



Lakenheath Parish Council

The Parish Office

98 High Street, Lakenheath IP27 9EW

Telephone: 01842 860598

Email: lakenheathparish@gmail.com

MINUTES

of the LAKENHEATH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held at the METHODIST CHAPEL, BACK STREET, LAKENHEATH MONDAY 8th January 2024

MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND. The public may make their views known at the Public Participation item: "Representations from members of the Public" on this this agenda

Three minutes are allotted for each person, *the public may not speak at any other time*

Present:

Cllr G Kelly (Chairman)

Cllr J Hastings (Vice Chairman)

Cllr P Gyte

Cllr A Gyte

Cllr J Cahill

Cllr I Frost

Cllr D Smith

Cllr M Rowntree

Cllr D Smith

Cllr N Smith

In attendance: N Glading, Parish Clerk, and five members of the public

2024/143 Chairman's welcome and confirmation of recording

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Meeting will be recorded for Minutes only.

2024/144 Apologies for Absence had been received from: Cllr W Overy

2024/145 Public Participation: Representations from Members of the Public

Limited to 3 minutes each person: it is advised that generally no decisions will be made

- (i) Emails from a resident about aircraft noise "This has been going on for weeks now. They are not sticking to their flight paths. These were taken today between 2.50-3.15pm. There were others that I was unable to capture. From 3-3.15 at least a dozen planes flew directly over the school. There can be absolutely no excuse for this. No respect or consideration for our children's hearing. Complete contempt for the villagers. How is nothing being done about it. First 4 photos are Highfields/The Elders, the rest are over the school, some from the playground"

Clerk to send details of the email to Sqn Ldr Geary

- (ii) It was reported that the Warm Room initiative at the Community Centre not being well attended, unless it picks up, this could be last time. Councillors will assist with publicity. Takes place between 11.30 am to around 2 pm. It was

AGREED that details would be supplied to Cllr M Hugo so that LPC can assist with publicity.

- (iii) Mr Kevin Watts, the Chair of Playing Field Association told the meeting that the Playing Field fence had been installed about 13 years ago, and is now not fit for purpose, with jagged metal. It is important to replace it from a safety point of view, risk of injury to young children and so that car park boundaries are not lost.

The Playingfield Association has provided a statement, showing the current position financially: the Association are paying off debt that had been incurred, chipping away at. The Playing Field Association and Pavilion are run by volunteers.

On a separate note: Mr Watts understands that the playing field public toilets were closed due to continued vandalism. People are asking for access to the Pavilion toilets.

Cllr A Gyte commented that the Youth Football Club has keys on match days. For future discussion.

2024/146 **Reports & Questions**

a. Update from Sqn Leader S Geary

Sqn Ldr Geary was accompanied by Vikki Quamina, the relatively new community officer. Her email is: victoria.quamina.1.gb@us.af.mil

Sqn Ldr Geary is responsible for the military operations side of things, Vikki for community contact/ projects.

Apologised for being late, the pair had to attend the Brandon meeting first.

In addition to the continuing operational commitments and the routine training sorties required to retain currency and competency on the aircraft, 48FW aircraft participated in Exercise Atlantic Trident in the UK, conducted an Exercise in Ghedi, Italy and participated in the Dubai Air Show.

Away from flying operations, The Station hosted the latest UK/US Agile Combat Employment Working Group and 48FW conducted an Active Shooter Exercise in November. The Wing also successfully passed an Explosive Safety Inspection in December.

Visits:

RAF Lakenheath continues to attract a plethora of visitors. During November and December, our visitors included the UK Minister for Defence Procurement, the US Deputy Secretary of Defence, the Czech Air Force and the United Services Organisation - The US leading charitable organization in serving active-duty service members and military families – who brought a group of celebrities, including Penn and Teller, to engage with, and perform for, 48FW personnel.

Community Engagement:

48FW supported over 25 events across Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire over the Remembrance weekend. I delivered a presentation on 48FW flying activities and my role as the RAF Commander to a community group in Holt, Norfolk early in November. The USVF hosted a Thanksgiving Service at Ely Cathedral on 22 Nov. And, on 1 Dec 23, 48FW hosted members of the local

community at the Station for a Tree Lighting Ceremony and Yuletide Event.

Looking Forward:

48FW will be conducting night flying activities for 2-weeks starting 8 Jan 24.

Finally, I will be leaving the RAF Commander job in the Spring to take up an appointment at RAF Marham. I'll let you know the name of my replacement as soon as I have their details.

Comment: A resident attending the meeting complained that she is upset by aircraft noise: she - you are flying every day. Very noisy. The F35s arrived and started to fly over the village. You can taste jet fumes in the air in the village. People are developing asthma and anxiety. Pictures are shaking in residents' houses. Many of the people with Alzheimer's are upset by the noise. Over Liberty Gate there was lots of noise today. Panorama is doing a programme on nuclear missiles next week We have the right to a quality of life here Not acceptable to move I have lived here a long time.

Cllr Cahill: My next door neighbour has to wear ear plugs in the Garden

Cllr Cahill: Next litter pick 11am could we have some volunteers please

Cllr Frost:

I did notice a plane over the Cemetery I will

send Sqn Ldr Geary the photograph" Actually I saw the USAF fighter jet flying over the village while I was chatting with the American lady Tracy. I took a picture in the cemetery shortly after that and date and time are included with every picture taken so I could use it to approximately give the timing for the flyover from just before.

Cllr Kelly: I think you can get the feel of the meeting (read out the comment at 2024/145 (i) Clerk to forward email and photos to Sqn Ldr Geary

Sqn Ldr Geary commented that unless the air crew are doing something wrong, nothing is laid down in Law that they have to avoid the village However, out of courtesy, the pilots largely try and avoid flying over housing.

These are non-enforceable regulations; this is the first time in a long time that Sqn Ldr Geary has had any complaints. He will look into.

Sqn Ldr Geary and V. Quamina left the meeting

- b. Update from West Suffolk District Councillor Gerald Kelly
- c. Busy with budget setting and all the rest. The driver for expenditure is getting things right. None of the councils seem to be working as they should, need to make sure we get the basics right. There are big issues around homelessness and housing– draft consultation going out soon. Increased demand for affordable housing. Public Records Office, West Suffolk did decide not to continue with Hub, we did say we would do the best we could. There may be another way of maintaining what we've got. Cabinet meeting tomorrow afternoon and I will be raising the subject.
 - Q. Old School?
 - A. 2025 opening is slightly optimistic. S106 money just goes into a pot, the money is there.
 - Q. Complaints about the state the village was in over last Summer. Did I read that there is only going to be one cut a year?.
 - A. West Suffolk will have to step in and get something done.

Q. Coming out of Woodcutters Way you can't see to the left.

A. The land is owned by Bennetts. Clerk to ask Bennetts to clear.

d. Update from Suffolk County Councillor Colin Noble

Doing budgets, you probably read in the papers, costs are up 20%, partly due to increase in National minimum wage increase. Tough choices have had to be made: ending funding to Arts in a years time. Theatres/ Arts are important but set against a family with issues I would help the family.

C/Cllr Noble confirmed the closure of Bury St Edmunds Records Centre. Records to go to The Hold in Ipswich, which is a World class heritage centre. A shame but necessary. Most of the money that Suffolk County Council spend is not the precept but government grants. Met with Nick Timothy today. Government putting more money into pothole repair.

Budget debate on 15th February 2024.

Q. Can Highways do the pothole outside the School?

A. On the list. A round yellow marking denotes patch repair, whereas with a square marking the workmen cut out and effect a permanent repair.

Quicker crews do the patch repairs which will be properly repaired in time. No body is suggesting that a temporary repair will last.

Q. I am a member of local History Group, shame to see another facility going.

A. Yes

Q. News on School?

A. Depends on housing, which has slowed. If interest rates stabilise, if some cheaper mortgage rates come through, may improve. The Hyde Housing estate will probably be built before the school. Takes about 18 months once you break ground. All have had problems, down to how hot the market is.

Long term, not known. All new schools are run by an Academy Trust, and the new school will be the same.

Q. What's happening to the old school?

A. Long term the plan is for the school to be moved; the site is substandard. It is not really a County decision. It sounds bizarre but the way in which the thing is structured with the academy Trust, that will be run by the Trust. We have already appointed the Academy Trust, I know as I sat on the Panel picking the Academy Trust.

Q. Could you confirm that it will be run by an Academy Trust?

A. All new schools are taken over by Academy Trusts. You are legally obliged by Suffolk County Council to hand the new schools over to an Academy Trust.

Q. Our understanding was that, as far as early years was concerned, the primary school bit was going to stay County.

A. Your understanding is wrong then. Need to talk to your officers and they need to understand how the system works.

Next Saturday C/Cllr Noble will host another Men's Shed 10am and Tim Passmore, the Police Crime Commissioner, will attend.

(Received after the meeting: *Chairman's note: The School, Governors and Suffolk CC Education have subsequently confirmed that Lakenheath Community Primary School will remain a Local Authority maintained school and **not** transfer to a Trust.*)

Cllr Noble left the meeting

2024/147 **Confirmation of accuracy of the Minutes of the LPC Meeting held on 4th December 2023**

The Minutes from the meeting held on 4th December 2023 were unanimously **APPROVED** with no changes. Clerk to publish draft minutes within 10 working days of the meeting, if possible.

2024/148 **Payment of Accounts (APPENDIX A)**

- a. RFO Report: **NOTED**
- b. The Payments of Accounts was **AGREED**. Delegated authority to RFO **AGREED**
- c. The Bank Reconciliation was **NOTED and APPROVED**
- d. The Precept calculations were **NOTED and APPROVED**
- e. The 2024/25 Precept was considered.

The Chairman explained that with the number of exempt USAF personnel, the number of tax payers falls and consequently the burden falls on tax payers. The Chief Executive at West Suffolk is taking this forward. Bury residents pay less and have many more facilities.

It was **RESOLVED to APPROVE a precept increase of 2.45%.**

The Chairman and the Clerk signed the Precept Application form.

2024/149 **Parish Report-** Chairman/ Clerk on recent and forthcoming issues/ topics

- a. Update on New School (tarmac figures footpath) covered previously
- b. Update on old school building: clearly until they move there is no point in seeking an ACV
- c. To Note: there was no Planning Sub Committee meeting in December 2023
- d. Update on Royal Mail poor service (i.e., late receipt of post) Royal Mail continue to maintain that this was an isolated issue. Please would Councillors keep an eye on.

2024/150 **Lakenheath Parish Councillor/ Officer Reports**

To receive reports

- a. Business forum (Cllr W Overy) not present, had given apologies
- b. Environmental update: Lead Councillor Cllr J Cahill has bought a plaque. There is a litter pick 3rd arranged for 3rd Feb 2024. Thanks to the Councillors for all their voluntary help.
- c. Mobile network infrastructure (Cllr Frost) on going.
- d. Lakenheath Streetlights Lead Councillor Cllr I Frost reported that Pearce and Kemp have visited for an evaluation. LPC has submitted the Expression of Interest papers for the West Suffolk Council Carbonisation Initiative. This is to replace sodium lights with LEDs saving money, lower maintenance. LPC want to get all the lights. West Suffolk Street Lighting fund is the "Decarbonisation Initiative Fund, carbonisation would be making the lights emit more CO2.
- e. SID Report (PAPER C will follow) Note: Sent to Cllrs 16.01.2024
- f. Speedwatch team: Lead Councillor Cllr P Gyte reported that this is not a parish council initiative, however it is supported by the Parish Council. The team members have not been out much due to bad weather and illness

- g. Tree maintenance project update: Lead Councillor Hugo told the meeting that quotes are being received and she will present at February 2024 meeting.
- h. The Officer's report: Post occupancy condition of 17 Cemetery Road Lakenheath was **RECEIVED**. It was Noted that the cottage had been returned to the Parish Council in a poor condition, having been renovated and completely refurbished approximately four years ago. Carpets, lino, doors, kitchen units, and walls will need to be replaced or redecorated. It is not possible to consider renting out 17 Cemetery Road in its present condition.
Cllr Alan Gyte is Lead Councillor on the Refurbishment Programme and he is obtaining quotations for the required work for consideration at the next Parish Council meeting.
It was Noted that the oil tank was dry, it has now been partially filled to allow a low heat at the cottage to protect against the cold weather.
The oil filled radiators bought by the Parish Council during the Winter of 2022/3 may be in the outbuildings, although they are not immediately evident, clerk to search and check.
- i. Neighbourhood Plan/ High Street Regeneration Plans Cllr Kelly reported that anything to do with tables (i.e. elongated speed bumps) will not be acceptable. All the Councillors, bar Cllr Rowntree, have had the opportunity to view the draft plans.

2024/151 **Matters relating to Lakenheath Cemetery**

- a. Cemetery Committee Report
Cllr Iain Frost reported that he had met an American woman at the Cemetery and she had commented that the Cemetery "looks beautiful".
Gaps in the hedge remain and the gate needs repainting.
There are some sunken graves due to natural causes, the infill is in hand, and the work will be carried out shortly.
There are many Christmas tributes etc left on the graves, relatives/ friend to be asked to remove these prior to March 1st 2024. A Notice to be placed on the noticeboard.
- b. Bay emptying: Cllr Hugo reported that this is in hand.

2024/152 **Grant Requests**

- a. Consolidated Charities Allotment fencing: next meeting. It was Noted that the Committee want to use sweet chestnut palings.
- b. Recreation Ground fence, deferred from the last meeting. This was not on earlier Agendas as notification of attendance came after the agenda went out. The Committee have supplied a new quote which is cheaper. Like for like fencing is to be used (wood with metal straps at the top) and more professional accounts have been received.
Q. Will the wood be treated with preservative?
A. Yes, by the Committee
Q. Has the Committee carried out any fundraising towards the fence?
A. No. We do run some events such as the Village Fete etc but revenue from that only covers our outgoings incurred by running the building.

The Playing Fields are a very visible part of the village gateway and a dilapidated, unkempt fence does not give a good impression.

It was **PROPOSED** that £5,515 is granted by LPC to pay for the Recreation Ground fence. This was unanimously **APPROVED**.

2024/153 **Emergency Plan**

- a. To consider the LPC Emergency Plan. To be discussed at the Town and Parish Forum in March 2024, in the context of the Third National Adaptation Programme (NAP3). This report sets out the actions that government and others will take to adapt to the impacts of climate change from 2023 to 2028. The government has said that communities should make assumptions that issues such as adverse weather will continue. Communities are best placed to deal with situations. Cllr Kelly will ask Tim Wilding to come to us and discuss after the Town and Parish Forum in March 2024.

2024/154 **Matters relating to Governance**

- a. Councillors examined current Cemetery fees i.e., for burial, interment and headstones.
It is evident that Lakenheath Cemetery is cheaper than many other providers.
Needs to consider the long-term ongoing costs of maintenance.
Clerk to report back to the next meeting with figures for 10%, 20%, 30% and 40% actual figures, rounded up to an appropriate amount.
- b. The review of the LPC Standing Orders was deferred at the Clerks request
- c. The LPC Financial Regulations were reviewed and unanimously **AGREED**
- d. The LPC Complaints Policy was reviewed and unanimously **AGREED**
- e. The LPC Data Protection Policy was reviewed and unanimously **AGREED**

2024/155 **Playground faults identified by Play Inspection Co.**

- a. Project Lead Councillor Cllr M Rowntree: the meeting with 1A play had to be cancelled and is being rearranged.
It was **AGREED** that the vandalised bench should be removed. Cllrs A Gyte and Cllr N Smith agreed to remove the bench.
There is a metal bench at the back of the Cemetery which could be used as a substitute.

Q. Who owns the car park at the toilets, it was flooded?

A. It is maintained by West Suffolk Council

2024/156 **Items for Future Meetings**

- a. Who owns eyesore opposite the Church
- b. Telephone box outside the Library
- c. Near Memorial- verge has been cut back leaving metal rods sticking out
A potential hazard: but thought to be a deterrent to parking
- d. Review of Lakenheath Times
- e. Review of Crime figures
- f. Parking officers in December came to Lakenheath 131 times and issued 10 Penalty Notices. Cllr Kelly to query these figures.

2024/157 **Such other business which, in the opinion of the Chairman,** should be considered as a matter of urgency: none

2024/158 **Information**

Clerk has purchased a secure key safe as keys need to be identified and stored securely. Cllr A Gyte offered to fix this to the office wall.

2024/159 **MATTERS TO BE TAKEN UNDER EXEMPTION**

It is recommended that in view of the confidential nature of the following items, which relates to business/ confidential matters of other individuals, the public shall be excluded while the following item is discussed. This is in accordance to the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960, as amended by the Local Government Act 1972

The public left the meeting

9.02 meeting closed