

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF LAKENHEATH PARISH COUNCIL
HELD AT THE METHODIST CHURCH CHAPEL ON MONDAY 2nd OCTOBER 2017.

Present: - Messrs E Morley (Chairman)

J Gentle	Mrs Brown
I Frost	Mrs Lucas
R Norman	Ms Hastings
D Durrant	Mrs Gyte
W Newman	

FHDC - Cllr Edwards, Peter Gudde, Rachael Mann & Lesley-Ann Keogh and 7 members of the public were also present.

The Chairman opened the meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence

Cllr Whitehand.

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Brown - Treasurer Lakenheath Youth FC

Cllr Frost - Friends of Lakenheath Library Trustee

Cllr Gyte – Lakenheath Good Neighbours & Lakenheath Consolidated Charities

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

Cllr Norman – Village Hall

Cllr Hastings – Chairman of Ladies Keep Fit Club.

The chairman asked to vary the agenda and all agreed.

3. Co-option to include an up to date list of councillors to be published in Lakenheath Times

4. Councillor Code of Conduct & Attendance

Each councillor had been given an updated list of councillors. It was proposed to publish an up to date version in the Lakenheath Times. It was seconded and all agreed.

The chairman read mail correspondence from an unsuccessful applicant for co-option. He went on to raise his concerns over individuals speaking to the press. He explained that any member can speak as an individual to the press but any statement given on behalf of the Parish Council should at least be referred to him as Chairman.

Each councillor had been given a copy of an extract from the Good Councillor Guide regarding attendance.

Resolution – Up to date list of Councillors to be published in Lakenheath Times.

6. Confirmation of Minutes of Meetings held on 4th & 18th September 2017

After amendment it was proposed to accept minutes. All present at the September meetings agreed.

8. Reports & Questions:-

(b) FHDC to include Toggam/Solar Farm Presentation & Questions – Cllr Edwards, Peter Gudde & Rachael Mann

FHDC Cllr Edwards thanked the Parish Council for the invitation to give an update on the solar farm.

Rachael Mann had provided each Councillor with a copy of the annual report which showed that assumptions had been exceeded at £308k income for the year. An external auditor Ernst & Young had independently passed the report with assurance provided of £15.2million income. The original cost was £14.5m including due diligence costs. *Rachael asked for any questions.*

Cllr Frost asked about longevity of the equipment.

RM - There is a 25 year life expectancy with the provision to replace, repair and maintain every year. With technology developing it may be worth investing more in the future.

PG – There are three parts to each panel, glass, cabling and a converter, all of which need to withstand frost and hail etc. Electronics may move forward. The maintenance programme ensures that the converters are regularly checked and the equipment is also self-checking. The financial model allows for maintenance and as things wear out they will be replaced. Solar panels from the 1970s are still working but technology moves on and replacement could be considered in the future, as a separate business case.

Cllr Durrant asked how the return compared to leaving funds in the bank.

RM – A return of 7.5-8% is being achieved against 0.5% if left in the bank.

Cllr Brown asked about the problem of storage of power generated from the Solar Farm which currently operates purely during day light hours, so that the supply can become constant. She added that battery projects are the new rapid expansion in the largest utility markets and asked if the district council will follow.

PG – Battery storage may become a commercial activity and there is an argument for this if a business uses the power. It would involve a feasibility study.

Cllr Brown said that in September last year FHDC were continuing to investigate overcoming barriers in order to enter the energy markets, particularly to aid vulnerable members of the community.

PG – The opportunity may be for users to see their usage and have a tariff to fit their time of use, with prices changing to the half hour. Flexibility may be seen to use solar, tariff and the grid for electricity.

Cllr Brown asked, as a generator of electricity during day light hours only, FHDC were hopeful that it could provide energy to their own premises in order to save on energy costs. If not directly they were to lobby the big 6 energy companies to do just this. She asked if this had been implemented now in the hope that there will be a reduction in council tax costs in the future.

PG – The Department for Energy and OfGem had been lobbied to set UK policy. It is time for change and local generators could join with larger generators. FHDC are working with others to influence this.

Cllr Brown asked which services would benefit from the income.

RM – The funds have not been ring-fenced for particular services.

Cllr Brown said that the income would go some way to replace the lost Revenue Support Grant from central government.

RM agreed.

Cllr Brown recalled that Greenheath were granted planning consent to install, subject to conditions, a bio digester on their farm. She asked if the District Council were likely to take that over too. Would consideration be given to it being powered from refuse in the future, or to even create a sustainable jet fuel which could ultimately result in 90% less carbon than traditional fossil fuels? This could be sold to reduce council tax costs in the future.

PG – FHDC purchased Greenheath the company, the owner of the farm is developing the bio digester separately.

RM – The bio digester does not sit with the company that FHDC acquired. FHDC have already moved the assets from that company to council ownership.

Cllr Hastings asked if there would be open days to include school children.

PG – There will be long-term communication and more open days can be set if there is the demand. Visits have to be controlled as dealing with electricity.

Cllr Gentle asked about the long term need for solar power against wind power which is cheaper to generate.

PG – It depends on the site. A whole mix and range is needed.

Cllr Gentle said that wind carries on generating through the night.

PG – Wind can also stop and that is why a mix is needed.

The chairman thanked the members and officers from FHDC for attending and they left the meeting.

7. Representations from Members of the Public

A resident from Undley Common said that he had recently moved to the area and had contacted the RAF Commander as the noise from the aircraft had over the past 2 to 3 months become more prevalent with lower flying over Undley Common. The reasons given had been contradictory and he had been asked to keep a log. The RAF Commander had assured him that he would do what he could but a number of excuses had been given including activity over Mildenhall although aircraft could not be seen in the sky. There had been instances where the pilots were doing what they want and Sqdn Ldr Neild had agreed. RAF Wittering have also made complaints to RAF Lakenheath.

The chairman said that it is a working base and that Sqdn Ldr Neild does normally attend meetings and takes matters on board. Comments would be passed on.

Another resident of Undley Common had lived there for 66 years and had only complained at one other time, 39 years ago. The problem had worsened over the last few years, although residents had been told that Undley Common is not on the flight path. Aircraft are flying directly over roofs, far too close. There had been no action and promises had not been delivered. A site visit had been promised but had not taken place. This is unacceptable.

Action point – Aircraft noise and flight pattern issues to be raised with RAF Commander.

5. Police Matters

There were none.

8. Reports & Questions:-

(a) RAF Commander Lakenheath

There were none.

(b) FHDC to include Toggam/Solar Farm Presentation & Questions – Cllr Edwards, Peter Gudde & Rachael Mann

The clerk read a response from Rachel Almond, Service Manager (Planning – Development) at FHDC regarding Delegation Panels.

(c) Suffolk County Council to include Public Footpaths

The clerk advised that the issue of missing NO CYCLING signs on the footpaths between the High Street and Woodlands had been passed to the Area Warden at Suffolk Highways.

The clerk had provided each Councillor with letter templates that Freckenham Parish Council use asking residents to cut back hedges from the pavement and roadways.

Cllr Brown said that Freckenham doesn't have the same level of rental properties as Lakenheath and that a time allowance should be given for management companies to attend.

The chairman proposed amending and adopting the letters, to be used when complaints are received. All agreed.

Resolution – Letter templates amended and adopted to be sent when complaints are received about overgrown hedges.

9. Matters Arising from Minutes not elsewhere on the Agenda

There were none.

10. Planning Matters:-

(a) To receive report from Planning Committee

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

(c) To appoint new members to the Planning Committee

Cllr Brown said that she had taken great umbrage over the Chairman's comments regarding dealing with the press. She had been appointed as press officer some time ago and had made regular comments.

The Chairman said that there was a necessity for two way communication.

Cllr Brown left the meeting and said that she would consider resignation.

The clerk read Cllr Brown's planning report:

Applications supported:

DC/17/1704/HH – Householder Planning Application – single storey front, side and rear extension with a garage conversion – 36 Covey Way, Lakenheath

DC/17/1732/HH - Householder Planning Application - (i) Single storey rear extension, (ii) replacement of flat roof to pitched and (iii) detached garage – 8 Palmer Drive, Lakenheath

DC/17/1744/HH - Householder Planning Application - Single storey front extension – 15 Caudle Avenue, Lakenheath

Applications supported with conditions:

DC17/1657/HH - Planning Application – re construction of bay window – 19 High Street, Lakenheath – reason is to relocate the cashpoint more centrally within the new bay - our condition was as this is in the conservation area materials to match existing.

Applications in circulation:

DC/17/1731/FUL – (i) Siting of 1 no. portacabin to be used as Rural Craft and education activity area (ii) 1 no. Livestock Barn – Cupola Farm, Undley.

Major developments: Middle of last month we received an email from the National Planning Casework Unit (on behalf of the Secretary of State) to advise that the Ministry of Defence together with FHDC have overcome the DIO objections which are now withdrawn. As a result, having considered the case, the Secretary of State decided not to call in our 4 cases being considered. It stated that he is satisfied that the applications should be determined at a local level. Shame this was not the case on Hatchfield Farm in Newmarket.

The Planning Officer on request of information relating to this news informed us that the conditions which were agreed with the Ministry of Defence actually formed part of a 'statement of common ground' as part of the forthcoming examinations into the emerging Development Plan documents! They do not, therefore, appear on the website as part of any planning application material. As a result, we are seeking clarification on this conflicting information. There is nothing that shows a formal withdrawal of the DIO concerns to FHDC on their planning portal.

At the same time, we are obtaining advice to ensure that we will have concrete points for any Judicial Review to have a positive outcome.

So that you know, the conditions suggested are that all dwellings have fitted noise reduction insulation. Additionally, where the school is to be sited at least one area suitable for outdoor teaching activities is to be provided where noise levels are below 50 dB LAeq, for 30mins, during normal school opening hours, as advocated within the Institute of Acoustics and Association of Noise Consultants 'Acoustics of Schools. A ludicrous suggestion to accommodate and serve the whole proposed new school being built to accommodate up to 420 pupils.

I spoke with an Early Years Specialist and she agreed that greater access to outdoor learning is now a requirement within the Foundation Stage Curriculum. With the size school proposed there will be two classes for the Reception year. Provision of one area only being accessible to a whole school is totally unacceptable to ensure productive learning as prescribed. I still cannot see how a significant area can be sound mitigated and remain a truly outdoor learning environment.

Some of our younger residents are concerned on the schooling front and very keen for a new school to be provided. Nevertheless, I think many people are concerned over the proposed location. There are several concerns over the proposed location, the journey from one end of the village to the other, drop off parking on a dangerous section of the main road and finally the jet noise which will possibly effect concentration levels.

When the issue was put to parishioners by the Parish Council in 2015 the replies received were overwhelmingly in favour of the legal route being taken. As all the sites fall within the higher noise contours we have a duty of care to ensure that this is properly and adequately mitigated.

The Parish Council have been invited to a meeting, date awaited, with the Planning officer which the clerk and I will attend. Is anyone else interested in participating? The aim is to properly clarify points on the major development sites.

Cllr Gyte suggested that the planning officer was asked for dates and circulated to councillors for attendance.

The clerk went on with Councillor Brown's report:

Public Inquiry for the Maidscross Hill site: This consisted of up to 110 houses and was to be heard at Forest Heath District Council offices as from tomorrow. The good news is that last Thursday the application was withdrawn by the applicants. I understand from one of the site owners that consideration is to be given to resubmit a case with fewer possible homes.

SIR: The planning sub-committee will submit additional representations this week which have to be received by Friday. If anyone has any ideas of what to include please let me know. We cannot however repeat any comments already made. It must be new information only.

The Tesco Site: Forest Heath planners tell me that they have had discussions with the new owner of the site however the details of pre-application enquiries are still confidential.

Town and Parish Forum: The meeting due 13th September 2017 was cancelled due to lack of confirmed attendees.

Lastly now that we have a full complement of councillors is there anyone now who would like to join us on the Planning subcommittee as a fifth person? In addition, I have spoken with David Gathercole. He has a lot of the history knowledge on the developing village and is passionate that we do not grow without suitable infrastructure in place.

Cllr Lucas said that Cllr Brown leaving the meeting meant that the planning sub-committee needed to be discussed.

Cllr Gentle said that the chairman had no real understanding of the points raised.

The chairman said that private individuals can make comments to the press, if comments were made on behalf of the parish council the chairman should be aware.

Cllr Norman said that Cllr Brown had been appointed as press officer for the parish council.

Cllr Lucas said that Cllr Brown is also chair of the planning sub-committee.

The chairman asked for protocol.

Cllr Newman said that damage limitation was needed to prevent Cllr Brown from resigning.

Cllr Norman said that Cllr Brown was needed to support the planning sub-committee.

Cllr Hastings said that discussion was becoming overheated and that is was not appropriate at this time.

Cllr Norman reported that work was being carried out on the proposed Tesco site.

Cllr Lucas confirmed that planning approval had been given.

Action Point – Contact Planning Officer to ask for dates to attend a meeting with Councillors.

Action Point – To discuss planning sub-committee members at November meeting.

11. Lakenheath Cemetery

(a) To receive a Cemetery Report

Cllr Durrant reported that the cemetery was very clean and tidy but had noticed that broken benches had been put near to the bunker in the new cemetery.

The clerk had received notification from CGM Group that UK Power Networks would shut down power for work to be carried out on the lime, copper and yew trees at the entrance to the cemetery. The shutdown would affect most of Cemetery Road including the school, so they propose work is carried out on Wednesday 25th October, during half term. The total cost including power shut down is quoted at £740 +VAT.

Cllr Durrant had experience of UK Power Networks covering the cost of tree work themselves, if their cabling was affected.

Cllr Hastings said that the cost was covered for residential properties only.

Cllr Durrant proposed accepting the quotation and for the work to be carried out in half term. It was seconded by Cllr Lucas and all agreed.

Resolution – CGM Group quotation of £740 +VAT accepted and work to be carried out during half term.

(b) Chapel

The clerk had received a quotation for a solar panel system that would heat and ventilate the chapel, helping to prevent damp. The total cost of installation is £4000 inc VAT. She added that many grants are available for protection of old buildings and this may be a possible option to fund.

Cllr Durrant proposed applying for grant funding. It was seconded and all agreed.

Resolution – Apply for grant funding to install a solar system for heat and ventilation in the cemetery chapel.

(c) Cemetery/Village Keeper

The clerk advised that a quote was near to completion for contracting work to be carried out by West Suffolk.

Action Point – Cemetery/Village Keeper to be discussed at November meeting.

12. 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
003790	Yorkshire Lavender	Lavender Plants - Village Sign	£200.00
003791	Bannold	Pebbles - Village Sign	£185.40
003792	Anglian Water Business Ltd (National)	Public Conveniences - Wings Road	£165.85
D/D + 3793 to 3796	Staff	September Salaries, Income Tax, NI & Pension	£4385.53
3797	Suffolk Association of Local Councils	Clerk's Information and Networking Event	£19.20
3798	Clare Shimmon (Reimbursement)	Mileage, Stationery, Mower Tyre, McAfee Total Protection, Postage, Cemetery Chapel Electricity & Petrol	£335.20
3799	BT Payment Services	Telephone & Broadband	£64.56
3800	Business Services at CAS Ltd	Insurance	£3338.08
3801	CPRE	Campaign to Protect Rural England Membership	£36.00
3802	BDO LLP	Review of Annual Return for Year Ended 31 March 2017	£480.00
3803	G Palmer Ltd	Painting & Repairs - Cemetery Chapel	£915.00
3804	Forest Heath District Council	Trade Refuse Collection	£905.32
3805	John Bartholomew	Cemetery Cottage Boiler Service	£96.72
3806	Forest Heath District Council	PSPO Signage for Play Area & Skate Park/MUGA	£240.00

(b) Bank Reconciliation

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

(c) Annual Return Presentation / Acceptance of External Auditor's Review

The clerk presented the External Auditor's Review which reported that there were no matters which came to their attention which required the issuing of a separate additional issues arising report. It was proposed to approve and accept the annual return including the auditor's certificate, now that the audit opinion had been given. All agreed.

Resolution - Annual Return including the auditor's certificate approved and accepted now that the audit opinion had been given.

13. S137 applications to include St Mary's Church

The clerk read a request from Lakenheath PCC asking for funds towards the Church magazine.

Cllr Gentle proposed a grant of £200. It was seconded by Cllr Frost and all agreed.

Resolution – S137 grant of £200 to Lakenheath PCC.

14. Lakenheath Playingfields to include Public Toilets

Cllr Lucas asked for Lakenheath Playingfields to be discussed at the November meeting.

The clerk reported further damage to the public toilets including a broken window, smashed glass from the recycling bins along with two picnic benches destroyed beyond repair.

Cllr Lucas reported an increase in the water bill since the flooding.

Cllr Gyte said that she was still investigating CCTV but reiterated the problem with a secure place for the equipment, which could only be the Parish Office and would need Wi-Fi along with the laws and by-laws. One possible option may be a coin operated door which may attract only genuine users who wouldn't mind paying and may help to stop this mindless vandalism. She also suggested another article in the Lakenheath Times asking for ideas.

Cllr Frost said that the vandalism just keeps happening.

Cllr Hastings asked if it was at certain times of the day or night.

Cllr Gyte asked if it worse since they were left open.

Cllr Gentle said that it had been a problem for 30 years and that repairs should be kept to a minimum level for the desperate users with the alternative being to pull the toilets down.

Cllr Norman said that CCTV needed to be 30 feet from the ground and that the benches should not be replaced.

Cllr Durrant said that he was concerned as the facilities were well used. The benches could maybe be replaced in the spring and the replacement window should be acrylic with metal bars.

Cllr Newman said that CCTV would help.

Cllr Gyte said that initial costing was £1200 with the biggest problem getting the information back to the Parish Office.

Cllr Gentle asked what action would be taken if the vandals were caught on camera.

The chairman said that he would love to pull the toilet down but that wasn't the answer and wasn't going to happen. He suggested closing them for a month until decisions could be made.

Cllr Norman suggested notices on the toilets advising that vandalism was the cause of closure.

Cllr Durrant said that they were originally taken on until the Tesco development was open and he would like to see the toilets remain open.

Cllr Hastings said that it was a nationwide problem and asked if anti-vandalism products were available.

The chairman proposed getting quotations for vandal proof equipment, which would be better value for money. It was seconded by Cllr Durrant and all agreed.

Cllr Durrant said that the play equipment is also looking tired and proposed that the village keeper, as he had done in previous years, added a lick of paint. It was seconded by Cllr Gyte and all agreed.

Resolution – Obtain quotations for anti-vandalism equipment in toilets.

Resolution – Village keeper to paint, where necessary, the play equipment.

Action Point – Playingfields to be discussed at November meeting.

15. Village Green

Councillors had noticed that vehicles are driving across the village green and also knocking over the existing wooden posts nearer to the parking area.

Cllr Lucas proposed installing an additional post near to the war memorial, stopping vehicles but allowing pushchairs and mobility scooters to pass. She also proposed concreting the existing posts.

It was seconded by Cllr Durrant and all agreed.

Resolution – Install an additional wooden post near to the war memorial and concrete the existing posts.

16. Emergency Group – Lakenheath Times

Cllr Hastings said that a Volunteer Group meeting had been arranged for Wednesday 11th October. All village organisations had been invited and would be asked about any existing emergency plans they may have. She proposed that once the volunteer list had been updated that the Emergency Plan was published in the Lakenheath Times. It would be cost effective to have a cut out section over the back two pages. It was seconded and all agreed.

Resolution – Emergency plan to be completed and published as a cut out section at the back of the Lakenheath Times.

17. Celtic Cross/Heritage

The clerk read a statement prepared by Cllr Brown:

This program is coming to a close as a result of Forest Heath District Council arranging for the repairs and refurbishment of the Celtic Cross. New steps are now in place so the access to the monument is very much improved. We await a date for the refurbishment of the area, which should be fairly soon. As a result, I suggest to change the name of the working party to Lakenheath Heritage so that we can now concentrate on the preservation of village history.

The proposed AIMS of the revised group are:

- To create a "Story of Lakenheath" which will be easily accessible, particularly to newcomers, which shows the development of the community and the roles played by villagers in its history.
- To show the historical, geographic and ecological heritage of the Village and Warren.
- To set the village history in a regional and national context where appropriate.

The proposed OBJECTIVES of the group are to encourage village involvement by:

- Using existing photographs and documents.
- Collecting recollections and tales of village life in bygone times. This could include audio interviews.
- Recovering and publishing 'lost' documents and histories with consent where applicable.
- Producing a Timeline for the Village showing the significant events in the history of the village.
- Linking culture and history shown in the Village Story to places still in existence.

We may have a slight concern. The exercise is growing so much quicker than we ever envisaged, resulting in the question as to whether the Parish Council website will be adequate to realise aspirations of the group.

Our Working Party Chair discussed this with our Parish Clerk who agreed that it may be beyond her IT capability. We may have to consider a separate website. This has the added problem that HTML (the language used to make web-pages) has moved on to 'HTML5'. 'Google' apparently will not include web-sites in their search results unless they have a 'cell-phone friendly' alternative. This is something we have to investigate further before deciding where we move from here. In the meantime, the time-line for the village is progressing nicely and many memories and stories from residents past and present have now been collected. I will keep you informed as to progress when appropriate.

Cllr Gyte proposed the change of name. It was seconded by Cllr Lucas and all agreed.

Resolution – Celtic Cross working party name to change to Lakenheath Heritage.

18. Phone Box Sponsorship to include Lakenheath Times Article

The clerk presented councillors with a draft Lakenheath Times article regarding the red telephone boxes.

Cllr Norman reported that Icklingham had used theirs for a defibrillator and Prickwillow as an art studio.

Cllr Norman said that the boxes could be taken away and sand blasted before painting.

It was proposed to publish the article. It was seconded and all agreed.

Resolution – Article regarding Red Telephone Boxes to be published in November's LT.

19. Items for Future Meetings to include CCTV, Recent Dog Attack & Defibrillators

- CCTV
- Recent Dog Attack
- Defibrillators
- Playingfields
- Village Green
- Village Keeper
- Telephone Boxes
- Planning Sub-Committee Members
- Code of Conduct - Use of Social Media

The chairman said that council had discussed the possibility of recording meetings and that any social media posts must be on the conscience of individuals.

Cllr Durrant said that social media was a big part of life and posts must be in accordance with the code of conduct.

Cllr Gyte said that anything written on behalf of the council must be brought to meetings, to gain approval before publishing.

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

The clerk reported that a consultation had been received, too late for the agenda, regarding the Local Government Financial Settlement which included the financial arrangements of Parish Councils. Responses are required by October 26th.

It was proposed to circulate the consultation by email and to respond with comments raised. It was seconded and all agreed.

The clerk had received correspondence from Snapdragon Consulting who act on behalf of developers at Lord's Walk. They ask if the Parish Council would like a meeting to discuss their developing masterplan for the site.

Cllr Durrant said that it falls within Eriswell Parish Council's remit.

Cllr Lucas said that Lakenheath had been approached as neighbours and asked if an electronic version of the presentation could be made available.

It was proposed to decline the offer. It was seconded and all agreed.

Resolution – Local Government Financial Settlement consultation to be circulated by email and response given with comments raised.

Resolution – Decline offer of meeting with Snapdragon Consulting but request an electronic copy of the presentation.

21. To note date of next Meeting - Monday 6th November 2017

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:48pm.