

Minutes of the Lakenheath Parish Council Annual General Meeting

Methodist Church Chapel on Monday 8th May 2017 at 7.00pm

Present:- Messrs D Gathercole (Chairman) Mrs Whitehand

D Durrant Mrs Gyte

E Morley Mrs Lucas

R Norman Mrs Brown

J Gentle

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

1. Election of Chairman and to Receive Declaration of Acceptance of Office

The Chairman resigned from the Parish Council, returning all keys and documents to the Clerk. He went on to ask for nominations.

Cllr Durrant proposed Cllr Morley and was seconded by Cllr Brown.

With no other nominations, all agreed.

The declaration of office was signed by Cllr Morley and the clerk.

Mr Gathercole left the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Clr Frost.

3. To Consider Approval of Councillor's Absences*

There were none.

4. Declarations of Interest

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

Cllr Gyte – Lakenheath Good Neighbours and Lakenheath Consolidated Charities.

Cllr Brown – Lakenheath Youth FC Treasurer.

Cllr Lucas – Sutton Services Ltd and Lakenheath Playingfields Association (Elveden Estates).

Cllr Norman – Village Hall.

Clr Durrant – James Waters Ltd.

4. Election of Vice Chairman

The Chairman asked for nominations.

Cllr Lucas proposed Cllr Whitehand and was seconded by Cllr Gyte. Voting 2 in favour.

Cllr Brown expressed concerns about Cllr Whitehand's attendance.

Cllr Whitehand withdrew from nomination.

The clerk explained that the Parish Council may, but need not, appoint a vice-chair.

Cllr Gyte asked for clarification on the responsibilities of the vice-chair.

Cllr Morley explained and asked for further nominations.

Cllr Brown proposed Cllr Gyte and was seconded by Cllr Norman.

With no other nominations, all agreed.

The declaration of office was signed by Cllr Gyte and the clerk.

6. Police Matters

Cllr Norman said that he had witnessed a broken down car right on the bend of Sharpes Corner. A police car had stopped and then continued to move on without any help, leaving the vehicle in a dangerous position.

Cllr Gyte said that Inspector Mark Shipton was attending the Annual Parish Meeting and questions could be raised then.

Cllr Durrant said that PCSO Chittock was back in the locality concentrating on Anti-Social Behaviour.

7. Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting held on 3rd April 2017

It was proposed to accept minutes. All present at the April meeting agreed.

8. Representations from Member of the Public

There were none.

9. Reports & Questions:-

(a) RAF Commander Lakenheath

Sqdn Ldr Neild said that the F35s had arrived; for some this was a surprise. Traffic nuisance was kept to a minimum and it seemed to go well. The F35s have now departed, after their first successful deployment into Europe. There is only one squadron remaining at present but their presence will be felt this week. With many of the aircraft away, it should then quieten down.

Cllr Norman asked if there was any truth in the Bury Free Press article regarding RAF Mildenhall not closing until 2023.

Sqdn Ldr Neild said that the original announcement had been closure before 2023 and that 2022 is being worked towards. There is a great deal of work and planning going on and this news just adds to the uncertainty.

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

(b) Forest Heath District Council to include Revenue Support Grant

Cllr Brown said that it had been ascertained some years ago that FHDC were provided with a grant from Central Government towards the cost of services provided to visiting forces, who are exempt from council tax. At the time, the PC were informed that compensation was included within the Revenue Support Grant and that FHDC had no mechanism to calculate specific amounts. The funds have not been passed to parishes nor are the exempt properties included in the tax base.

She proposed that now the Revenue Support Grant had finished, that the PC approach FHDC and request a proportion of this money due to the high contingent of visiting forces within the community. This would mean that a lower parish precept is paid by the properties included in the tax base. This is why the PC precept is higher here than in other villages.

It was seconded by Cllr Norman and all agreed.

Cllr Brown said that the fence along Wings Road side of the car park had two rotten and broken posts.

The clerk said that she had reported it to FHDC last week and that it was being addressed.

Cllr Gentle said that buildings that had been paid for by FHDC had been passed to the horse racing community. The buildings were supposedly a revenue earner but the income will no longer go to FHDC. He added that he was still yet to receive an answer from Cllr Marston regarding FHDC's commercial ventures and that FHDC seemed obsessed with looking after Newmarket.

Cllr Brown said that FHDC had announced they are pleased with the power being generated by the solar farm.

Resolution - Contact FHDC regarding payment of a grant for visiting forces.

(c) Suffolk County Council to include Footpath Link

Cllr Brown said that the works in the High Street brought to question why there is no disabled parking available in the High Street. She proposed contacting SCC highways, asking for consideration for spaces in the most central point, outside the post office.

Cllr Gyte said that it was a fair distance from the car park to the High Street, where the only disabled parking is located.

It was seconded by Cllr Whitehand who added that the issue had been raised with SCC a few years ago and all agreed.

10. Matters Arising from Minutes not elsewhere on the Agenda

There were none.

11. Planning Matters:-

(a) To receive report from Planning Sub-Committee including a Town & Parish Forum Update

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

Cllr Brown gave her report:

Applications supported

1. DC/17/0543/HH - Householder Planning Application - Single storey rear extension - 8 Highfields Drive, Lakenheath
2. DC/17/0648/FUL - Planning Application - (i) 1no. dwelling (following demolition of part of existing garage), (ii) new access for donor property and associated parking - Four Bays 6 Back Street Lakenheath. The case has since been withdrawn
3. DC/17/0442/FUL - Planning Application - 1no. dwelling with associated access – 5 Wings Road, Lakenheath
4. DC/17/0728/HH - Householder Planning Application - Single storey front extension - 20A The Firs, Lakenheath

Applications supported with conditions

1. DC/17/0590/FUL - Planning Application - (i) 3no. dwellings; (ii) associated amenity space and access - Land Behind Sharpes Corner Bungalows Sharpes Corner Lakenheath supported this as previous objections had created adjustments subject to the access between plots 5 & 6 being properly surfaced with a bound material from the edge of the metalled carriageway.

Applications not supported

1. DC/17/0592/FUL - Planning Application - 1no. dwelling – 43 Mill Road
2. DC/17/0727/TCA - Trees in a Conservation Area Notification - 1no. Yew (T2 on plan) fell and replace with a Silver Birch – 47 High Street, Lakenheath. Not supported because this is an ancient Yew in the conservation area of the Village. Not good enough reason given to fell this.

Applications in circulation

1. DC/17/0418/TCA - Trees in a Conservation Area Notification - (i) 1 no. Horse Chestnut (A on plan) - removing overhanging branches by 3 metres long (ii) 1 no. Cedar (B on plan) - reduce height by 3 metres (iii) 1 no. Cedar (C on plan) - Fell (iv) 1 no. Cedar (D on plan) - reduce height by 4 metres (v) 1 no. Cedar (E on plan) - reduce height by 4 metres and (vi) 5 no. Pine trees (L-F on plan) - Fell - The Manor Garden Hall Drive Lakenheath
2. DC/17/0785/HH - Householder Planning Application - Dropped kerb and hardstanding – 35 Mill Road, Lakenheath

The case last month for 4 dwellings on the junction of Mill Road and Wings Road has now been withdrawn as Forest Heath indicated to the applicant that consent is unlikely to be forthcoming. I am advised that it is likely to be resubmitted with only two houses, which is more in line with the Planning Sub-committee's suggestion.

The application for a dwelling in the plot behind the Doctors Surgery has been refused by FHDC, by reason of its size and layout, which would constitute a cramped and inappropriate form of development within the street scene, harmful to the character and appearance of the area.

Major Developments: There is nothing further to report. I have spoken with the Planning Casework Manager at the NPCU and they still await an update from the MOD as to whether any mitigation measures have yet been found to overcome their objections in relation to nuisances as a result of the RAF Operations.

Tesco Site: It appears that this is now being cleared in readiness for building the residential element intended for plot 2. I have still heard nothing relating to the retail area other than the new owner would ideally like it to remain a retail area. Forest Heath have provided no information.

Enforcement: Pizza house. The latest is that the owner is aware that the shop front is not appropriate and has accepted that it will have to be replaced. Enforcement have provided him with a copy of the shop front guidance and is taking the matter up with his supplier.

44 High Street, the proposed new Japanese Restaurant formerly Wortley's Dairy. I am sure that you all have noticed that the current owners have rendered over the flints on both side elevations. As the building is in the conservation area it was reported to enforcement who inspected the same day but say that there was no one on site at the time, therefore did nothing about the situation. Several days later when we had not received any follow up to their inspection I provided detail as to the contents of the conservation area which clearly sets out that rendering the old brickwork or flint work should be avoided. Under the heading of Flint Rubble Walls, it clearly states that flint rubble or napped flint walls should be preserved and neither painted nor rendered. Enforcement's response to this was that regrettably, due to the hard nature of a cementitious render, attempts undertaken to remove the render are likely to result in disturbing the flints behind, potentially resulting in the requirement of localised reconstruction of the outer flint skin. Due to the nature of flint work it would not be unreasonable to anticipate the extent of reconstruction necessary, once started, could extend some way beyond the area highlighted. Whilst such work could be undertaken, the aesthetic outcome would result in the reinstatement of the previously compromised gable end due to the inconsistent approach to its finish.

Clearly the works undertaken to date are not desirable from a conservation point of view both in terms of aesthetics and with regard to the overall performance of the building; although in the absence of detailed evidence it is possible and not uncommon that the flintwork may already have been repointed using a cement mortar. Due to the extent of render work undertaken, the implications of its removal, together with the extent of a cementitious application already in place to the majority of the elevation, having considered the matter with conservation it is not considered expedient to take further action with regard to this particular element of the enquiry. There you have it. It would seem that the conservation area is not worth conserving. For the future if any one notices works in the conservation area please let me know so that it can be addressed immediately.

Cllr Morley said that clunch walls had also been removed from the rear of the property.

Cllr Whitehand said that there were still some clunch walls remaining on the left, right at the back.

Cllr Gentle said that it all came down to the Conservation Officer.

Cllr Gyte said that the property near to the Pizza House was also a disgrace.

Cllr Brown went on:

Celtic Cross: This is an item now for discussion next month.

Finally, I attended the Town and Parish Forum whose minutes have already been circulated.

The clerk reported that Balmforth were no longer the agents for the rented properties and were unable to provide any further details for Lakenheath Hall.

Cllr Norman reported that the two half built properties are being worked on at Lakenheath Hall but that the whole area needed tidying up again.

Cllr Brown proposed contacting Yellow Door to prompt a tidy up and gain the details of the new agent for the Hall.

It was seconded by Cllr Norman and all agreed.

Resolution - Contact Yellow Door to prompt a tidy up around Lakenheath Hall and to obtain new agent's details.

12. Lakenheath Cemetery

(a) To receive a Cemetery Report

Cllr Whitehand reported that the cemetery is very clean and tidy and that only one grave had added items. The only part that looked slightly messy, due to the wind, was the garden of rest.

Cllr Morley said that the stone pile could be tidier.

Cllr Durrant reported that the Cypress trees look poorly and need to be watered and moved. He will speak to the cemetery keeper and ask him to empty the water butts accordingly.

Cllr Brown asked what problems the unauthorised items on graves would cause now that grass cutting was needed.

Cllr Whitehand said that the cemetery keeper would need to move them to cut the grass.

Cllr Gentle said that sooner or later the cemetery sub-committee would need to address the issue.

Cllr Durrant said that he had not been issued with a copy of the regulations when purchasing a grave.

The clerk reported that other undertakers do issue the packs and that a signed declaration is received from families.

Cllr Durrant proposed contacting Brandon Funeral Services to reinforce that the regulations pack and signed declaration are a requirement.

It was seconded by Cllr Brown and all agreed.

Resolution - Contact Brandon Funeral Services to reinforce requirement for regulation pack and signed declaration.

Action Point - Cllr Durrant to speak to cemetery keeper to move Cypress trees and water.

Action Point - Stone pile to be tidied.

(b) To confirm Grant of Exclusive Rights of Burial

Mr Durrant – 35 Wings Road.

(c) Cottage Insulation

The clerk gave details of budget and reserves for the cemetery cottage totalling £9,000 with £723 already committed. She added that Aaran Services had indicated that the cost of solid wall insulation after receipt of grant payment would be £13,000 to £16,000. She added that a French drain had been laid a few years ago.

There was discussion about the future use of the cemetery cottage and it was agreed to discuss the issue of the cottage and keeper at the June meeting.

Action Point - To discuss Cemetery cottage and keeper at June meeting.

(d) Old Equipment Held in Storage

The clerk reported that the Playingfields Association would like the old equipment but had asked the cost involved.

Cllr Durrant said that he would investigate.

Action Point - Cllr Durrant to investigate value of old equipment held in storage at the cemetery.

13. Lakenheath PlayingFields

(a) Vandalism

The clerk reported that an old bench had been damaged but that it was already in a poor state of repair. The sinks are also being blocked by bottle tops being pushed into the waste pipe. The plugs have been removed to prevent flooding.

Cllr Brown proposed replacing the taps with a push type, with an auto stop mechanism.

It was seconded by Cllr Gyte. Voting 7 in favour and 1 against.

Resolution - Taps to be replaced with a push type with an auto stop mechanism.

(b) Skate Park / MUGA / Toilet Block

The clerk read a statement from the Playingfields Association:

'The Playingfields Association feel that to prevent any further animosity, that the status quo should be retained. We will continue to operate the Skate Park /MUGA. Since the present association took over the process has worked well and we can see no reason to change it at the moment; although it may be appropriate in the future if the climate were to change'.

Cllr Norman reported that the toilet block had been clean and acceptable on Sunday. He added that fly tipping had been cleared from the village.

(c) Annual Grant

The clerk advised that a grant of £3,000 for grass costs had been agreed last year.

Cllr Brown said that the grass was compacted, over rolled and needed water. She understood that an outside contractor may be used. She said that the work was needed as it wasn't very safe for the smaller children.

Cllr Durrant said that maintenance should include water. He was in favour of a grant as long as the grass was maintained.

Cllr Gyte proposed a grant of £3,000.

It was seconded by Cllr Gentle and all agreed.

Resolution - S19 annual grant of £3,000 to Lakenheath Playingfields Association for grass costs.

14. Review of Annual Subscriptions/Memberships

The clerk had previously circulated to each councillor a list of subscriptions and memberships. After discussion Cllr Durrant proposed to leave all in place except the Society of Local Council Clerks. Seconded by Cllr Lucas and all agreed.

Resolution - All subscriptions and memberships except Society of Local Council Clerks to be left in place.

15. S137 applications - Lakenheath Good Neighbours, The Voluntary Network and Lakenheath Indoor Bowls Club.

- Lakenheath Good Neighbours

The clerk read a letter asking for a donation of £250 to top up funds.

Cllr Brown proposed to donate £250. Seconded by Cllr Whitehand and all agreed.

- The Voluntary Network

The clerk read a letter asking for donations.

Cllr Morley asked if the village benefitted from this service.

Cllr Durrant said that Dial a Ride supports local residents.

Cllr Lucas asked how the service was booked.

Cllr Durrant said that it made regular runs every day.

Cllr Luas proposed a donation of £250. Seconded by Cllr Brown and all agreed.

- Lakenheath Indoor Bowls Club

The clerk read an email asking for a donation of £250 to help fund the installation of road signs to the Indoor Bowls Club.

Cllr Gyte proposed to donate £250. Seconded by Cllr Whitehand and all agreed.

Resolution - S137 payments of £250 to Lakenheath Good Neighbours, £250 to The Voluntary Network and £250 to Lakenheath Indoor Bowls Club.

16. Financial Matters including:-

(a) Payments of Accounts

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

Chq No.	Payee	Description of Supply	Amount
D/D + 3718 to 3721	Staff	April Salaries, Income Tax, NI & Pension	£4002.39
3722	British Gas	Electricity - Wings Road Public Conveniences	£83.65
3723	John Rolph	Removal of Wasp Nest - Cemetery Cottage	£40.00
3724	K C Flack	Fit Baby Changing Unit - Children's Play Area	£70.00
3725	BT Payment Services	Telephone & Broadband	£58.20
3726	Bendall & Sons Solicitors	Legal Costs (on account) for Purchase of Village Sign Land	£250.00
3727	BCT	Grass Rake	£22.82
3728	Community Action Suffolk	S137 Grant	£25.00
3729	RST Irrigation	Mower Repairs	£708.69
3730	County Graphics (Norfolk) Ltd	Lakenheath Times - March Edition	£450.00
3731	Bussens & Parkin (2015) Ltd	Work Clothes, Plunger, Grass Seed & Weedkiller	£81.06
3732	Railton TPC Ltd	Statement of Common Ground on Transport & Highway Matters	£1491.83

(b) Bank Reconciliation

A bank reconciliation for 31st March 2017 was presented. It was proposed to accept and all agreed.

17. Consultation - Suffolk Libraries Customer Survey

Each councillor had been provided with a copy of the consultation. All questions were discussed and responses proposed. All agreed.

Resolution - Response to be given to Suffolk Libraries Customer Survey.

18. Anchor Lane Obstructions

The clerk had received a complaint from a resident regarding the bollards outside properties at the entrance to Anchor Lane. As a blue badge holder she was finding it increasingly difficult to park near to the Co-op. She had recently seen a police officer outside and he had advised her that the bollards are illegal but left without dealing with the issue.

Cllr Norman said that PCSO Chittock had dealt with it at some time.

The Chairman said that Anchor Lane residents do need access for emergency vehicles.

Cllr Durrant said that a problem was that double yellow lines are not policed.

Cllr Gentle said that it was not right to park outside houses and that it is a public-right of way.

Cllr Whitehand said that unfortunately the Parish Council had no jurisdiction and that residents should contact SCC highways with their concerns.

Cllr Durrant proposed that residents contacting SCC Highways. Seconded by Cllr Gyte and all agreed.

Resolution - Residents to contact SCC highways regarding concerns regarding obstructions in Anchor Lane.

19. Emergency Planning / Electricity Supply

The clerk had presented councillors with a proposed article for the Lakenheath Times regarding an Emergency Volunteer Group.

It was proposed to accept, seconded and all agreed.

Resolution - Article agreed for the Lakenheath Times regarding an Emergency Volunteer Group.

20. Street Lighting - Unit 245 Roebuck Drive

The clerk had received notification that street lighting unit 245 on Roebuck Drive required complete replacement as the column is in a dangerous condition and the lantern obsolete. A total cost of £1,166.39+VAT was given.

It was proposed to proceed with the replacement, seconded and all agreed.

Resolution – Street lighting unit 245 to be replaced at a cost of £1,166.39+VAT.

21. Meeting Name-Plates

The clerk had received a request from a resident for individual councillors to be identifiable at meetings. The parishioner had suggested nameplates that members of the public could see. The clerk said that plastic name plates would help if councillors changed and that 11 would cost in the region of £35+VAT. Cllr Gyte proposed purchasing nameplates. Seconded by Cllr Norman and all agreed.

Resolution - Purchase nameplates for Councillors to use at meetings.

22. SpeedWatch

Cllr Gyte advised a pamphlet giving that details of SpeedWatch would be published in the Lakenheath Times next month, she then proposed and read a suggested supplementary article. It was seconded and all agreed.

Cllr Norman said that vehicles tended to be faster leaving the village than entering.

Cllr Gyte said that vehicles could be recorded after they had passed the SpeedWatch speed gun.

Cllr Norman asked if wheelie bin sticker could be used as temporary speed repeater signs.

Cllr Gentle emphasised that speed indicator repeaters are needed on Station Road now that the limit has been extended.

Resolution - SpeedWatch article to be published in June edition of Lakenheath Times.

23. Village Sign

The clerk advised that the transfer of land title from Suffolk County Council was now in the hands of solicitors. She added that she had spoken to Mr Flack who confirmed his estimate of £1100 to create a brick edging to the footpath alongside the residential property, mirroring the existing edge and clearing the vegetation. The village keeper could then put down a plastic membrane and cover with pebbles to match the stone used in the base of the sign.

Cllr Whitehand proposed accepting Mr Flack's estimate, seconded by Cllr Gyte and all agreed.

Resolution - Mr Flack to create a brick edging to the footpath around the village sign, clearing vegetation at an estimated cost of £1100.

24. Village Spring Clean

Cllr Frost had reported to the clerk that the spring clean would be held on Saturday 24th June. It would be in conjunction with the Abundant Life Church and he would also place an article in the Lakenheath Times.

Action Point – Cllr Frost to organise the village spring clean for June 24th, also placing an article in the Lakenheath Times.

25. The Great Get Together

The clerk read an email about ‘The Great Get Together’ proposed by the Jo Cox Foundation on the 17th & 18th of June, a year on from her murder.

Cllr Brown said that this was possibly something for the village hall.

Cllr Norman said that other deaths weren’t marked.

Cllr Gyte said that it was short notice and that she didn’t think it should be led by the Parish Council.

Cllr Lucas said that it was a tragic event but wasn’t sure how it should be marked.

Cllr Durrant said he wasn’t sure on the relevance to the village.

Cllr Lucas said that it could be something to work on with the USAF.

Cllr Norman asked for details so that he could speak to the village hall committee at their next meeting.

Action Point – ‘The Great Get Together’ details to Cllr Norman for discussion at the next village hall meeting.

26. Battle’s Over - A Nation’s Tribute 11th November 2018

Cllr Gyte said that the event should involve children and that she would approach the school. The children could sign songs and read poetry from the time. Children could be asked to trace family ancestors back to WWI. There could be a trawl around village for medals, certificates and pictures to create an exhibition. Parishioners could be asked to help along with the members of the Royal British Legion.

Cllr Brown said that it was a brilliant idea to get the school involved.

Cllr Gyte said that she would speak to the school, Brownies, Scouts and Guides and report back to the Parish Council.

The clerk said that she had spoken to Beck Row who have a beacon sited at the Aspal Lane nature reserve. They highlighted a number of issues that will need considering for a site, risk assessments, a cherry picker to light the beacon, the fire service have to be informed, sand and/or fire extinguishers have to be on site, volunteers on hand to deal with sparks and distance from other properties.

The problems with Maids Cross Hill will include permission from the land owner, closeness to the base perimeter and permission from Natural England to use the SSSI land. It had also been recommended to site the beacon close to a venue so that celebrations could continue once the beacon was lit.

It was proposed to have a beacon sited somewhere in the village. Voting 5 in favour and 2 against.

Cllr Whitehand asked for details so that the Playingfields Association could consider.

Cllr Gyte said that the Football Pit should also be considered.

Action Point – LPFA and Football Club to be approached to site beacon.

Resolution – to purchase a beacon to be sited somewhere in the village

27. Website

Cllr Brown said that the Parish Council have often been accused of the lack of transparency in comparison to the District and the County Councils. As they both show on their website attendance statistics and apologies for meetings listed for each individual Councillor she proposed to add this to the Parish Council's website.

Cllr Lucas said that this information was no more than was already available in the minutes.

Seconded by Cllr Whitehand and all agreed.

Cllr Brown proposed that an extra page is added to the website to show historic pictures and stories of the village/villagers. Currently there is no permanent home for these items which are of great interest to many people. Showing these on the website would encourage a greater interest in Parish Council business as residents would look at other items on the web site. She added that she was happy over a period of time to upload items to the website for public viewing. It would be a long term project.

The clerk said that her knowledge of web building was minimal but that she was happy to work on adding this additional information.

It was seconded and all agreed.

Resolution - Website to include meeting attendance statistics and apologies for individual councillors.

Resolution - Website to include historic pictures and stories of the village/villagers.

28. Items for Future Meetings

- Cemetery Keeper / Cottage
- Lakenheath Hall
- Bank Signatories
- Co-option
- SCC Highways to include 30 MPH repeaters on Station Road
- Battle's Over - A Nation's Tribute 11th November 2018

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

There was none.

**30. To note date of next Meetings: Monday 22nd May 2017 Annual Parish Meeting (Peace Memorial Hall)
Monday 5th June 2017**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:55 pm.