

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF LAKENHEATH PARISH COUNCIL
HELD AT THE METHODIST CHURCH CHAPEL ON MONDAY 3rd JULY 2017.

Present: - Messrs E Morley (Chairman)

R Norman	Mrs Brown
J Gentle	Mrs Gyte
I Frost	Mrs Lucas
	Mrs Whitehand

Squadron Leader Neild and 2 members of the public were also present.

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

1. Apologies for Absence

Cllr Durrant.

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Norman - Village Hall

Cllr Brown - Treasurer Lakenheath Youth FC

Cllr Frost - Friends of Lakenheath Library Trustee

Cllr Gyte - Lakenheath Good Neighbours and Lakenheath Consolidated Charities

Cllr Lucas – Sutton Services Ltd and Lakenheath Playingfield Committee (Elveden Estates)

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

7. Reports & Questions:-

(a) RAF Commander Lakenheath

Sqdn Ldr Neild said that he didn't have a lot to report. He reminded councillors of the Sect 31 served to call in developments at Lakenheath North and Rabbit Hill Covert. He added that flying would be quiet today and tomorrow but that visitors were expected later in the month.

Cllr Frost asked how often planes were flying over the village.

Sqdn Ldr Neild said that there shouldn't be any but visitors (although not exclusively) could sometimes get it wrong. It was not the intention to fly over the village.

Cllr Norman reminded Sqdn Ldr Neild that aircraft seemed to be following the cut around the north of the village.

Sqdn Ldr Neild said that he does report issues to the duty pilots.

Cllr Brown had noticed that aircraft seemed to be flying in a more westerly fashion.

The chairman added that he had noticed helicopters flying over the village.

Cllr Brown said that the Eriswell Road development was before planning on Wednesday and that she had advised the DIO. The Broom Road appeal decision was due this week and the proposal for 550 houses at Eriswell was due before planning in August.

Sqdn Ldr Neild said that the MOD now had a single point of contact for planning and that subject matter experts had been visiting the area.

Cllr Brown said that the MOD were looking to reach a mutual decision with planners.

Sqdn Ldr Neild said that it would be an outcome bias decision.

3. Police Matters

There were none.

4. Confirmation of Minutes of Meetings held on 5th June 2017

It was proposed to accept minutes. All agreed.

5. Representations from Members of the Public

There were none.

6. Emergency Group / Volunteer Working Group to include volunteer Jenny Hastings

A copy of Freckenham's Emergency Plan had been given to all councillors.

Cllr Brown said that it was short and succinct.

Cllr Norman said that Cllr Marston had previously produced a report.

Ms Hastings had been gathering volunteers and had also identified 21 groups in the village. The groups would be invited to a meeting to help identify the vulnerable. Freckenham's report could then be tweaked and adopted. She said that it was important that everyone received a loose copy of the report and that it was not just printed in the Lakenheath Times.

The chairman asked for volunteers to join the working group.

Cllrs Lucas, Whitehand and Norman volunteered. All agreed.

Resolution – Cllrs Lucas, Whitehand and Norman to join Emergency/Volunteer Working Group.

7. Reports & Questions:-

(b) Forest Heath District Council

Cllr Brown reported that another planning case that the Parish Council had strongly objected to, in School Close, had again gone before delegation and been approved. The PC are no longer advised of cases going to panel. She asked if this issue should be raised by the planning sub-committee or the PC. Cases are considered at delegation when there is a disagreement between the case officer and the PC, however the PC are not advised of the officer decision. Ward members are advised of the agenda but not the PC. She proposed that the PC contact Principal Planner, Rachel Almond to raise the concern.

Seconded by Cllr Frost and all agreed.

Cllr Gyte asked if the problem was unique to Lakenheath.

Cllr Brown said no but that District Councillors normally attended PC meetings.

Resolution – Contact Principal Planner Rachel Almond to raise concerns regarding Delegation Panel.

(c) Suffolk County Council to include Disabled Parking Bays

The clerk read a response to the concerns raised about 30 mph repeater on Station Road advising that it is no longer a legal requirement for the provision of repeater signs.

However there is a requirement for consistency within a highway authority area, that there is a clearly defined policy on the provision of repeaters. Suffolk has yet to develop a final policy on this and they are not in a position to judge the appropriateness of further signs on Station Road. Suffolk Highways is currently undergoing a major restructure and non-urgent work is being deferred, this includes the development of this policy.

Cllr Norman said that the Highway Code states the lamp posts being close together defines a 30 mph area.

Cllr Gyte said that 30 mph is enforced until a national speed limit sign is seen. It is the responsibility of the driver.

Cllr Lucas said that when the speed limit had been moved she was unaware until she noticed the signs. She reiterated that drivers are just not aware.

Cllr Gyte agreed that it had been done sneakily but ultimately it was the responsibility of drivers.

Cllr Brown proposed that following the cashpoint raid that all of the closed road signs are now removed.

Cllr Norman proposed contacting SCC to ask why the new poles for street lights between High Street and Mayfields had been erected 6 weeks ago but the lamps were still missing.

Cllr Brown proposed raising the issue of a missing public footpath sign on Smeeth Bridge.

All were seconded by Cllr Gyte and all agreed.

The clerk read a response from Councillor Noble who agreed that it is an excellent idea to have disabled parking bays outside the post office but that he has a full schedule of projects for his highways budget and is unable to fund. If the PC decide to fund the work he will be fully supportive and ask officers to explain the laying of the order.

Cllr Gyte proposed that the PC should proceed with installing two disabled parking bays outside the post office at a cost of £350.

It was seconded by Cllr Whitehand and all agreed.

Resolution - Contact SCC to remove road closed signs.

Resolution - Contact SCC re missing street lamps between High Street and Mayfields.

Resolution - Contact SCC re missing public footpath sign on Smeeth Bridge.

Resolution - To proceed with installing two disabled parking bays outside Post Office at a cost of £350.

8. Matters Arising from Minutes not elsewhere on the Agenda

The clerk reported that Inspector Mark Shipton is able to attend the August meeting.

The clerk reported that FHDC are able to attend either the September or October meeting to give an update on the Solar Farm.

It was agreed to invite FHDC to the October meeting and to request a copy of the Annual Report prior to the meeting.

Cllr Gentle wished to clear up any misunderstanding on Lakenheath Hall. The original planning permission had been for 9 properties. The three properties in the Hall were to have access from Hall Drive and the remaining 6 from Station Road. Highways agreed this for safety reasons. He added that Hall Drive isn't the best access.

Cllr Norman said that the PC and village owed Cllr Brown a huge debt of gratitude. He was disgusted at the Development & Control Meeting where there was talking and laughing while Cllr Brown spoke. Cllr Marston had said that aircraft noise would be noticed more over the original school and that disruption was in the morning and only in 6 second bursts.

Cllr Gentle said that the new school site was a flood plain and raised the issue of parking and traffic control near the school.

Action Point – Inspector Mark Shipton to attend the August meeting.

Action Point – FHDC to attend the October meeting to give an update on the Solar Farm along with requesting a copy of the Annual Report prior to the meeting.

9. Planning Matters:-

(a) To receive report from Planning Sub-Committee

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

Cllr Brown gave her report:

Applications supported

1. A pre-development enquiry. This is for the provision of a proposed communications tower north-west of Lakenheath. Behind Sharpes Corner. This will bring 4G 'mobile broadband' coverage to the area for O2 and Vodafone. A good thing for the Village.

Applications supported with conditions

1. DC/17/0889/FUL - Planning Application - 2no. dwellings with integral garages and new vehicular access - Junction of Wings Road and Mill Road Lakenheath

Applications not supported

1. Appeal AP/17/0018/REF – Up to 132 dwellings land north of Broom Road, Covey Way and Maids Cross Hill
2. DC/17/0684/FUL - Planning Application - 4 dwellings. There was a previous consent for 2 x 3 bed dwellings now to be replaced with 4 x 2 bed dwellings with no gardens. - The Lakenheath Hotel 124 High Street Lakenheath

Major developments: 3 of the major cases, namely the Station Road North, Rabbit Hill and Briscoe way (a total of 523 proposed dwellings plus a school) were brought before Development and Control on 7th June. All three cases were granted an approval however the National Planning Casework Unit has now placed an article 31 Notice against each case. In short this means the District Council is prevented from issuing planning permissions in advance of the Secretary of State considering whether he wishes to determine them himself. We understand the National Planning Casework Unit (on behalf of the Secretary of State) continues to await further evidence/clarification from the Ministry of Defence before making that decision. Having spoken with the DIO acting for the MOD I am informed that they have a strong objection to residential houses in a potentially high noise level zone. The DIO are now in discussion with the District Council keeping the department for Communities and Local Government up to date in order to find a resolution to the outstanding issues. In addition, they have a further concern relating to complaints from future residents. They want assurances that the sites which are effected by operations at RAF Lakenheath, if development proceeds, that a mechanism must be in place that prospective occupiers are definitely aware of what could be a nuisance by way of noise.

They also want an early resolution to their concerns and have advised that in the event that solutions are not obtainable they will push for a full public inquiry relating to all the sites in the village. So, it is a watch this space for now.

In the meantime, the next major case comes to Development and Control on Wednesday, namely up to 140 dwellings on Eriswell Road. Although consent was provisionally granted in 2014, it is to return to committee to consider the updated material considerations. We should make a further written representation.

The objection now relating to noise following the publication of the new noise contours emanating from the operations at RAF Lakenheath and the added traffic congestion following the approvals given last month will be the main items. I propose to formulate a letter to be sent in tomorrow. I will speak up at the meeting unless someone else would like to?

The chairman said that he was happy for Cllr Brown to speak.

Cllr Norman seconded the proposal and all agreed.

Cllr Brown went on:

The Tesco Site: Dave Beighton, Principal Planning Officer at Forest Heath informed me last week that Sarah Drane, met with Marianna Christina, the present case officer and the new owner back in April to look at an alternative scheme, but nothing further has been heard nor received.

Sharpes Corner: The developer tells me that 4 of the houses are now completed and let out to USAF personnel. The fifth is complete and a tenant moves in on the 14th July. The balance of the homes will be completed before the year end. Originally, they were to be modernised and sold but will now be kept and let out. Apparently the rental yield is too good. The result is that it is now intended that the surrounding open space will be brought up to a good standard and properly and regularly maintained. The corner will no longer be an eye sore. Additionally, the bungalow nearest Mutford Green which is sinking will be underpinned and jacked up.

The Warren: The Senior Warden, John Smithson is now aware that there is a large mature Larch fallen across a footpath and obstructing the route, he will talk to the county access team to see what can be done about its removal. We also had an issue where older teenagers, bless them, had made a den and young sycamores had been hacked about, a tree hollowed out and a sofa and seating installed. This was removed by the land owners Elveden Estates. Hopefully no other trees will be damaged. The Warden will make extra patrols of the area.

Enforcement: Pizza house. This is still the subject of ongoing negotiations.

The next Forest Heath Parish and Town Forum is on Thursday 13th July 2017 at Newmarket Sports Pavilion, Newmarket. Unfortunately, I cannot attend this session. Is anyone else prepared to go please? This is an excellent opportunity to network with other parishes. The two main topics are Effective Communication (social media etc.) with the addition of cluster groups and a new single council which I assume means the suggested joining fully of St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath to become West Suffolk.

Cllr Gyte asked how the cluster groups would work.

Cllr Brown said that it could join together parishes with similar issues.

Cllr Norman said that a rest/comfort room had been installed at Lakenheath Hall, directly behind his property. He had emailed Yellow Door who had been told by the planning authority to place it there. They had replied within an hour and agreed to blank out windows overlooking his garden.

Cllr Gentle said that the planners were turning the whole area into a dormitory.

The chairman said that the smallest things like green spaces make a difference.

Cllr Gyte said that it was happening everywhere.

Cllr Norman said that Ely was growing by a further 3000 houses.

Cllr Brown said that infrastructure was not considered, especially after the mayhem caused last week with the High Street closed.

The chairman thanked Cllr Brown.

Resolution – Cllr Brown to make written representation to the Development and Control meeting re Eriswell Road planning application.

10. Lakenheath Cemetery

(a) To receive a Cemetery Report

Cllr Lucas had visited the cemetery and reported that it looked tidy, smart and cared for.

The chairman suggested cutting a number of long hanging branches over the new garden of rest.

Cllr Lucas said that a few of the hedges needed attention along with the concrete posts at the bottom of the old section.

The chairman said that the post and chain fence had probably been put in to keep people and vehicles off the grass.

Cllr Gentle said that the fencing had been there for some time back when families had to maintain their own graves.

Cllr Lucas said that it looked tired, battered and wonky. She proposed removing it completely.

It was seconded by Cllr Whitehand and all agreed.

Action Point – Overhanging branches to be cut over new garden of rest.

Resolution – To remove the concrete post and chain link fence at the bottom of the cemetery old section.

(b) To confirm Grant of Exclusive Rights of Burial

There were none.

(c) Chapel

The clerk circulated photographs of the interior of the cemetery chapel. Damp is causing the paint and plaster to flake.

It was suggested to obtain quotes from Mr Cook and Mr Palmer to repair the plaster and paint work. All agreed.

Cllr Lucas asked if a heater or dehumidifier should be considered.

Cllr Brown suggested asking John Smithson if any heritage funding was available to fund the work.

Action Point – Quotations to be obtained from Mr Cook and Mr Palmer to repair the plaster and paint work in the chapel.

Action Point – Speak to John Smithson about possible heritage funding for chapel repairs.

(d) Trees

The clerk had obtained a quotation of £200 + VAT from CGM to re balance a lime tree in the new section of the cemetery and to remove a dead tree at the front boundary. They will also re poison, free of charge, any growth from the previously ground stumps.

It was proposed to accept the quotation and all agreed.

The clerk had also discussed with CGM, the large trees at the front boundary, which are close to touching the power lines. CGM have confirmed that they will organise the work with UK Power Networks who are likely to cover any costs.

Resolution – CGM quotation of £200 + VAT accepted to re balance a lime and remove a dead tree from the cemetery boundary.

(e) Cemetery / Village Keeper

The clerk provided each Councillor with a list of tasks carried out by the cemetery/village keeper.

It was acknowledged that the keeper carried out a hugely diverse number of tasks that would be difficult to contract all.

The clerk had spoken with FHDC who offered contracting to carry out weed control, grass and hedge cutting. She suggested that it might be a starting point to obtain a quotation for this work.

Cllr Lucas proposed taking the list of tasks away to consider options while the clerk obtained an indication of cost for weed control, grass and hedge cutting. To be discussed again in September.

It was seconded by Cllr Frost and all agreed.

Cllr Whitehand had been advised that care, including weeding and grass cutting of the village sign green had been handed over to Ian Smith.

The clerk advised that the village keeper had been doing the weeding but she understood that Miss Marston was still cutting the grass.

Resolution – To obtain contracting quotation from FHDC for weed control, grass and hedge cutting.

Action Point – To check responsibility for weeding and grass cutting around the village sign green.

(f) Signs

The clerk reported that although there are signs showing times, the cemetery keeper has had some issues with families being in the cemetery when it is due to close. He has to carry out an inspection of the whole cemetery to ensure that no one is locked in.

The chairman said that the sign on the front fencing giving times cannot be missed.

Cllr Whitehand said that no more signs were needed and that the village keeper should continue to do a circle of the cemetery before locking the gates.

Cllr Lucas proposed putting an additional sign in the noticeboard, near to the watering cans and gates.

It was seconded by Cllr Gyte and all agreed.

Resolution – Additional sign showing cemetery times to be put up on in noticeboard.

11. Financial Matters including:-

(a) Payments of Accounts

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

Chq No.	Payee	Description of Supply	Amount
D/D + 3748 to 3751	Staff	June Salaries, Income Tax, NI & Pension	£4437.63
3752	Browns of Burwell	Gas Oil	£272.74
3753	Sunrise Services (East Anglia) Ltd	Public Toilets Cleaning - May + Lost Cheque 3642	£408.00
3754	Bussens & Parkin (2015) Ltd	Key Cutting & Tags	£18.83
3755	Lakenheath Peace Memorial Hall	Parish Office Rent - April to June	£556.04
3756	BCT	Knapsack Sprayer	£91.86
3757	NFU Mutual	Insurance - Agricultural Vehicle	£383.81
3758	County Graphics (Norfolk) Ltd	Lakenheath Times - May Edition	£450.00
3759	Sunrise Services (East Anglia) Ltd	Public Toilets Cleaning - April	£192.00
3760	Eaton & Associates Ltd	Planning Services	£660.00
3761	Clare Shimmon	Mileage, Stationery, Plants & Compost for Cemetery, Cool/Heat Fan, Key Cutting, Electricity - Cemetery Chapel, Postage & Petrol	£321.97
3762	BT Payment Services	Telephone & Broadband	£58.36
3763	Hills Accounting Services	Internal Audit	£375.00

(b) Bank Reconciliation

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

(c) Internal Audit Review

Steven Hill had completed the internal audit and in conclusion said that the 'financial report of Lakenheath Parish Council does not give to any significant areas of concern, regarding the accuracy and appropriateness of the report prepared by the Council'.

Cllr Gyte thanked the clerk.

12. War Memorial – Posies

Cllr Brown said that the poppies at the war memorial were looking a bit sad and asked if they should be replaced.

Cllr Whitehand proposed replacing them at the end of the summer and would help the clerk to source them.

It was seconded by Cllr Gyte and all agreed.

Resolution – Replace posies around the war memorial at the end of the summer.

13. Street Lighting Unit 173, Highfields Drive

The clerk had received reports that tree foliage was blocking the light from street lighting unit 173 in Highfields Drive. SCC had removed the upper branches from around the post but had advised neighbours that it was the responsibility of the homeowner to prevent growth around the lamp.

It was proposed to write to the occupant reminding them of their responsibility to keep tree growth from the street light.

It was seconded and all agreed.

Resolution – Write to the occupant of Highfields Drive reminding them of their responsibility to keep tree growth from street light 173.

14. Play Area & Wings Road Public Conveniences

The clerk explained the vandalism that had occurred at the public toilets on Wings Road and at the play area. Unfortunately quotations to repair the issues had not yet been received.

Cllr Gyte read a proposed article for the Lakenheath Times and suggested the option of CCTV.

It was proposed to publish the article and to look into CCTV.

It was seconded and all agreed.

Resolution – Cllr Gyte to publish article regarding public toilets in the LT and to investigate CCTV options.

15. Co-option

The clerk reported that Cllr Marston had resigned and a notice of vacancy was posted on the noticeboard and website until July 11th. She had provided councillors with a suggested co-option article for the LT.

It was proposed to publish the article in the August edition of the LT.

It was seconded and all agreed.

Resolution – Co-option article to be published in the August edition of the LT.

16. Items for Future Meetings

- Police Inspector Mark Shipton (August)
- FHDC - Solar Farm Update (October)
- Cemetery - Chapel
- Co-option
- CCTV
- Cemetery Keeper (September)

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

There were none.

18. To note date of next Meeting - Monday 7th August 2017

Cllrs Norman and Lucas gave apologies for the August meeting.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:25 pm.