

MINUTES OF METHWOLD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD AT ST. GEORGE'S HALL
THURSDAY 13th AUGUST 2015

Present: Mr J. Marriage Chairman, Mr P. Ashman, Mrs B. Horton, Mr P. Crawley, Mr B Welland
Mrs D. Charlesworth Smith, Mr D Thomas, Mrs T Thomas

Councillor M Storey
5 members of the public

Mr Marriage welcomed all to the meeting

OPEN FORUM: Resident asked if the PC knew that Highways had only painted white lines on one side of the crossroads at Cock Corner and the Cranwich Crossroads, Clerk has already written to Highways about this and will follow up.

PC was asked to consider installing outside gym equipment on the Rec. the Clerk has been given details to circulate to all Councillors. This will be put on the Open Spaces Agenda.

The dirt track at the top of The Avenue in Brookville has deteriorated, previously Highways had road scalplings to help make good Clerk to contact Highways. It is reported that Scotts Lane has the same problem.

1. To receive and consider accepting apologies for absence – Councillor Peake, PCSO Law, Mr R Hood, Mrs K Plumridge,
2. Declaration of Interest - Councillors invited to declare any interest in any item on the agenda - none
3. To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 9th July 2015. Mrs Charlesworth-Smith questioned the paragraph -
Mr Ashman was asked if he would do the moles voluntarily but he declined, the £30 he used to get for doing the moles didn't even cover his diesel costs each week when he was the mole catcher. The Chairman said this was irrelevant now that Mr Ashman had resigned.

Matters arising from past minutes: Mrs Charlesworth –Smith questioned why this was missing from the Agenda, this was an oversight.

4. Reports:
 - 4.1 Chairman's Report:- Following the council meeting on 9th July the period has been relatively quiet except for the issue over the moles in the Rec and Cemetery which has been the on-going. Both the Rec and the Cemetery are showing increasing signs of mole activity. I am aware of concerns within the parish.
I was unable to attend the Hall and General Purposes meeting in July but was at the Open Spaces meeting later in the month and the Hall meeting in early August.

Two issues of concern to councillors are:

- Litter particularly on the Rec
- Dog waste

Aided Phil Ashman in the installation of the seats on Fair Hill and inspected both the Parish Notice Boards and the fence between the Rec and Storey's meadow. The latter is in need of significant repair to the extent that replacement is the only option. [It was noted in the inspection report carried out by Wicksteeds that this fence was needing attention].

I have been working on a simplification of the Cemetery Rules whereby a simple A4 "gatefold" can be included with invoices/receipts and have been reviewing the upgrade of the Parish Council's website on Methwold.net I would note that the traffic in emails has fortunately subsided. Thank you.

Training-We have been charged for £120 for 4 places, 1 Councillor did attend and the 3 who missed the training have offered to pay £30 each. The Chairman said that in future the Council should adopt that those who miss training session pay for their place.

- 4.2 Clerk's Report:-
 - Quotes – Fair Hill seat bases – Chosen Contractor has been informed and is due to start work on seat bases w/c 3rd August

- Brickwork at St George's Hall – Chosen Contractor has been informed, have received P/L insurance and waiting for start date to be confirmed.
- St George's Hall – Gable end roof – Still no response from Contractor, have discussed with Chairman next steps.
- Decorating – Chosen Contractor has been informed work expected to commence 17th August.
- Kitchen-Contractor acknowledged acceptance letter and has given provisional start date of 21st September 2015, he will contact me nearer to the time to confirm this date.
- Mole catching- revised quote received.
- Streetlighting Service Contract – 3 year contract signed and returned to Contractor as agreed.
- Lockable skip ordered for Rec. car park on 3 month trial, delivery 3rd August.
- Finance – 2014/15 accounts have been sent to External Auditor, who have written back asking for more information, this has been sent.
- Highways – sent list of items which need attention when the Ranger gangs visit the parish of Methwold during the commencing 20 July 2015, since received email to say that Stoke Road (Brookville) – hedge cutting at sign and Hythe Road – potholes filled are the two items which have been done, any other works requested will be inspected and programmed as appropriate.
- Brookville-white gates, cheque sent to NCC, contacted NCC to ask when the gates will be fitted, waiting for response.
- Batchcroft Trust-contacted Rev. Waters to let him know who the representatives are.
- Hedge- alongside the Cemetery/Iceni Academy have written to the Academy asking them to cut back their overhanging hedge.
- Training -Introductory Training for Councillors and Clerks at Wereham Village Hall on Tuesday 28th July 6.45pm to 9pm, only 1 Councillor attended, PC still has to pay for 4 places £120
- Chairmanship Training – JM booked in for September DT already attended course in July.
- SNAP Meeting - 10th August 2015 at 7pm in Downham Market Town Hall
- 2 Parish Councillors have resigned, KLWNBC have been informed and notices posted in Methwold, Methwold Hythe and Brookville. If no election is to be held Co-option of new Councillors can be held at the September meeting. Have had email and telephone discussions with potential candidates.
- Recycling weights- Discussions with BCR regarding the payments for recycled materials, a cheque for £74.91 has been received, this is now up to date and payments will be made automatically to MPC
- Cemetery – following meeting contacted all Funeral Directors with new price list.
- Commemorating World War 1 Fund - War Memorial in Cemetery- End of Grant Monitoring form was received, this has been completed and returned. Email received to say that they have acknowledged and processed the report – no additional information is required.
- Meeting with Chairman and Vice Chairman to discuss agenda items.
- Hall emails and admin up to date, Cemetery admin up to date, minutes completed for PC meeting, notes completed for Hall, did not attend OS meeting due to holiday.

4.3 To accept the Report from the Open Spaces Working Party held on 23.07.15 and to consider recommendations made regarding –**Noticeboards**-All three have been surveyed and the worse one is outside St George's, Mr Crawley offered to renovate these need to purchase 3 x plexiglass Mr Ashman proposed to accept Mr Crawley's offer and the purchase of plexiglass and paint approx.. £100 seconded by Mrs Horton - All agreed.

Fence between Rec. and Storeys Meadow-fence is in very bad condition, the fence is approx. 225mtr in length and cost is expected to be approx. £1200-£1500 to replace with wooden posts and wire, this does not include the removal of the original metal fence and the old posts and wire. Open Spaces to draw up a spec. for replacement fence. The Parish Council is responsible for the fence and Councillor Storey confirmed that the fence has been there for a long time.

Moles - to be discussed later

Signage for litter -The situation is not improving litter is strewn everywhere and one of the net guards on the goalposts has been broken. The Council discussed additional signage, the Chairman suspended the meeting for a member of the public to say that they had picked up litter in the Rec. but the bin was full so they had to put it by the side of the bin. There is now a skip in the car park to enable the handyman to dispose of the rubbish bags. Another resident asked if another litter bin could be put in the car park but there is no guarantee that the offender would use it, it was discussed how do we go about getting people to respect the facilities we have at the Recreation Ground? Dropping litter is an offence and a notice will be put in the Methwold times, should Open Spaces look into more signage and CCTV? The clerk has been asked to check Bylaws to see what action can be taken.

- 4.4 To accept the Report from the Hall and General Purposes Working Party held on 06.08.15 and to consider recommendations made regarding-Hall decoration, due to start on 17.08.15, Mr Thomas proposed walls are painted magnolia and ceiling painted white Mr Ashman seconded – All agreed.
Oil Gauge-batteries have been replaced but still not working, it is approx. 10 years old, new gauge costs approx. £100, Mrs Horton proposed that new gauge is purchased seconded by Mr Ashman – All agreed.
The Grants group have been asked to look at 2 items-toilet refurbishment & drinks facility for St George’s Hall.
5. Finances
- 5.1 Accounts Update – As of 30/07/2015 the Current Account £73,708.34, Tracker Account £40,344.89 and Saver Account £331.13 Total £114,384.36. This amount includes funds already approved for work in the Parish, grants received and an agreed emergency fund.
- 5.2 Approval of payments-The Clerk has received an invoice this afternoon for the seat bases and this will be added to the master Income & Invoice list, the Parish Council was asked to approve this payment so that the Contractor does not have to wait another month for payment. BCR Textiles have refunded £74.91 for recycling. Mrs Charlesworth –Smith proposed that the payments are accepted seconded by Mr Welland – All agreed.
6. Planning - to receive planning decisions –15/00704/F Methwold Walnut House 50 Globe Street Methwold Thetford Norfolk IP26 4PQ - Construction of log cabin within boundary for use as a hairdressing salon Application Permitted 10 July 2015 Delegated Decision
- 6.1 To consider any planning applications-15/01152/F Extend existing utility room and new extension to form garden room Vallis 26 Brook Lane Brookville Thetford Norfolk IP26 4RQ-Support application-All agreed
15/01170/F Proposed single storey side extension and rebuilding of dilapidated brick/clunch wall to boundary 2 Eldens Lane Methwold Thetford Norfolk IP26 4PZ-Support application-All agreed
- 6.2 To consider any planning applications received after the agenda was produced - none
7. Items received for Agenda-Dog waste bins Mrs Charlesworth-Smith has been contacted by a parishioner in Brookville who has complained that people are not picking up after their dogs, this is also a problem in The Avenue, there is a dog waste in here but people choose to ignore it. It is an offence not to clear up after dogs and anyone who witnesses someone not clearing up after their dog is asked to give the name and address of the offender to the Clerk who will contact the Cleanup team at KLWNBC, or you can report the problem at <http://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk> Street Scene Services. The Council agreed that Mrs Charlesworth-Smith will place a notice on the Parish Page to bring this to people’s attention. KLWNBC used to have dog wardens but it is believed that this service is now only for strays.
It was reported that people have been seen walking their dogs on the Rec. there are notices displayed at both entrances stating no dogs allowed.
8. Correspondence-Clerk read out a thank you letter from Mr C Neville thanking the previous Council for his long service gift. An email was read out regarding moles on the Rec, the writer had counted 43 molehills. Another letter was received by the Clerk which was read out, this was regarding the circumstances under which Mr Ashman felt the need to resign and the additional cost this will mean to the Parish. The letter questioned whether this was a good example of local governance and a lack of respect, goodwill & conscientiousness. Copies of this correspondence are available from the Clerk if anyone wishes to see them. Mrs Charlesworth-Smith asked if the Clerk will be replying to this letter explaining that the Parish Council are not allowed to employ Councillors, this has already been explained in previous minutes.
9. Any Further Reports
Parish Councillors-2 vacancies will be Co-opted at the next Parish Council meeting on 10th September.
The Clerk is on holiday at the next meeting, minutes will be taken by another person. To allow the Clerk to have the full details of the meeting it will be recorded.
Mr Thomas reported that he, Mr Ashman and Mr Welland attended the recent SNAP meeting at Downham Market, the Police and the Borough Council were looking for 3 items to take back and work on and Methwold managed to get 2 of the 3 items, these were - parking on Mondays and thefts and petty crime in the area. These will be reported back at the next SNAP meeting in 2 months time. The Councillors who attended said that it was worthwhile attending.

Mr Crawley reported that the window frames in the Fenton Room are rotten and need attention, this will be added to the hall agenda. The waste bins for Fair Hill need some 40 x 40 square tubing and Rapid-set concrete to fix them into place, Mr Crawley asked permission to purchase this approx. cost £50 Mr Welland seconded – All Agreed.

Mr Crawley & Mr Welland apologised for missing the training and will give the Clerk a cheque to cover the cost of their place on the course. Chairman accepted apology and offer of payment.

Mrs Charlesworth-Smith asked who was responsible for the grassed areas outside the houses along the Main Road in Brookville; it is not the Parish Council. The Clerk will speak to Highways and report back. It was reported that 4 people called Mrs Charlesworth-Smith on Tuesday morning to complain about the low flying aircraft over the area on Monday evening, this is thought to be planes from Lakenheath and Mrs Charlesworth-Smith was advised to contact Lakenheath air base. Marham planes are thought to fly north of the area.

Mrs Horton reported that when she arrived at the Hall on Wednesday morning a grill on one of the Fenton Room windows was hanging down, on inspection the other grills had been pulled away, the fire door in the kitchen was open and the first aid kit contents were on the floor, the door to St George's Hall was unlocked and there was dirt on the ladies toilet floor, upstairs the doors to the cupboard at the top of the stairs was open. Mrs Horton called the Caretaker who cleaned up. The Theatre Group confirmed that they had locked up after rehearsals on Tuesday evening, there were a group of youths hanging around in the car park when the Theatre Group left the hall. It seems that the Hall was broken into after the meeting. This was reported to the Police at the end of the meeting and a crime number has been received.

Mrs Horton asked if the Highway Rangers had visited the Parish, the Clerk explained that they had been but had only been able to do 2 items on the list which had been sent to them, it is thought this is because there is no money available. The Clerk will follow this up with Highways.

10. To pass a resolution to exclude members of the public

Quotes: Moles, 5 Contractors were asked to quote and previously 2 quotes had been received. Contractor A quoted £1500 which followed the spec for 2 x visits per week which was issued by the Parish Council the Contractor B quoted £3276 for 1 x visit per week, to comply with the code of practice from the BASC and the Guild of British Mole Catchers 1 x visit per week is not acceptable. The Chairman proposed to waive Financial Regulations which requires 3 quotes on this occasion as there are concerns over trip hazards on the Rec. Mr Crawley proposed to accept the £1500 quote and to appoint the mole catcher to start as soon as possible, the council voted 7 for - 1 abstention – Approved by majority

Meeting ended 8.55pm