

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF LAKENHEATH PARISH COUNCIL

HELD AT THE METHODIST CHURCH CHAPEL ON MONDAY 1st AUGUST 2016.

Present: - Messrs D Gathercole (Chairman)

D Durrant

Mrs Gyte

I Frost

Mrs Whitehand

R Norman

J Gentle

Sqdn Ldr Neild and 3 members of the public were also present.

The Chairman opened the meeting and asked for the agenda to be varied. All agreed.

6. Reports from:-

(a) RAF Commander Lakenheath

Sqdn Ldr Neild said that there was not a lot to report. The amount of flying today was indicative of the rest of August. He added that there had been planning application discussions with the DIO, a statutory consultee, who have made comments on some proposals. DIO will now come in with their comments and are conscious of the time constraints. They may touch on noise and recovery paths.

Cllr Gyte asked if concerns and comments would be made before Wednesday's Development & Control Committee meeting at FHDC.

Sqdn Ldr Neild said that a draft should go out tonight and added that the DIO have walked some of the ground. He gave his apologies for the September meeting

The Chairman thanked Sqdn Ldr Neild and he left the meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence

Councillors Lucas, Morley, Brown and Marston.

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Gyte – Lakenheath Good Neighbours and Trustee Lakenheath Peace Memorial Hall.

Cllr Gathercole – Lakenheath Playingfields and Youth Club.

Cllr Frost – Friends of Lakenheath Library.

Cllr Whitehand – Lakenheath Junior Youth Club, Lakenheath Carnival and Lakenheath Playingfields Association.

Cllr Durrant – James Waters Ltd

3. Police Matters

The clerk said that Sgt Jason Francis had responded that the increased crime in Lakenheath was in particular at the Lords Walk area adjacent to RAF Lakenheath. Since 1st March 2016 there had been 34 offences where metal items had been targeted. Suffolk Constabulary has responded to these thefts with extra patrols in the area along with colleagues from the MOD Police.

Cllr Norman said that residents paid for policing in Lakenheath. ASB was not dealt with and residents are being very short changed.

Cllr Gyte said that the police shifts now finish at 6pm and that they no longer address parking issues.

Cllr Gentle said that the matter should be taken up with the Commissioner.

Cllr Gyte said that she would do this on behalf of the Parish Council.

Action Point – Cllr Gyte to contact the Police Commissioner.

4. Confirmation of Minutes of Meetings held on 4th July 2016

It was proposed to accept minutes. All present at the meeting of the 4th July agreed.

5. Representations from Members of the Public

There were none.

6. Reports from:-

(b) Forest Heath District Council to include Celtic Cross & Dog Waste Bin – Roebuck Drive

The clerk read a report from Cllr Brown:

The 'Waymarked Trail' at the Warren namely the Nature Trail set up for children in the main and accessed from the Warren car-park is practically impassable in place. Additionally, after struggling through the gate onto the fenced area it is so overgrown that it is difficult to pass through it. Have Forest Heath abandoned the upkeep of the Warren? Yet it is cited on many occasions on the major proposed development sites for the village. The signs on the gate at Broom Road say the SSSI site is managed by Forest Heath. Forest Heath have advised that they merely rent the car park and upkeep is the responsibility of Elveden Estates. Please can our District Councillor find out for sure who is responsible and arrange the necessary please? A member of the public kindly cut the grass around the picnic tables so that they are now usable.

Cllr Gentle suggested that the clerk contact FHDC.

The chairman said that a willow tree is blocking the view for motorists leaving High Gravel Drove and asked the clerk to contact FHDC.

The clerk read a letter from a resident regarding the new signage at the take-away opposite St Mary's Church. She advised that she had contacted enforcement at FHDC who will investigate.

Cllr Gentle said that a residential property in Barr Drive seemed to be used commercially. It was proposed to contact enforcement at FHDC to investigate. All agreed.

Cllr Gyte said that fencing around the car park in Wings Road was falling down, exposing nails.

Action Point – Clerk to contact FHDC regarding the 'Waymarked Trail'.

Action Point – Clerk to contact FHDC regarding the willow tree at the junction of B1112 and High Gravel Drove.

Resolution – Clerk to contact FHDC enforcement regarding property in Barr Drive.

Action Point – Clerk to contact FHDC regarding the fencing around the Wings Road car park.

(c) Suffolk County Council

The clerk reported that SCC are still investigating the overgrown hedge at the Mill Road, Wings Road junction.

Cllr Gentle said that vegetation was now covering the 30MPH signs as you enter Lakenheath on Station Road.

Action Point – Clerk to report overgrown vegetation on Station Road.

7. Street Lighting including replacement of unit 96, Mutford Green & unit 235, Eriswell Road

The clerk said that she had not received any response to emails chasing the report on concrete columns.

The clerk advised that two street light units required replacement. Unit 96 in Mutford Green and unit 235 in Eriswell Road. SCC had provided quotations at £1,397.41 + VAT for LED units.

It was proposed to accept. All agreed.

Resolution – Clerk to arrange replacement of units 96 and 235.

8. Matters Arising from Minutes not elsewhere on the Agenda

The clerk advised that Network Rail had responded to advise that they are in the process of demolishing the signal box at Lakenheath Station.

The clerk advised that the solar farm purchase is in commercially sensitive contract negotiation at this time and as such a briefing to the Parish Council will be arranged once and if the purchase proceeds.

Cllr Durrant said that he had been told at the last meeting that he must sit and say nothing about planning. Following advice, he will declare his interest and state his employer. As such, Rabbithill Covert is the only application he cannot speak on.

9. Planning Matters:-

(a) To receive report from Planning Committee

(b) To consider any other outstanding applications and matters including Lakenheath Hall

(c) Planning / Development and Legal Process Update

The clerk read Cllr Brown's report:

Applications supported

1. DC/16/1273/TPO – 17 Birch Close, Lakenheath Scots pine with TPO to remove lowest lateral limb back to main trunk and sever Ivy.
2. DC/16/1367/HH – Householder Planning Application – detached garage – 20 Wingfield Avenue
3. DC/16/1253/FUL - 15A Back Street, Lakenheath - Planning Application - 1no. dwelling and detached garage (following demolition of existing dwelling and attached garage) with a question as to whether the old Stable Block should be retained as in the conservation area.

Supported with reservations

1. DC/13/0660/FUL - Resubmission Land off Briscoe Way provision of 67 dwellings. This case is increasing the green space by 10% approx. from the original layout reducing plots sizes as a result. We confirmed that we supported a development on this site, although it is outside the current village boundary. However, we were concerned over the parking facilities which do not appear to meet current regulations. There are not sufficient spaces to cover all of the properties let alone visitors and service providers. In addition, the planning subcommittee were also concerned that the modified site layout had become cramped and now seemed over developed; with the increase in Green Spaces the penalty is smaller plots. Other major concerns still relate to the cumulative impact on highways, health provision and public transport of which you are all aware.

Applications not supported

1. DC/16/1233/FUL - 37 Eriswell Road, Lakenheath - Planning Application - 1no. dwelling with detached garage and associated vehicular access. This case we originally supported with many conditions. FHDC turned it down which was supported at appeal to PINS. Nothing appears now to have changed.
2. DC/16/1300/FUL – 44 High Street, Lakenheath - Planning Application - Conversion of property from residential (class C3) to mixed use, restaurant (class A3) on the ground floor and residential (class C3) on first floor- Parking needs better consideration as the High Street is already overcrowded early evening. 8 spaces being made available is insufficient. The driveway entrance is too close to the zebra crossing for access and egress to parking area. Who will occupy the upstairs residential area as two parking spaces are likely to be lost as a result?
3. DC/14/2096/HYB – Land North of Station Road – re-consultation in relation to Aviation advice – Our response was that a holding order had been placed on the case by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (MOD) which had stated that the report did not satisfactorily address the issue of noise. The MOD requested a full noise assessment as a result. We reserved our right to make comment on this item once such a report was available.

Applications in circulation

1. DC/16/1336/FUL and DC/16/1360/OUT- Land at Little Eriswell Road From A1065 To Norfolk County Boundary Eriswell Suffolk - Planning Application - (i) Provision of balancing ponds adjacent to the Cut-off Channel (ii) Use of existing Woodlands as public open space and Outline Planning Application (Means of Access to be considered) - (i) Up to 550 dwellings (ii) Primary School (iii) Retail unit (iv) Associated open and play space, allotments, landscaping and infrastructure works.
2. DC/16/1405/HH – 22 Wingfield Road, Lakenheath – single storey extension on north elevation

We need to have a meeting to discuss these cases please. Thursday evening can that work for the Subcommittee please?

Lakenheath Hall All I can say is that the tidy up operation continues and we await a revised planning application for larger dwellings.

Major Developments Last month was a busy month. This will include where the services of Richard Buxton have been utilised.

Lakenheath Parish with the help of our travel consultant provided a representation on the revised highways cumulative impact report prepared by consultants employed by Suffolk County Council. In short the recommendations to mitigate the choke points within that report are undeliverable. In addition, there were inconsistencies in the base data from previous reports provided. We just do not know which detail is the correct detail. Finally, it did not take into account traffic movement in the event that Tesco site remains as a retail unit per current planning consent.

Necton Management and Land adjacent to 34 Broom Road to provide 120 dwellings – We have now submitted our statement of case via the Solicitors. In short we supported the site but still have to overcome the cumulative impacts relating to health, education and Highways. We have no mitigation to cover these items. This is relevant to all the major cases.

FHDC bought the Necton application to committee mid-month and in effect stated that had they the ability to now assess the case it would be refused approval. The planning officer felt that in the main the site was too close to a SSSI site without mitigation for diverting leisure and recreation areas to prevent possible damage to the Warren which is to be preserved. The report provided two tables namely the benefits of the site and the dis-benefits of the proposals. These will form the basis of the District Councils Statement of case. Nothing else can now occur till January 2017 when witness statements are prepared prior to the PINS hearing in February 2017.

As reported last month there was to be an extraordinary meeting of Development and Control to bring the Pigeon Site to committee. In addition, the applicant provided an aviation report on which we were consulted. The meeting was cancelled at the last minute because on the 11th July the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) on behalf of the MoD, asked for a holding order and requested that a Noise Impact Assessment be submitted. This was to ensure that the Local Planning Authority are in a position to fully consider the impact of noise from RAF Lakenheath on the proposed development, in which case they can objectively assess any concerns that might be raised on such grounds, including those of the MoD. This is something that we as a Parish have been requesting since the application was first brought to the table. We responded to the consultation on the aviation reports on the basis that we agreed with the DIO and would not provide comments until a new assessment was provided. The current report relying on information from Wikipedia and assumptions without true facts.

In the meantime, the planning application is now scheduled to be discussed at the Development and Control meeting scheduled for Wednesday evening. I will make representation on behalf of the parish. In the meantime, a letter has today been submitted with representations via Richard Buxton which we hope will mean that the case is deferred. Bringing this to committee has to be against the spirit of investigations and further information required before consideration is made by FHDC. Our only option was to make legal representations.

Second school for Lakenheath Last month Suffolk County Council admitted to us in an email that they have never received a report from their consultants Concertus as to the best suitable site for our second school. On the 11th July we wrote to Suffolk County Council reminding them of their shortcomings via the Solicitors. Coincidentally on the same day they in turn wrote to Concertus requesting various items that we have been asking for over the last two years or so. This covered a scoping opinion to include an environmental assessment, cumulative impacts, detail on noise and vibration, current and proposed, air quality etc.

The Tesco Site Nothing further to report at this time.

Hatchfield Farm Enquiry Still no results.

The Vision Statement This is now available on the web site. Hopefully the Parish will engage with the contents and we will receive some feedback.

Legal Progress Update I believe that I have advised of the continuing use of the Solicitors expertise in relation to the items already mentioned.

Cllr Gentle said that he couldn't understand how the Broom Road site would affect the SSSI and it doesn't seem to make sense. He added that there seems to be a determination to develop the Station Road site.

The Chairman said that it was not within the Parish Council remit to get involved and that Necton Management would have their day in court.

Cllr Gentle asked how people are supposed to access the Station Road site safely. Along with the flooding issues it doesn't make sense.

The Chairman said that this is why the Parish Council are employing a barrister.

Cllr Gentle said that Yellow Door and the contractors are doing an excellent job at Lakenheath Hall and it was a pity that they were previously stopped. They could have finished two months ago.

10. Lakenheath Cemetery

(a) To receive a Cemetery Report

Cllr Whitehand said that everything was neat and tidy and that two of the graves with unauthorised items had been cleared. One still remained.

Cllr Durrant said that he would visit the family this week. He added that one of the rubbish bunkers is full.

Action Point – Clerk to arrange for bunker to be emptied.

(b) To confirm Grant of Exclusive Rights of Burial

There were none.

(c) Unauthorised items on Graves & Cemetery Regulations (ceramic photographs)

Cllr Durrant said that he had measured the existing ceramic photographs at 50mm diameter.

It was proposed to allow ceramic photographs to a maximum size of 50mm in diameter. All agreed.

Resolution – Ceramic photographs to be permitted on memorials to a maximum size of 50mm in diameter.

(d) To discuss/approve cemetery fees wef 1st September 2016

The clerk had provided a revised list of fees and payments with an increase of 2%, rounding to the nearest pound.

It was proposed to introduce the revised fees wef 1st September. All agreed.

Resolution – Revised cemetery fees to take effect from 1st September 2016.

(e) Hedge Cutting

The clerk had obtained a quotation of £1,800 + VAT from CGM Group to cut the exterior of the perimeter hedge and to reduce the height to 1.8 metres.

Cllr Durrant asked if this covered the whole perimeter including the new cemetery.

The clerk said that she would check.

Councillors agreed that it seemed a very good price and it was proposed to accept the quotation without the need for an additional two. All agreed

Resolution – Clerk to check that the whole perimeter hedge is included, if so to instruct CGM Group to cut and reduce height down to 1.8 metres. £1,800 + VAT quotation accepted without the need for a further two quotations.

(f) Risk Assessment

The clerk presented a risk assessment for Lakenheath Cemetery. It was proposed to accept and all agreed.

Resolution – Cemetery risk assessment accepted and duly signed by the Chairman.

11. Financial Matters including:-

(a) Payments of Accounts

It was proposed to accept expenditure as listed and all agreed.

Cllr Durrant asked if it might be appropriate to have a maintenance contract on the mower.

(b) Bank Reconciliation

A bank reconciliation for 30th June 2016 was presented. It was proposed to accept and all agreed.

12. Parking Enforcement

With Cllr Brown absent it was agreed to table for next month.

Cllr Norman said that parking had been decriminalised and that other parts of the country were employing parking wardens. However, it seemed to help major towns but not smaller parishes.

Cllr Gyte said that illegal parking was dangerous.

Action Point – Parking Enforcement tabled for September meeting.

13. Village Sign

The clerk had received a request from a resident to tidy up the area on the footpath next to the village sign. He had suggested curbing to match that around the sign and for new planting.

It was agreed for the clerk to investigate prices and to report back to full council. Councillors also asked for a letter of thanks to be sent to Mr Ian Smith for all his hard work.

Action Point – Clerk to investigate prices for curbing against path at village sign green and to send thanks to Mr Ian Smith.

14. Litter Bins

The clerk read an email from the Friends of Lakenheath Library regarding the litter bin outside the library. She had approached FHDC to have it replaced and they had suggested the possibility of replacing all litter bins in the High Street. To replace all 9 litter bins including those in the car park would cost approximately £4,500 + VAT including fitting. FHDC have asked for the Parish Council's proposal and contribution. The Parish Council would then have a say on the type of bin.

It was proposed that all 9 bins are replaced and the Parish Council meets half the cost. All agreed.

Resolution – Proposal to go to FHDC to replace all 9 litter bins and for the Parish Council to meet half the cost.

15. Consultations:-

(a) Upper Orwell Crossing

It was proposed to make no comment. All agreed.

Resolution – No response to be given to Upper Orwell Crossing Consultation.

(b) Highways England – Road Investment Strategy

Cllr Durrant said that money had been spent on five-ways but congestion was worse.

Cllr Gyte suggested traffic lights were required even if only at certain times.

Cllr Whitehand said that the road markings should be redone correctly.

Cllr Norman suggested speed bumps approaching the roundabout northbound.

The Chairman suggested a speed camera.

It was proposed to respond with the above suggestions. All agreed.

Resolution – Response to Highways England – Road Investment Strategy as above.

(c) Devolution

After discussion it was proposed to make no comment. Voting 4 in favour and 2 against.

Resolution – No response to be given to Devolution Consultation.

(d) Greenspace Strategy

After discussion it was proposed that the planning sub-committee should respond on behalf of the Parish Council. All agreed.

Resolution – Planning sub-committee to respond to the Greenspace Strategy Consultation on behalf of the Parish Council.

16. Speed-Watch & Vehicle Activated Sign

Cllr Gyte said that she had reported last month that four sites had been turned down. Following a visit on the 15th of July, all sites have been reassessed and an opinion given that all are good. Overhead cables did not affect the camera but the 30MPH signs were too near to the Woodlands site but it could be moved over the road to Drift Road, to catch the traffic going out of the village. Training is due to start in September.

The clerk read a response from the SCC Road Safety Manager who is trying to complete the works required to further the application for a Vehicle Activated Sign.

17. HM the Queen's 90th Birthday – Commemorative Elm Trees

The clerk had received a request from a resident to plant elm trees in Elm Close to commemorate the Queen's 90th birthday.

The Chairman said that 30 years on there would be complaints about them being too tall and killing the grass.

Cllrs Durrant and Gyte suggested a more public area.

Cllr Whitehand said that she would prefer to see a bench or seat to commemorate the Queen's 90th Birthday.

Cllr Gyte suggested again a more public area for trees with a commemorative plaque.

It was proposed to respond to the resident asking him for suggestions on other sites. All agreed.

Resolution – Clerk to respond to resident asking for alternative site suggestions for commemorative trees.

19. Fly Posting

The clerk said that she had received a complaint from a resident about the increasing amount of fly posting.

Cllr Whitehand said that even events outside of the village were being seen and that she wouldn't mind taking anything down. She added that the persons responsible should be tackled.

Cllr Gyte suggested that a polite notice in the Lakenheath Times asking the community to tackle might help.

It was proposed to place an article in the September edition. All agreed.

Resolution – Cllr Gyte to place an article in the Lakenheath Times regarding Fly Posting.

20. Items for Future Meetings

- Parking Enforcement

21. Such other business which, in the opinion of the Chairman, should be considered as a matter of urgency

There was none.

22. To note date of next Meeting – Monday 5th September 2016

Members of the public were asked to leave the meeting.

19. Cemetery/Village Keeper review*

The clerk advised that the final day of employment for the part-time village keeper was 1st September 2016.

It was proposed to present farewell gifts to a maximum of £50. All agreed

The clerk said that FHDC could take over the play area monthly inspections wef from September until March 2017 at a cost of £164.50 + VAT.

It was proposed to instruct FHDC accordingly. All agreed.

The clerk said that Sunrise Services could start with a deep clean to the toilets in week commencing 5th September 2016 at a cost of £72.00 followed by a twice weekly clean at a cost of £24 per visit. They would require a contract.

It was proposed to accept the quotations from Sunrise Services and for the Chairman to sign a contract. All agreed.

Resolution – Farewell gifts to be presented to a maximum of £50.

Resolution – Clerk to instruct FHDC to carry out the monthly play area inspection wef from September.

Resolution – Clerk to instruct Sunrise Services for an initial deep clean of the toilets followed by a two weekly visit. Chairman to sign a contract accordingly.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:40 pm.