

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WHETSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Held at the Council Offices, Cemetery Road, Whetstone
19th March 2009

Present: -- Mr. M.R.Bounds in the Chair
Mr. S.R.Webb
Mr. J.Dunkley
Mr. P.Cox
Mr.M.C.Burley
Mr.D.Garratt
Mrs. J.M.Sault
Mr. J. Wells - BDC Officer
Mr. L. Phillimore

Mrs. A.M.Tyler
Mrs. J.C.Songhurst
Mr. T.Ball
Mr. J. Kenney
Mr. K.Coles
Mr.M.E.Jackson
Mr. D.Jennings LCC
Mr. B.Garner LCC
Clerk in attendance

142. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from: – Mr. A.C. Tanner and Mrs. J.Forey BDC – other meeting.
RESOLVED: To accept apologies received.

143. CHAIRS REPORT AND REMARKS

None.

144. DISCLOSURES OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

Mr. M.E.Jackson declared a personal interest in items related to the Ragworts Allotments and Mr. K.Coles declared a prejudicial interest in matters relating to his Health and Community cabinet portfolio at BDC.

145. APPROVE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF COUNCIL DATED 26th FEBRUARY 2009

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting dated 26th February 2009, as circulated, be approved, and signed by the Chairman.

146. CAR PARK HIGH STREET DISCUSSION

The Chairman welcomed BDC Officer Mr. Jon Wells and invited him to talk on the consultation process regarding the Car Park on High Street. The Chairman informed members that our four District Councillors had met to discuss the car park issue.

Mr. Jon Wells discussed the options that were suggested by the District Councillors as being the base ideas for a public consultation with all parishioners. These were i) do nothing, that is status quo ii) introduce 2 hour max parking with no return restrictions and resident and business parking permits available iii) building 6 houses on the site and iv) the Parish Council operate the car park.

He gave the cost to run and maintain the car park as £2500 per annum. Revenue potential off parking permits had been calculated at £2500 - £3000. This was challenged as being over inflated, as it was believed that people would not pay the permit fees.

A question was asked regarding 3 hour parking being more suited to users needs, such as hairdresser visits or Church events.

The Officer suggested to members not to get bogged down on one option but to see the four mentioned as suitable for a consultation with the village. Were any other suggestions available? None were suggested. The 23 car parks in the district currently cost £135,000 to maintain. Recently the district had spent £180,000 on Narborough Train Station car park.

The possibility of a parish council run car park was discussed. The clerk raised maintenance i.e. resurfacing, as an issue. The front car park had been top coated recently and signed. There were opportunities to enhance the car park and make it more attractive, but at the end of the day, it is primarily a car park. A question was asked on the house building option. Did the council plan to attempt to build on the land locked area they also own that runs alongside the church wall? No plans were known about.

The suggestion of gifting or purchasing the land for a token amount instead of leasing to the parish was discussed. This would get rid of the ongoing lease costs. The land locked strip could also be gifted or sold to the parish. This was noted by the officer.

Parking was discussed and if the car park became unpopular, it was felt parking would move onto the streets. This had been thought of and LCC Highways officers would be involved as they are in other road traffic / parking issues in the County. Fines were being issued in the parish by the enforcement team, and these were for on and off road offences.

The status quo option was discussed. It was felt by the officer that this would be detrimental as standards would not be maintained without increased funds to cover ongoing and future maintenance.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Wells for his presentation. It was RESOLVED that the consultation document would include the four approved options as outlined and discussed above. This would be issued to the parishioners during April.

147. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

a) Public Speaking Protocol - None Received

b) The meeting was suspended to allow members of the public to make representation about any items not on the agenda (old parishioner's time).

i) The village signs were discussed and it was asked that the clerk put this on the April Full Council Agenda.

ii) The three arches had had safety barriers fitted by BDC.

iii) Parking on the corner of Attfield Drive and quad bikes were highlighted as an ASB issue. The clerk was asked to contact the police regarding this issue.

iv) Hanging baskets on Springwell lane were discussed. The clerk informed the meeting that 8 more were being fitted on Dog and Gun Lane which completed this part of the village.

v) The issues on Oliver Park were raised. ASB on a Friday night had been passed to the police by the clerk. The police had attended and dealt with a Biggs Close matter. They were focusing part of the Friday night patrols on to Oliver park.

vi) Graffiti on the Blaby Road underpass was bad again. The clerk was asked to contact BDC.

vii) Grove Road speeding was raised and it was felt that this had to be dealt with by utilising our County Councillors. A wish list was advised of traffic and road issues in the village. This formed the start of consultation and action plans could then be drawn up. The clerk re-iterated that neighbouring parishes were "buying" safety installations themselves instead of hoping for action or being chosen as a needy scheme. It was

agreed that the clerk write to LCC Cllr's with the details and needs of the parish as a starting point.

LCC Cllr Mr. B.Garner said that part funded schemes may be an option, but a "wish list" would still be the starting point. It was pointed out that some schemes can take up to three years before they are achieved. The speed humps being installed on the Blaby side of Grove Road was seen as a suitable scheme to be installed on the Whetstone side. This could be a suitable starting point.

viii) The new Kerbside Recycling scheme was discussed. The term Kerbside was incorrect as BDC clearly state not to leave your bins kerbside as this is illegal under current laws. The term should be curtilage as that is where you are asked to leave your waste ready for collection. It was agreed that the Recycling officer for BDC, Karen Ashley be invited to a future Full Council meeting.

148. REPORTS FROM COUNTY/DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

The following verbal reports were given by BDC District councillors: BDC Cllr. Mr.K.Coles updated council on the Thursday Friday night project and also the Youth Forum he is running at Whetstone Parish Council. He was looking to join up with neighbouring parishes.

LCC Cllr. Mr. B.Garner informed the meeting of a Z56 footpath consultation he had been to. It had been ongoing for several years and corrected the route of a footpath diverted during building works on the Burnham Drive estate, but never updated on the footpaths maps. This had been approved at the meeting. It was noted that no consultation had been made with the Parish council with in the last two years.

LCC Cllr. Mr. D.Jennings updated the meeting on the railway bridge proposals on Enderby Road which the clerk had copied to all members. The blanket planning permission Network Rail currently had, to progress without reference to local planning conditions did not apply to this bridge. Therefore a planning application would need to be made to BDC.

The cemetery at Countesthorpe had had its transitional rate relief removed, meaning a massive increase for the parish, which had been unbudgeted for. The clerk confirmed this to be the case within Whetstone, with the impact being some additional £100 on the cemetery rates bill at Whetstone. It had been poorly communicated and all parish budgets would be impacted by this. The clerk was asked to enquire as to how this was notified to parishes, as he had no recollection of a direct communication on this matter from BDC. It was a possibility that no notification was required, but courtesy would have been the right way forward.

RESOLVED: That the verbal reports given be received.

149. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

The Chair of Planning gave a verbal report on the meeting held that evening.

RESOLVED: That the written reports and verbal reports given be received.

150. FINANCE – RECEIVE PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND CONFIRM BALANCE SHEET

RESOLVED: The accounts paid up to the end of February 2009 be confirmed and that the bank reconciliation statement dated 28th February 2009 be signed by the Chairman on behalf of Council.

151. PARISH COUNCILLOR VACANCY

The clerk had tabled an application for co-option to members. This was the only application on the table. The other interested party had withdrawn due to workload.

RESOLVED: Mr. Les Phillimore was proposed and seconded and appointed as a co-opted councillor. The clerk asked Mr. Phillimore to complete the necessary paperwork and he then joined the meeting. The Chairman congratulated him and welcomed him back onto council on behalf of members.

152. REVIEW CONTINGENCY PLANS IN CASE OF STAFF ABSENCE

This item had been placed on the agenda by request to ensure council had coverage in case of sudden absence or illness to the Clerk or Financial Administrator. The clerk explained the steps in place as covered by Risk Assessment as per recommendations from the external auditor. From this, an aide memoire of contact numbers had been generated and a suggestion was that this be issued to the Chairman each year to ensure contact details are available to assist in continuing with council business.

RESOLVED: That the Staff working party defines a procedure based on the clerks recommendations.

153. CLERKS REPORT

The work schedule was tabled and noted. The clerk reported on the following:

An update on the Graffiti removal work was given. Permission had been sought and now obtained from the two private property owners and the work would be completed in early April.

A request was made that the churchyard & cemetery gates be locked up earlier on a Friday and Saturday evening to avoid ASB gatherings. It was RESOLVED that this be done, and also to approve up to an additional 2 hours litter pick on a Saturday morning, if required, to keep the parks free from litter.

a) The clerk had the legal documents for the Ragworts available to be signed and witnessed. A question was raised about having sight of the legal document. The clerk had worked with our solicitors on ensuring the lease was protective of the parish council and passed all expectations and requirements onto the Allotment Association. This had been discussed in full with the Associations during 8 months of work. As clerk and RFO he was happy with all the work undertaken and advice given by the solicitors.

RESOLVED: To sign the lease, copies of which would be available in the office to members to review.

The clerk had taken photographs of the poor state of the fencing surrounding the field for reference. These were currently the responsibility of BDC and Three Oaks Housing.

Two quotes had been obtained for remedial agricultural work needed to have the field ready for growing. This was to spray, rotivate, plough and re-rotate so that the allotments can be marked out and used. The clerk said that this moved some way to council's thoughts on supporting the set up.

RESOLVED: That the matter be reviewed by Finance Working Party to ensure funding streams were in place as suggested by the clerk.

b) Meeting dates were discussed and the following were RESOLVED:

Finance WP – Thursday 26th March 2009 at 6.30 p.m.

Joint POS & Recreation WP – Thursday 9th April 2009 at 6.30 p.m.

Staff WP – Thursday 16th April 2009 at 6.30 p.m.

Crime and Disorder Liaison Group – Thursday 23rd April at 7.00 p.m

154. CORRESPONDENCE

RESOLVED: The correspondence list be received and noted.

a) LCC- Highways, Waste and Transport enquiries system improvements.

b) BDC – Request to attend April meeting by BDC and Rural Enabler.

RESOLVED: To allow attendance to the April Full Council meeting. No decision has to be taken at this meeting.

c) St.Peter's Church – Clock update.

d) LCC – Information re: Enderby Road Railway bridge scheme of work.

e) 1st Scout Group – Information regarding group.

f) New Image – Information regarding group.

g) LCC – Notification of notice not to proceed with cycle scheme previously notified.

RESOLVED: The letters be received.

155. APPOINTMENTS OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER MEETINGS

a) BDC – Homelessness Strategy meeting – 30th April 2009

RESOLVED: The BDC Councillors would be in attendance.

With there being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 9.58 p.m.