

MINUTES of a meeting of GREAT PAXTON PARISH COUNCIL held on Monday 14th November 2016 at Great Paxton School, Mount Pleasant, Great Paxton.

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

IN ATTENDANCE: County Councillor Julie Wisson and four Members of the public.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence from the meeting were presented on behalf of Parish Councillors Mrs J Addison, G R Addison and P Goodyer and District Councillors Mrs B E Boddington and R J West.

There were no declarations of interests nor requests for dispensation.

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

County Councillor Mrs Julie Wisson

County Councillor Wisson reminded the Parish Council that the deadline for 2017/18 LHI Applications was 30th November and that she would be pleased to support the Council's submission and assist during this year's process.

The County Councillor reported on her attendance at a meeting led by Highways England at which options for future improvements to the A428 from the Black Cat Roundabout to Caxton Gibbet were presented. This development formed part of the Government's Road Investment Strategy and the A428 project fell within the next 5 year strategy period. If approved, the scheme could commence in 2020 once work to the A14 had been completed. She added that options currently under review included retention of the current road, de trunking of the A428 or creation of a new road and that a 6 week consultation period on these options would commence in February 2017. Highways England appeared to be suggesting that an Expressway might be the best option which would involve a minimum number of on/off junctions. Under/over passes would also be constructed to access land and roads either side of the new expressway. It was anticipated that the preferred option would be announced in summer 2018.

In response to concerns expressed by Councillor Mrs Peters regarding the future of Hinchingsbrooke Hospital given the extent of new housing development in the catchment area, County Councillor Wisson understood that Hinchingsbrooke was not clinically or financially sustainable and that a merger with Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust was the best option to secure its future. As an example, she drew the meeting's attention to the recruitment issues experienced by the hospital which meant that agency staff were used at great expense to cover a 20% vacancy rate. There was currently no suggestion that specific hospital services would close.

Having invited the public to comment on items on the agenda, mention was made of the County Council's winter gritting regime and new information recently published that suggested that Toseland Road would be regarded as a 'secondary road' and therefore, depending on weather conditions, would continue to be treated. Despite the suggestion that it was not being used, there was support for retention of the telephone box in the village. To encourage individuals to make representations to the District Council about its removal the Parish Council agreed to place the necessary details on its Facebook site.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 31st October 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. LOCAL HIGHWAYS INITIATIVE: 2017/18 APPLICATION

Councillor Mrs Peters reported that, together with Councillor Goodyer and the Clerk, she had met Mark MacDonald, County Project Manager on site to discuss a potential scheme for traffic calming along the High Street. This could involve the installation of two priority give way traffic islands with solar illuminated signs. Having walked the High Street and taken into consideration existing entrances and the distances required between each feature, it was suggested that the Islands be located on the High Street in the direction of The Offords, mid-way between the two entrances to Brookside and opposite the letterbox by The Bell Public House in the direction of St Neots. Because of the tendency for cars to be parked during the evenings and at weekends, it was suggested that rubberised speed cushions should be placed just beyond the junction of Adams Lane with the High Street. It was estimated that this scheme could cost approximately £13,000 to which the County might contribute a maximum of £10,000. The Parish Council would need to consider whether it wished to meet the outstanding sum. County Councillor Wisson undertook to canvass the support of Derek Crosby, Traffic Management Officer at Police Headquarters for the application.

Having been reminded that the County Council would not support 'yellow no parking lines' on the corners of Adams and Church Lanes because this was not permitted anyway under the Highway Code, it was suggested that the County Council be asked to place a mark on the curb to indicate the extent of the distance of 10 metres from the junction.

Having been advised that a new PCSO had recently joined the St Neots Safer Neighbourhood Team to cover rural areas including Great Paxton, it was suggested that he be invited to meet the Parish Council at their next meeting and to respond to concerns expressed about parking in the village.

Having been advised that the Community Shop Committee also had mentioned the traffic issue in their application for grant to the Cambridgeshire Community Foundation, it was

RESOLVED

that the Parish Council submit a bid for funding towards traffic calming measures on the High Street as part of the 2017/18 Local Highways Initiative process.

5. WINTER GRITTING – TOSELAND ROAD

Further to Minute No 2 and following residents' concerns, the Parish Council noted the latest advice received from the County Council that all roads removed from their precautionary gritting routes would now be considered as secondary routes and gritted when there was a period of prolonged cold weather, when road surface temperatures fall and stay below freezing point or when snowfall was forecast.

6. NOTIFICATION UNDER SECTION 49(4) OF THE COMMUNICATIONS ACT 2003 – PROPOSAL BY BRITISH TELECOMMUNICATIONS plc

Further to Item No 2, the Parish Council was informed that notice had been received of the intention of British Telecommunications plc to remove the public telephone box on the High Street in Great Paxton because it had not been used over the last 12 month period. Given this evidence, the Parish Council did not feel able to justify making a formal objection to the proposal but agreed that an item be placed on the Council's Facebook site to encourage residents to make their own representations to the District Council should they feel minded to.

RESOLVED

that the District Council be advised that the Parish Council has no objection to the removal of the public telephone box on the High Street, Great Paxton.

7. NEW CORRESPONDENCE – COUNTY COUNCIL: ENFORCMENT PLAN FOR PLANNING, MINERAL AND WASTE DEVELOPMENT IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE

At the invitation of the County Council, the Parish Council considered an update to the Enforcement Plan for Planning, Minerals and Waste Development in Cambridgeshire. The Plan explained the County Council's approach to achieving planning compliance at mineral and waste management sites in the County, how formal action against non-compliance could be taken and the basis on which decisions would be made. Having noted that the consultation period would close on 6th December, Councillors undertook to forward any comments on the Plan to the Clerk to submit to the County Council in advance of this deadline.

8. TREE PLANTING SCHEME

Having been reminded of the opportunity to take advantage of this year's tree planting scheme, the Parish Council requested the Clerk to contact the District Council's Tree Warden Co-ordinator to discuss the possibility of planting Dogwood or Crab Apple Trees on Saxon Green and to enquire with the landowner whether it would be possible to plant on the residential boundary with Mount Pleasant at the top of Adams Lane.

9. COUNCIL BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2017/18

In the light of their decision under Minute No 4 and by referring to actual and estimated expenditure for 2015/16 and 2016/17 to date, the Parish Council proceeded to discuss the budget for the next financial year and the impact this might have on the level of precept for 2017/18. After careful consideration of each cost item, having noted receipt of a CIL Payment of £1237.04 arising from planning application no. 1201992FUL and allowing for a minor percentage increase for inflation, it was

RESOLVED

- a) that the feasibility study recommended by Groundwork for a potential cycle/footpath link from the village to St Neots be progressed;
- b) that, together with the CIL contribution of £1237, a sum of £1500 be allocated towards Highways Improvements for the purposes of the 2017/18 LHI Application; and

- c) that the proposed budget be approved and a Council Tax precept of £19,500 be set for 2017/18.

10. UPDATES

i. Paxton Post Editor

At the suggestion of the Chairman and having regard to the recent resignation of the Editor of the Paxton Post, it was

RESOLVED

- a) that, on behalf of the Parish Council, the Clerk be requested to write to Simon Black, former Editor to convey to him the Council's appreciation for his time, effort and contribution towards compilation of the Paxton Post in recent years; and
- b) that the Clerk be requested to contact –
 - the Head teacher at Longsands Academy to establish if a local media or IT student would be interested in a project to produce a short A5 newsletter on behalf of the village; and
 - Simon Black to ascertain whether any one attending the monthly meetings of the Friendship Group would be interested in the role.

ii. Cycle Path

Councillor Beattie reported that he had submitted an application for funding to the Cambridgeshire Community Foundation, the organisation responsible for coordinating the A14 Community Fund and had responded to questions that had arisen thus far in connection with the application. The Parish Council was hopeful that a decision to pursue the Groundwork feasibility study would give added weight to the application. Any additional funding awarded would be directed towards exploring further options. County Councillor Wisson also confirmed that she continued to lobby on behalf of the Parish Council and that an indication of the Council's commitment, in the form of a Feasibility Study, would give added support to their cause. It was understood that the County Council had appointed a Working Party specifically to look at paths and cycle ways in anticipation of additional infrastructure funding in future years. The County Councillor undertook to find out how the Swavesey Cycle Path was established and whether there was anything that Great Paxton could learn from that experience?

iii. Community Shop

Councillor Widdowson reported that the Community Shop had held its Annual General Meeting on 7th November and that 28 shareholders had attended. The meeting had received a presentation on the activities of the Committee and an account of the action being taken to raise the funds needed to achieve the target of £40,000. Three applications for grant assistance had been submitted and the outcome of each was awaited.

Councillor Widdowson reminded the meeting that the next fund raising event was the 'Beetle & Bingo Night' to be held on 26th November at The Bell. Nineteen prizes had been donated to the Raffle. Calendars priced at £10 and featuring village scenes had been produced to raise funds for the Community Shop and these were now available to order. If successful, this venture would be repeated next year.

iv. Village Website

No further update since the last meeting.

v. Saxon Green

Councillors were informed that AEL Solutions had drawn attention to the need for adjustments to the single gate to the Saxon Green play area and having been advised that the cost of the works required had been estimated at £286.80, it was

RESOLVED

that AEL Solutions be authorised to proceed with the works outlined in their quotation Ref No SQ136544 at an estimated cost of £286.80.

vi. Highways, Footpaths, Trees Etc.

The Clerk undertook to write to the occupants of Westfield Cottage, 12 The High Street to request that they attend to an overhanging Buddleia and two other overgrown shrubs in their front garden. After further discussion, it was

RESOLVED

that authority be given to Simon Black to purchase a Christmas Tree for the village for a maximum cost of £100.

11. FINANCE MATTERS

Having noted the financial statement for the period to 31st October, 2016, it was

RESOLVED

a) that the following invoices and payments be approved –

14th Nov – Great Paxton CoE Primary School Hire of Community Room x 3	£36.00
Mrs C Brandon – Reimbursement of expenses (10 miles @ 0.40p)	£4.00
Mrs C Brandon – Working At Home Allowance Quarterly Payment	£97.00
Mrs C Brandon – Salary from 31st October – 11th November 2016 (2 weeks)	£140.00

b) that the sum of £2000 be transferred from the Community Fund to the Business Premium (Saxon Green) Account.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 9th January 2017 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

Following review, the Council

RESOLVED

- a) that the Clerk be paid in accordance with SCP 21 of the NJC pay scales for Local Government Services with effect from 1st April 2016; and
- b) that the hours of employment of the Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer be increased from seven to eight per week with effect from 14th November 2016 subject to review at the March 2017 Council meeting.

Chairman