding in 2017/18. The Parish Council had previously indicated support for 'two priority give way traffic islands' to be located either end of the High Street. Subsequently, residents had raised the possibility of yellow lines on the corners of Adams and Church Lanes. The meeting also was advised that one accident and one near miss had occurred in the High Street recently which added weight to the need to slow traffic down through the village.

Mr MacDonald envisaged that four give way features (or a minimum of 3) might be required along the length of the High Street. It was important that these were spaced no more than 680 metres apart to prevent vehicles increasing their speed in between and that they should be located away from existing road junctions and entrances to property. It was estimated that the scheme might cost in the region of £5000.

Having discussed in general terms where the give way features might be located, the Parish Council concluded that it would be preferable for Councillors to meet Mr MacDonald on site to discuss the potential project further. It was also suggested that the Clerk should contact the local PCSO to try to obtain evidence of the speed used by vehicles through the village.

In terms of 'yellow no parking lines' on the corners of Adams and Church Lanes, Mr MacDonald advised that as parking on corners was not permitted anyway, the County Council would not take any action at these locations. In these circumstances, the Parish Council asked the Clerk to contact the local PCSO to request that the Police take regular action to enforce this Regulation and possibly place letters on car window screens to warn car owners of the dangers posed by parking in those places giving advice, at the same time, on the penalties that could be imposed on persistent offenders. The Clerk also was requested to prompt the PCSO to look at the increase in parking on pavements in the village.

Pending the outcome of the site visit, the 2017/18 LHI application would be reconsidered at the next meeting to allow for a submission by the closing date of 30th November.

5. Council Budget and Precept 2017/18

The Parish Council received information on budget head expenditure over the period 2014/15 – 2015/16 and the estimated budget for 2016/17 to assist in compiling a draft budget for 2017/18. However, given the uncertainty around the 2017/18 LHI application and the provision that the Parish Council might need to set aside for this purpose, it was agreed to defer further consideration of the draft budget to the next meeting when the site visit and further discussions with the County Highways Officer had taken place.

6. Grounds Maintenance Contract

The Parish Council was reminded that its Grounds Maintenance Contract was due to expire on 31st March 2017. Having also been reminded of the approach taken in previous years to secure grounds maintenance services for the village, it was

RESOLVED

that the Clerk be requested to invite the submission of fixed priced tenders (for a 3 year period) for the Parish Council's Grounds Maintenance Contract commencing 1st April 2017.

7. New Correspondence – District/County Council/Cambridgeshire ACRE Related

7.1 Tree Planting Scheme – Councillors were advised that the deadline for completed tree orders under this year's District Council's tree planting scheme was 5th December. As there was a suggestion that the Council might take advantage of the scheme for planting a tree(s) on Saxon Green, Councillor S Peters undertook to consider which species would be suitable and to report back to the next meeting as to how the Council should proceed.

7.2 Tree Warden Service – The Parish Council understood that the Tree Warden Service could discontinue on 31st March 2017 unless the District Council agreed to retain the service and provide continuing funding for it. To enable the service to continue, it had been suggested that the post of Tree Warden Coordinator might be funded by Town/Parish Councils. Because there was no indication of the scale of financial contribution that the Parish Council might have to make, as there were alternative sources of tree expertise available in the parish, as there appeared to be a mixed response to the request from other Parish Councils and mindful of the need for regular tree inspection, Councillors

RESOLVED

- i that the District Council be advised that the Parish Council would contribute financially towards the retention of the post of Tree Warden Coordinator provided the Service allowed for the undertaking of an annual tree survey in the Parish; and
- ii that, having been reminded of the importance of regular inspection of trees on parish land, the Clerk be requested to make arrangements for an inspection over the winter season.

7.3 Electoral Cycle in Huntingdonshire – Having been requested to comment on proposed changes to the ordinary electoral cycle of Town and Parish Councils in Huntingdonshire

from May 2018 and whilst the change would not impact on the next scheduled election in Great Paxton in any event, Councillors were of the view that the proposals were sensible particularly at a time when there were so many restraints on local government spending. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the District Council be advised that the Parish Council support proposed changes to the electoral cycle of Town and Parish Councils in Huntingdonshire.

7.4 CIL Meaningful Proportion – Councillors were pleased to note that a CIL “Meaningful Proportion” payment of £1237.04 was to be made to the Parish Council following planning development in the parish. It was understood that spending of the ‘meaningful proportion’ was the responsibility of the Parish Council and that it should be spent in accordance with the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended). A copy of the Guidance on this matter was circulated separately to Councillors.

7.5 Community Gritting – It was reported that the County Council had launched its 2016/17 Community Gritting Scheme. Councillors agreed to invite volunteers for this year’s scheme by placing information on the Parish Council’s Facebook site.

7.6 Cambridgeshire ACRE – Due to the date and time of the Cambridgeshire Parish Council Conference on 18th November, the Parish Council reluctantly concluded that it would not be able to nominate a Councillor to attend this year’s conference.

7.7 St Neots Community Forum for A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet Scheme – As Councillor Beattie had attended a previous event in connection with the proposed A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet Scheme, it was

RESOLVED

that Councillor D Beattie be nominated to represent the Council at the next meeting of the St Neots Community Forum on the evening of 23rd November.

8. Proposed Cycle Path

Councillor Beattie reported that whilst some uncertainty remained over the Council’s eligibility for grant, he was about to submit an application to the A14 Community Fund for financial assistance towards the cost of undertaking a feasibility study on a proposed cycle path for Great Paxton.

9. Other Outstanding Matters

- i **Paxton Post Editor** – Disappointingly, no one had yet responded to the Parish Council’s request for a volunteer to become the new Editor of the Paxton Post. Councillor Goodyer undertook to place the Parish Council’s advert on the Community Facebook site to help generate an interest.
- ii **Playing Field Trust** – The Clerk reported that she was continuing to make enquiries about this initiative and would report on the outcome to a future meeting.

10. Updates

10.1 Community Shop

Councillor Widdowson updated the Parish Council on progress on the Community Shop. He reported that, to date £13,000 had been raised towards the budget target of £44,000 and that applications for further financial support had been submitted to the A14 Community Fund and other similar schemes. The site, adjacent to The Bell, had now been cleared. The next fundraising event entitled 'Beetle & Bingo Night' was to take place at The Bell on the 26th November. The Annual General Meeting was also scheduled for 7th November at The Bell.

10.2 Village Website

On behalf of David Lloyd, Editor, the Clerk reported that the village website was running well. Whilst the number of visitors to the site was still slightly down, the position had improved over the last two months. Generally new items were uploaded within 4 days. The meeting was reminded to forward items of interest via the link to 'the Editor' or by emailing Mr Lloyd directly.

10.3 Saxon Green – Routine Inspection and repairs

In terms of routine inspection of the play area, Councillor Beattie reported that he had not observed any issues requiring attention.

Councillor S Peters confirmed that the repairs to the Play Area undertaken by AOL Solutions were satisfactory such that their invoice for payment for parts and installation labour could be authorised under the following item.

10.4 Highways, Footpaths, Trees etc

Other than continuing correspondence with Balfour Beatty for a quote to trim the trees etc around Lamp PC 19, there were no other issues to report.

11. FINANCE MATTERS

Having noted the financial statement for the period to 30th September 2016, it was

RESOLVED

that the following invoices and payments be approved –

14th Sept – CPALC (Training x 6 Sessions)	£420.00
20th Sept - xpress (Newsletter Print)	£118.00
28th Sept – AEL Solutions (Saxon Green repairs)	£241.56
29th Sept – PKF Accountants (External Audit)	£120.00
Mrs C Brandon – Reimbursement of expenses (Postage - £9.90 and 10 miles @ 0.40p)	£13.90
Mrs C Brandon – Salary from 12th Sept to 28th October 2016 (7 weeks)	£490.00

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 14th November 2016 at 8pm.

13. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

RESOLVED

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

14. EMPLOYMENT MATTERS - UPDATE

In the light of a report circulated to Councillors and having reviewed the requirements of paragraph 17 of the contract of employment of the post of Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer, the Council

RESOLVED

- i that the Contract of Employment of the post of Parish Clerk/RFO be amended to enable the Council to waive the expectations of paragraph 17 in the light of the extent and nature of the previous experience offered by the current post holder and future applicants to the post; and
- ii that the remaining business under his item be deferred in the absence of the Chairman.

Chairman