

WALPOLE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting of Walpole Parish Council held via online video, on Thursday 11th of February 2021 at from 7.30pm.

Present :

Councillors – William Brooks, Heather Smith, Claire Robinson , Richard Green,
Adrian Eveleigh, Richard Blunt, Andy Bliss, Jade Roper, Charlene Campion, David Lawty
Councillors - Julian Kirk and Sandra Squires (19.50)
Clerk – Caroline Boyden
Two members of the Public

Welcome from Richard Green, Chairman to everyone.

1. Apologies – to accept apologies and reasons for absence:
Linda Matthews - family illness
2. To remind all councillors of their duty to abide by the Code of Conduct
The Chair reminded all councillors of their duty to abide by the Code of Conduct.
3. Declarations of Interest of any items on the agenda and to consider any requests for dispensations. Cllr Lawty on Community Centre and Defibrillator
4. Public Participation - to allow public participation (3 minutes allowed per speaker, up to a maximum of 15 minutes in total). None
5. Minutes – to approve the minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday, 14th of January 2021, having been previously circulated were proposed as a being a true record of the meeting. Proposed Cllr Eveleigh and seconded by Cllr Robinson. Unanimously agreed by those present at that meeting.
6. Matters Arising – to record matters arising from the last meeting:
 - 6.1 Willow Trees update – Cllr Squire and Cllr Blunt are still trying to establish who owns the trees, but Highways deny ownership and the 1m from the roadside was discussed as possible responsibility of the home owner.
 - 6.2 Defibrillator update – The official quote from the Community Centre preferred electrician has been received for £276 + VAT. The previous electrics had been completed by Wisbech Electrical and the clerk has contacted them for the certificate of work and guarantee. After much discussion, it was decided to go ahead with the quote provided by the Community Centre as the work would take place next week. Proposed by Cllr Bliss, seconded by Cllr Eveleigh with 5 in favour and 3 against, the motion was carried.
It was suggested that an agreement should be put in place between the Parish Council and Community Centre – to be added to next agenda.
 - 6.3 Market Lane Survey update – following a review of their original decision as requested by Walpole and Walpole Cross Keys Parish Councils, with the support of Cllr Squire, confirmation had been received that approval given for 40mph on the whole of Market Lane.

Clerk to ask for time frame and Cllr Squire advised that Highways should pay for the changes.

7. To receive reports:

7.1 Highways – Cllr Campion advised that a large pothole in Police Road.

Cllr Squire advised that gritting is done by County Council and nothing to do with the Parish Council. It should be on all bus routes and will follow up.

7.2 County and Borough Councillors Reports.

Cllr Squires discussed the following report:

Report 11th Feb 2021

Norfolk Winter Covid Support Scheme – We continue to provide set up a special support scheme to help Norfolk residents get through winter. It is for anyone who is experiencing financial hardship as a result of COVID-19. Further details are available [here](#).

Covid cases – case numbers are dropping but are still much higher than they were before the first lockdown, and higher than the England average. So, there is still no room for complacency.

Bereavement Service – with Covid deaths in Norfolk having exceeded 1200 since the pandemic began, we would like to remind people that additional support is available to help bereaved families to make the necessary arrangements and to offer a listening ear. [Bereavement support - Norfolk County Council](#)

Food support for people who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) - There is now additional support available for residents who are clinically extremely vulnerable (who have been advised to shield). Norfolk County Council can offer food and other support to people who are CEV, complementing the existing services provided by food banks and other local support. The support can help anyone who is CEV to access food, including those who can afford to buy food but may have nobody to help with their shopping or can't access online delivery orders. The support offered is tailored to meet a person's individual circumstances and can range from help to book a delivery slot, finding a volunteer to do their shopping and delivery, or an emergency food box if necessary. If you know someone who is CEV and in need of immediate food support, please signpost them to Norfolk County Council on 0344 800 8020.

Free school meal vouchers – the EdenRed portal has been up and running, and, to date, 120 schools across the county have ordered FSM vouchers for the half term week - there is a process in place to chase up remaining schools and colleges. Eligible home education pupils have also been emailed. If you know of a family struggling, please ask them to get in touch with either myself or the Norfolk Assistance Scheme.

Council Service Updates

Schools – closed except for children of keyworkers and vulnerable children. Early Years Childcare remains open. Except in cases where they have been closed by the weather.

Libraries & Mobile Libraries – closed

Recycling Centres – Open but with social distancing measures in place. Reuse shops are closed (**Docking & Wreham are closed this week while weather is icy due to unsafe conditions, King's Lynn is open**)

Museums – closed

Registration Office – no marriage ceremonies taking places except exceptional circumstances, births can still be registered by appointment only, registration of deaths is being conducted remotely by telephone.

Gritting etc – Obviously, crews are out gritting during this cold weather. Each gritting run takes a crew 3 hours to complete and across the County 2000 miles of road are gritted every time.

Scams: We are hearing of increasing incidents of Covid related scams across the County and would ask people to be aware. There are ones that offer so called home cleaning for “virus decontamination” and some offering vaccines for a cost. Please spread the word and make residents, particularly vulnerable ones aware. They can visit: <https://friendsagainstscams.org.uk> for more info on scams and how to avoid them.

Other news:

Trees – Due to the 1 Million Trees Project being somewhat delayed, I have decided to offer each of the Parishes in my Division between 3-5 native trees myself (a bit bigger than saplings but not fully grown either!). On the proviso that the parish will take care of them and water them if required during the summer. Please let me know if you would like any, and if so, what type would be preferred.

Flooding – Wow. Where to start. I have been inundated with flooding reports and in truth chasing them up and tying down the Flood Team seemed to take up 90% of my time last week. Lots of areas across West Norfolk have struggled more than usual, with lots of properties being flooded. This has obviously caused a backlog with Highways and the Flood Team and they have had to prioritise their case load. Which is not easy to hear when it is your house that is flooded, but they are working and getting out to people as quickly as they can.

The flooding is also caused by numerous factors and it can be complicated to establish the cause and therefore the fix. While it is very easy to blame Highways, it often is not that simple. This past week I have found Highways to be very helpful and under a lot of pressure. Bearing in mind that it is also Highways staff who do the gritting runs, often with very little time off.

I find it most frustrating that there is no immediate support available for residents with flooding with them (and councillors) going round in circles between the various organisations involved with flooding. Last week I wrote to the Leader of NCC, stating I feel residents are being let down and more needs to be done to provide actual help rather than hold meetings.

He has responded to state that the newly created “Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance” chaired by Lord Dannatt will be looking at just those things. I have reminded him that residents do not want to hear about more meetings, they want action and the best things they could do is set up an emergency flood line and have equipment and staff available to provide practical help. I have written to Lord Dannatt expressing my concerns and he has assured me that actions will flow from his meeting, not just words.

Digital devices – NCC continues to contribute to the EDP’s “Every Child Online campaign”. 1405 digital devices have been issued via IMT as at the end of January 2021, and approx. 200 are ready for delivery via Norfolk Assistance Scheme. Further Education colleges have also started taking delivery of DfE devices.

It is interesting though that the Labour Group suggested the council supported a campaign in a motion to council back in July 2020, about encouraging businesses to donate old IT to schools to help children get online when home schooling, which the Conservatives voted down saying it was not anything to do with them and would cost too much. Yet they can create a campaign themselves in conjunction with the EDP to do just that. 6 months has been lost and it has affected the learning of a vast number of children who have struggled to access remote learning.

Budget – Later today I am due to have a meeting with the Executive Director of Finance to discuss a budget amendment due to go before Council later this month. All amendments must be costed and approved by the Finance Department before being put forward and I am hopeful we can sort something out today. I cannot tell you what it is yet as I do not want to jinx it!

Signed :

Date :

Care Leavers – As the Chair of one of NCC’s Corporate Parenting sub groups I have been involved with setting up a new mentoring service for Norfolk Care Leavers by Councillors. We are working with other organisations who provide mentoring services, and it will be rolled out after the elections. We are also looking at attaining the Care Leavers Covenant, which will help provide items for Care Leavers moving into their own home. As an extension to this, last month I proposed to the Borough Council that the Care & Repair service could be extended to Care Leavers as they do not have a support network when they live independently and are more vulnerable to eviction. That will go through Cabinet successfully so we can be the first area of Norfolk to provide a practical support service for Care Leavers.

LGA Leadership Academy – At the end of last month, I was invited to take part in one of the LGA Leadership Academy courses, which runs until the end of March. The course is run by the LGA in conjunction with the Institute of Leadership & Management. It has been fascinating so far talking to other councillors round the Country about how their councils work and what we feel could be done to improve both the Council and the relationships of those within it. The course allows us to choose our own leadership challenge, to develop throughout the period of the course. True to type, I have chosen myself a difficult one but one that I feel is desperately in need of change. Which I cannot reveal until I have made at least a little progress!

Judicial Review continued.

As reported last month, following a change to care charges in July 2019, and the controversial introduction of the Minimum Income Guarantee which left many severely disabled people in Norfolk in financial hardship, a Judicial Review in December decided that NCC had discriminated against those severely disabled people who were unable to work.

As a result, a new charging policy is to be developed in conjunction with those who receive care, all extra charges introduced the former policy are to be repaid. I am pleased to know the claimant in the Judicial Review and to have been able to provide some small level of support. This decision affects severely disabled people right across Norfolk and in other councils around the Country. I am now in discussions with NCC over the refunds as the plan was to make payment back to care accounts, which to my mind is more of a credit note than a refund. Discussions are ongoing, although it is looking increasingly likely that NCC will be taken back to court for further discrimination against disabled people.

Cllr Blunt advised that the County Council and Police & Crime elections are going ahead this May despite a number of objections. Full and Cabinet councils are currently still functioning. Planning is suffering delays due to staff ill and vacancies.

- 7.3 Play Area - The bark by the monkey bars is very deep and children are sinking in it. Ut was suggested that safety matting be put underneath less bark. Clerk to check if the CIL funding could be applied for, as a number of items are in need of repair and also obtain 3 quotes for the work required. Cllr Roper to work on the application with the Clerk.
- 7.4 Community Centre– An update had been received from the Secretary advising that the Preschool was remaining open and a decorating project had taken place inside with a toilet refurbishment due during half term. The car park has been damaged with deep car tracks and looking at obtaining CCTV quotes. The CIL Fund could be applied for.
- 7.5 There new editors of the Crier had sent confirmation to the clerk that they are hoping to meet up as soon as the restrictions allow and work on the next edition. The Clerk advised that the website views will be sent out by separate email.

A Parish Council Facebook page was discussed, and it was agreed that Cllrs Roper and Campion go ahead and set this up on the understanding it was to promote information and news with no comments and have a link to the website.

- 7.6 Cllr Eveleigh advised nothing to add from last month and still awaiting the new signage from NCC. Clerk to chase Mr. Powers on the tidy along Follens road to Eastlands Bank.

ACTION CB

- 7.7 Community Fund Projects Working Group – Cllr Bliss advised of no change and that the concrete base for the new bench was in place and installation of the bench to follow when the weather improves.

Cllr Eveleigh raised the wall rebuilding by St. Andrews Church and clerk to add this to next agenda.

ACTION CB

- 7.8 Communications/Correspondence.

a. The tree has been cut back and the lamp post repaired on the junction with Chalk & Church Roads.

b. The damaged lamp post on Springfield Road has a new post in place.

c. CIL project fund – as discussed under play area 7.3

d. The flooding at April Cottage on Walnut Road discussed and Cllr Kirk has visited on several occasions and dug out the ditch. The flooding was from water on the road and the ditch. Cllr Squire advised that highways has been to the location and the check on the drains is due next week. The Flood team were due to visit today but due to the weather conditions have postponed until next week.

It was reported that one home had 6” of water and Carnella on Chalk Road was flooded at Christmas and are concerned about further flooding.

Cllr Squire advised that a new Flood Alliance has just been set up for Norfolk and practical support was required – see more information on this on page 3.

e. The offer of 3-5 trees from Cllr Squire was discussed and it was decided on 2 oaks for The Swingfield and 1 walnut tree for Walnut Road.

f. Policy & Procedures updates for Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Financial Risk Assessment and Risk Management Policy reviewed. Acceptance proposed Cllr Bliss, seconded Cllr Brooks and all in favour.

g. There are 2 bins with damaged hinges which need replacing and Cllr Bliss advised that the other 2 should be included along with raising the level of the bin to ensure all rubbish is captured. 3 quotes to be obtained to undertake this work along with the removal of the bin on Walnut Road. Cllr Roper to make the details available.

ACTION JD/CC/CB

The poor condition of the noticeboards was raised and photographs to be taken for the clerk to obtain 3 quotes to replace.

ACTION CB

8.. Planning

- 8.1 **a.** The application for a proposed dwelling at Plumridge Nurseries was discussed again and Cllr Lawty proposed objections on historical grounds but no seconder was forthcoming. Cllr Roper proposed support, seconded by Cllr Campion and approved by 5 councillors. Cllr Lawty requested his objection be minuted. NOTE Cllr Kirk was placed in the waiting room whilst this application was discussed as he had called this in.

- b.** Demolition of garage/carport and construction of two storey extension at Desford Lodge, Church Road discussed, and support was proposed by Cllr Roper, seconded by Cllr Brooks with approval from all present except for Cllr Lawty who requested his objection be minuted.
- c.** Removal of condition 5 for construction of agricultural dwelling at Newton Lodge Farm discussed and Cllr Eveleigh proposed support, seconded by Cllr Brooks and approved by all present.
- d.** Change of use from tractor shed to light commercial purposed at St. Peters Lodge discussed and support proposed by Cllr Eveleigh, seconded by Cllr Bliss and approved by all present on the understanding that a condition be added “not to be converted to a residential dwelling”.

9. Finance

- 9.1 To approve the Financial Reports for January including the Bank Reconciliation, Bank Statements, and payments/receipts – proposed Cllr Brooks, seconded Cllr Eveleigh and agreed by all present.
- 9.2 To approve the proposed payments to be made in February – proposed Cllr Eveleigh, seconded Cllr Brookes and agreed by all present.
Payments: Staff Costs £340.56, Mr. Powers for grass cutting £110.00, K & M Lighting for repairing the damaged lamp post on Chalk/Church Road junction, EE £20.00, Eon £63.20 and K&M Lighting £27.54 via direct debit.
- 9.3 Donation required for the Citizens Advice Bureau discussed and Clerk to find more information on spend in our area for next meeting. ACTION CB
- 9.4 The clerk advised of recent GDPR training and was checking current policies plus new information audit. Draft to be sent out for discussion at next meeting ACTION CB
- 10. Items for next agenda –Willow Trees, Flooding/Drainage, Bin quotes, Church wall,
- 11. The next meeting will be on Thursday 11th of March 2021 from 19.30 hrs via Zoom.

Meeting ended at 21.15pm