

WHISSONSETT PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Whissonsett Parish Council held virtually at 7.30pm on Monday 9th November 2020.

Under the Coronavirus Act, the Secretary of State has published meetings regulations which remove the requirement to hold annual meetings and allow virtual meetings up to 7 May 2021. These are contained in The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

Present: Cllr Sally Dye (Chairman)
Cllr Bruce Andrews (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Caroline Edge
Cllr Catherine McGee
Cllr Charles Holloway
Cllr James Daniels

District Cllr Trevor Carter
County Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris

Sheryl Irving (Clerk)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and reported that Mr John Newton had tendered his resignation as a councillor. The vacancy will be advertised and advised that anyone interested should contact either the Chairman or the Clerk for more information.

2. To receive any declarations of interest.

There were none received.

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 14th September 2020.

Cllr Dye proposed that the minutes be accepted as a true record of the meeting, this was seconded by Cllr Holloway and agreed by Council.

4. Open Forum for Public Participation.

There were no members of the public present.

5. County & District Councillors Reports.

D/Cllr Carter reported that the first meeting had been held in respect of the Climate Change Emergency and a strategy will be formulated for progress.

Breckland had committed a £6M business support package for new and existing businesses, grants and advice are available.

A briefing from the leader of Breckland had been circulated regarding the response to the Covid situation. The Chairman responded that she had been appalled by Breckland as she had been unable to get any response from three Breckland departments and that any adjustments to home working should have been resolved by now.

C/Cllr Kiddle-Morris submitted a written report and this is attached. The Chairman was disappointed that the verge cutting would be reduced to once a year due to budget constraints and a response will be submitted to the consultation.

6. Planning Issues

a) Decisions to note.

The following decisions were noted:

Application	Parish Council Comments	Breckland Decision
3PL/2020/0630/D – The Old Pit, High Street - Reserved matters application for 3 dwellings following outline permission 3PL/2017/0352/O.	Objections raised in respect of an increase of on-road parking and highway safety. No demand for any additional four-bedroom dwellings.	APPROVED.
3PL/2020/0629/D – The Old Pit, High Street - Reserved matters application for one dwelling following outline 3PL/2017/0937/O.	Objections raised in respect of application being outside of the decision of the outline planning permission for a single storey building, an increase of on-road parking and highway safety. No demand for any additional four-bedroom dwellings.	APPROVED.
3PL/2020/0892/VAR – The Old Pit, High Street - Variation of Condition No 4 on 3PL/2017/0937/O Conditions(s) Condition 4	Objections raised in respect of the negative visual impact of a two-storey dwelling. No demand for any additional four-bedroom dwellings but a need for smaller properties for local people wanting to downsize.	APPROVED

b) Applications to consider.

There were no applications to consider.

c) To note an appeal to the Secretary of State in respect of the following application:

3PL/2020/0107/F - 1 & 2 Sunnyside London Street Whissonsett, Two new 3-bedroom dwellings.

Council noted the appeal but were disappointed to see even more cars now parking in what is an unsuitable highways area and hoped that this will be considered at the appeal.

7. To consider any Highways matters.

a) To receive an update re matters previously reported.

- Water Leaks, London Road – C/Cllr Kiddle-Morris is taking this matter forward.
- Mill Lane – Highways Land – C/Cllr Kiddle-Morris and D/Cllr Carter are taking this matter forward as it relates to both Highways and Planning.

b) To receive a report regarding the SAM II sign.

Cllr McGee reported that the sign had been situated in two locations. The London Street/Colkirk Road location indicated speeding issues but the sign does encourage drivers to slow down. The Dereham Road location indicates the average speed is much lower, probably because the road is not suitable for higher speeds as it is quite bendy.

An alternative location of the High Street, from Mill Lane, was suggested and Cllr McGee will investigate this option.

Cllr McGee informed Council that if the data showed any occurrences of regular speeding at a particular time of day then the police can be contacted and requested to deal with the offender.

c) To note a response received from a local farmer regarding overgrown public rights of way in the village and the volume and speed of farm vehicles travelling through the village.

Council noted the response from a local farmer and was grateful that staff had been briefed re care on the local roads, which appeared to have had some effect.

d) To consider any new issues.

The resurfacing on Mill Lane, which had not been done well and was now lifting, will be reported to Highways.

At this point D/Cllr Carter left the meeting.

8. To consider issues relating to the Play Area.

a) To consider any actions resulting from the 2020 Play Area Inspection Report (awaited).

Cllr Edge reported that the zipwire had now been tightened and the inspection will be ordered.

b) To consider options to mark off the corner of Playing Field Drive.

Council agreed that there did not seem to be any reason to mark off the area, particularly as a BT pole was sited on it.

c) To consider any other issues.

There were no other issues raised.

9. To review the tenders for the grass cutting contract for 2021 onwards.

Three tenders had been received and Cllr Dye proposed that the current contractor be requested to reduce their quotation to £5,000, to closer match the lowest quotation received. If this was not accepted, then the contract should be awarded to the company who had submitted the lowest tender. This was seconded by Cllr Holloway and agreed by Council.

10. To consider maintenance of parish council trees, including:

- **Annual tree inspection report by Tree Surgeon.**
- **Bi-annual tree inspection report from the Tree Warden.**
- **Church Close Tree inspection report from the Tree Warden.**
- **To consider which trees should routinely be included in the annual tree inspection report.**

Cllr Holloway requested a volunteer to assist him with identifying the trees to be routinely inspected, the Chairman volunteered. In addition, a request for a site meeting with the tree surgeon will be made to discuss the beech tree which was reported as diseased, with felling recommended, together with an inspection of the Church Close tree. They will report back at the January meeting.

11. To consider maintenance and other issues relating to:

a) The Allotments

A tenant has expressed an interest in a second plot which is in a poor condition with lots of docks. Council agreed to offer one year free of charge to give the opportunity to clear it, with digging the roots out the best way forward.

b) Grass Cutting.

There was nothing to report.

c) The Village Sign.

Council noted that the grass area around the village sign will now be included in the grass cutting contract.

d) All other village areas.

The Chairman reported that the notice board was in a poor condition and she will try to find someone who is able to assist in a repair.

12. To consider a request to fund Neighbourhood Watch Signage and advertise scheme on Parish Website.

The Chairman reported that the Facebook page had disappeared and she could not access the new site. Council agreed that, until such time as the scheme is available to a wider section of the community, not to fund any signage or advertise the scheme on the parish website.

13. Correspondence

Council noted the following correspondence and, with the exception of a response to the Budget Consultation re verge cutting, no actions were required.

- Boundary Commission Review (closes 23.11.20)
- Breckland Planning Consultation Response
- NCC Budget Consultation
- Raynham Hall Christmas Event (now cancelled)

14. Finance & Governance Matters

a) To receive a financial statement for the year ending 31st March 2021.

The financial statement was noted.

b) To appoint an internal auditor for the year ending 31st March 2021.

Cllr Dye proposed that Mr Bergin be appointed as internal auditor for the year ending 31st March 2021 at a cost of £25, this was seconded by Cllr McGee and agreed by Council.

c) To consider a draft budget and set the precept for the year ending 31st March 2022.

Council agreed to defer any decision until the January meeting when it was hoped a decision could be made regarding works to the beech tree.

d) To approve the following payments:

The Chairman informed Council that the grass contractor had included an additional £200 for hedge cutting which had not been discussed or agreed by the Council and this payment was not approved. Cllr Dye proposed approval of the following payments, this was seconded by Cllr McGee and approved by Council.

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|--|---------------------------|
| • Clerk (Salary/Allowance – Oct/Nov & Arrears) | £271.42 |
| • HMRC – Refund to Clerk | £20.40 |
| • SLCC Membership (Brisley PC) | £19.75 |
| • Grass Contractor | £2060.00 |
| • Tree Felling (approved at Sept meeting) | £260.00 (paid 14.10.2020) |

15. To receive any new items for the next agenda.

There were no new items received for the next agenda.

16. To note the next meeting will be held at 7.30pm on Monday 11th January 2021.

Council noted the date of the next meeting and the meeting then closed at 9.09pm.

Signed:

Date:

County Councillor for Necton and Launditch Division Report November 2020

Covid 19: The Covid 19 infection rates are rising among the working population in Norfolk and there are concerns that this could lead to an increase in the infection rate among the over 60s which will impose a strain on hospital accommodation. As of the 23rd October the infection rate has risen to 89.2 per 1000k of population, the Breckland area has the highest rate at 171 per 100k. The Breckland rate of infection is mainly due to the outbreak in a food processing plant in Watton where nearly half of workers tested have proved positive.

Please remember to contact those people who needed support during the last lockdown to reassure them of support in the future if required.

Flu: Flu causes the death of around 15,000 people in the UK each year. The most vulnerable group are those people over 65, the same group that are at most risk from Covid 19. There has been an increase in the take up of the flu vaccine this year, but the message must be to all those who are at most risk i.e. those with underlying respiratory conditions plus those over 65 to get a flu jab.

Budget: There is still considerable uncertainty in what government funding will be available for financial year 21/22. Additionally, the government has not stated whether the allowed percentage increase in the general precept will remain at 2% or be amended. There is also uncertainty as to whether a rise is permissible in the adult social care precept. Despite this uncertainty NCC are obliged to consult on its budget proposals for 20/21 making suppositions as to governments intentions. The consultation runs until the 14th December, details can be found on the NCC website. The Council will set its council tax at its February 2021 meeting.

Grass Cutting: As part of the budget consultation (above) it is proposed to reduce grass verge cutting on "C" and "U" roads from 2 cuts per year to one. Also, it is proposed to reduce urban cuts from 5 to 4 per year.

Boundary Review: The second Boundary commission consultation on proposed changes to the Councils Division boundaries closes on the 23rd November. A change from the initial consultation is that Brisley is added to the new Division "Launditch". Due to a delay in the process due to Covid any changes will not take place until the 2025 Norfolk Council elections.

Parish Partnership: A reminder that bids for 50% funding for small highway improvements under the Parish Partnership scheme need to be submitted by the middle of December. If you have any queries please contact me in the first instance.

County Farms: The County Council is committed to maintaining the County Farm Estate in excess of 16,000 acres. The tenanted farms which vary in size provide a thriving and progressive estate which supports individual businesses and enables economic growth into the county's agricultural sector and indirectly into numerous related businesses. Any capital receipt from the sale of redundant buildings and land are reinvested in the estate. The County Farm estate was recently increased through the purchase of 163 acres.

Mark Kiddle-Morris.
Member for Necton and Launditch.
Norfolk County Council.