

Minutes of the Meeting of Freethorpe Parish Council held on Monday 15th February 2021 at 7.45pm remotely on Zoom

Present: Nick Spencer (Chairman, NS)
David Lake (Vice Chairman, DL)
Paul Bacon (PB)
Michael Blake (MB)
Janet Church (JC)
Grant Nurden (GN, also District Councillor)
Linda Turner (LT)
Andrew Moll (Parish Clerk, AM)

Also present: County Councillor Brian Iles, Tree Wardens Network Co-ordinator John Fleetwood, prospective County Councillor Lana Hemsall and 9 members of the public

1. Apologies

None.

2. Public Forum

a) County Councillor

Brian Iles described flood management planning work being done. Lana Hemsall added that a flood management working group has been set up under Lord Dannett involving many organisations. She will keep the Parish Council informed of progress on this front. Brian Iles also confirmed the Council Tax rate setting and that County Council elections will take place in May.

b) District Councillor

GN reported that Covid numbers in Norfolk are dropping. Three more large scale vaccination centres opened in Norfolk this month in the North Walsham Community Centre, the Connaught Hall in Attleborough and the Corn Exchange in Kings Lynn. 21 of Broadland's staff are directly supporting the NHS. The Enhanced Contact Tracing Team remains active across the District, including visits for food shopping or prescription collection. Checks at garden centres and major supermarkets will continue. A number of business support grants are currently active: the Additional Restrictions Grant (Discretionary Scheme); – this scheme has now reopened for new applications. The Additional Restrictions Grant; Closed Business Lockdown Payments (CBLP); Lockdown & Tier 4 – Local Restrictions Grant (Closed) Addendum; Tier 2 Local Restriction Grant payments. GN reported that an increase in Council Tax of 3.5% or £4.39 per band D property has been recommended. Garden waste brown bin collection charge will also increase.

c) Tree Wardens

John Fleetwood advised that nurseries are low on trees which will cause problems next year. He also reported an incident in the district in which trees previously planted were removed. He also advised that application 20210219 regarding the pollarding of willows at Wickhampton (agenda item 9a.i) was reasonable.

d) Public

Members of the public were invited to speak and four residents expressed their concerns about the planning application 20210222 (agenda 9a.ii). All speakers strongly opposed it. With the exception of GN (who was unable to take part for reasons given in

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paragraph 3 below) the Parish Council discussed its own response. The concerns discussed by residents and Parish Councillors included:

- i. The proposed development is outside the settlement boundary.
- ii. We understand that the land is designated agricultural land in the 2016 local plan. Although a portion of it has changed hands, Parish Council is not aware of a change of designation. This agricultural usage has been carefully protected ever since the construction of the bungalows on Chapelfield.
- iii. The development is outside the settlement boundary and this is unchanged in the current version of the Greater Norwich Local Plan.
- iv. The proposal creates a major new overlooking of the rear of many houses as the site is behind existing houses on three sides. It is hard to imagine a more intrusive place for such a development.
- v. The proposed swimming pool borders residents back gardens and is close to houses with likely noise disturbance and air quality degradation.
- vi. The right of way to the site is not made up or maintained and is unsuitable for additional vehicles. If private hire of the swimming pool is intended, the right of way to the site is not suitable for further extra traffic, and fly parking is possible on the track with severe inconvenience to residents. If private hire of the swimming pool is intended, this will create disturbance at all hours of the day for residents, with vehicles backwards and forwards hourly
- vii. The right of way is not equipped for additional traffic, which would increase the safety risks for children (and adults) living there.
- viii. The tree planting on the boundary (needed to mitigate overlooking) would itself shade gardens and roots will interfere with gardens.
- ix. The scale and style is not in keeping with the surroundings.
- x. The proposed development would damage, not enhance, the immediate setting and is insensitive to the character of the surrounding area.
- xi. Its value, in terms of architectural quality and (assumed) provision of a new facility with a private hire swimming pool, is far outweighed by the damage it would cause and the disturbance to the lives of neighbouring residents.

NS advised parishioners to submit their own comments to Broadland District Council by the deadline of 3rd March 2021. With the exception of GN (who abstained for reasons given in paragraph 3 below) the Parish Council voted unanimously to object to the application in its own response, citing the reasons given above.

3. Declarations of Interest for items on the agenda

GN advised that, as a substitute member of Broadland District Council's Planning Committee he is unable to join discussion of planning applications, agenda item 9 and the discussion in 2d. There were no other declarations.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 18th January 2021

The minutes of the meetings were **agreed** as an accurate record and would be signed by the Chairman.

5. Matters arising from the previous meeting

- a) (5b) Rampant Horse Community Value process – item 10d refers
- b) (5c) Forward plan - Neighbourhood Plan paper for April

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- c) (5d) SAM2 statistics in Excel format – AM advised that Calica Computer Solutions have provided the 2020 data in Excel format
- d) (8b) Flooding report actions – AM had shared an initial response from Norfolk County Council Highways and awaits further information
- e) (8c) Environmental concerns on agenda – item 10e refers
- f) (9d) Notify Broadland planners of flooding concerns re.garage site – AM advised that Freethorpe's flooding statement has been added to the planning application online
- g) (10c) Confirm requirements for Wickhampton Sign – item 10c refers
- h) (10d) Notify Parish Councillors of CIL conditions – AM has emailed the Parish Councillors with this information
- i) Any other matters arising – none.

6. Clerk's Report

- a) AM noted that Freethorpe's main roads fared well in the recent cold weather, but there were difficult conditions on the Reedham, Southwood and Moulton roads.
- b) The lockdown has made it a tough time for many people in terms of mental health and financial insecurity. Our small community is vulnerable. Building stronger community will be part of our vocation. The Rural Services Network has launched a major campaign called Revitalising Rural, details will be publicised on the website.
- c) AM encouraged councillors to sign up on the Parish Council website for email alerts.
- d) The Parish Council noted with sadness the death of Edith Moll, Parish Clerk from 1978 to 2009, and sent condolences to the family.

7. Finance

a) Monthly Financial Update

AM reported the current financial position in summary:

Bank balance, including deposit account	£28,620
Less forecast expenditure to end of March	£2,184
Less earmarked reserves	£9,077
Operating balance by end of March	£17,359
It was noted that additional expenditure is anticipated early in the new year on the Wickhampton sign and play equipment repair	

b) Payments

It was **agreed** to pay the following:-

Ref	Payee	Description	Amount (£)
1	Andrew Moll	Salary January 2021	158.67
2	Andrew Moll	Administration Expenses (Zoom 14.39+ Postage 2.55)	16.94
3	HMRC	PAYE	39.80
4	The Sign Shed	Invoice SI-32833 Three signs for Wickhampton as agreed at meeting of 18 th January	43.86
5	Norse Eastern Ltd.	Invoice 05IN-1028397 Play area inspections January 2021	100.00

8. Correspondence

a) Acle Foodbank

Parish Council noted the email from Acle Foodbank acknowledging receipt of our donation and describing their current work.

b) Greater Norwich Local Plan

The current consultation was discussed, including concerns raised by Hingham Town Council. Lana Hempsall advised that some minor errors were being corrected. NS had found the process to be sound and proposed this as the Parish Council response. There were no objections, but JC requested more time to reflect on the consultation document. DL noted that the sites identified for development in this parish do not include the land discussed at item 2d above. It was agreed that any further feedback from parish councillors be notified to AM by 28th February to include in the response.

ACTION ALL

c) Broadland Overview & Scrutiny Committee

GN clarified the role of this committee, of which he is a member. While no immediate issues were identified to raise with Overview & Scrutiny committee, its function was noted for future reference.

d) Citizens Advice Bureau(CAB) donation

CAB have asked for a donation. JC advised that the Parish Council has donated to CAB in the past. MB noted that usage of CAB is likely to have increased due to the pandemic. DL suggested CAB should be one of the charities supported but perhaps alternating with other good causes and services that benefit the parish. AM has asked CAB to provide information on the level of utilisation by our parishioners. It was agreed that the decision be deferred until this information is available.

ACTION AM

e) Armed Forces Covenant

GN advised that Broadland District Council has signed the Armed Forces Covenant. The Covenant was also supported by parish councillors and it was unanimously agreed that Freethorpe Parish Council will sign the Armed Forces Covenant.

ACTION AM

9. Planning

a) New Applications –

- i. Tree pollarding on Low Road [20210219](#) – DL explained the context in Wickhampton. Parish Council supported the application.
- ii. Development on land to rear of 19 The Green, Freethorpe, NR13 3NY [20210222](#) was dealt with earlier on the agenda at item 2d. Parish Council objects to the application.

b) Decisions – no new decisions

c) Enforcements – no new enforcements.

d) Other – Parish Councillors noted the timescale extension 26th February to [20200261](#).

10. Update on Ongoing Matters and Projects

a) Speed Management

Parish Council reviewed the high-level statistics comparing latest figures for all locations with 2017, when the SAM machine was first used. The reduction in volumes was noted, explained by lockdown. The speeds on entry to the village from Reedham gave cause for concern, with an 85th percentile speed of 42.4mph (up from 40.7 in 2017) and a maximum speed of 80mph.

b) Freethorpe & Wickhampton Play Areas

The Parish Council reviewed quotations for tree surgery at Wickhampton and agreed to award the work to the cheapest bid. AM is awaiting quotations for gardening/maintenance at the two play areas, to be followed by seeking quotations for

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surfacing and play equipment repairs. No new issues arose from the latest monthly inspection. NS has information to share on the need to evidence inspections.

c) Wickhampton Village Sign

Parish Council noted that the specification for the new village sign has been approved by David Brown and DL on behalf of Wickhampton residents. Quotations are now being sought from suppliers.

d) Rampant Horse Asset of Community Value

The Parish Council discussed the pros and cons of proceeding with the application now that the pub has changed hands and is being renovated for re-opening. It was agreed to put the application on hold, but to continue to review the situation. **ACTION AM**

e) Environmental concerns

Parish councillors were invited to propose ideas to address local environmental concerns by email to AM. **ACTION ALL**

f) Community Infrastructure Levy projects and other proposed projects for 2021/22

Parish councillors were invited to propose ideas by email to AM. **ACTION ALL**

11. Other Matters

a) Ditch drains

JC queried whether ditch drains were being cleared. This appears to be a factor in the flooding problems. PB raised the issue of the water that gathers at the top of the Common near the Southwood entry. There may be a blocked drainage pipe involved in causing that problem. **ACTION AM**

b) Conduct of the meeting

MB observed the calmness and courtesy with which the meeting had been conducted. This is in contrast to widely publicised problems at a recent parish council meeting in Cheshire.

12. Reports from Parish Councillors

None.

13. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would be Monday 15th March 2021, 7.45pm via Zoom.

14. Exclusion of the Press and Public under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to consider the following item of business:

None.

The meeting closed at 9:05 pm

Signed after approval by the Parish Council as being a true and accurate record by the Chair of the meeting or authorised deputy	Chair Nick Spencer	Date
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