

Pre-Meeting Business: The Chairman stated that Mrs. White was present as a representative of the local press and was not a member of the Parish Council.

Public Participation: Mrs. Woodhouse reported that the Archive Group will not be adopting the telephone box at the north end of the village. She also mentioned large potholes in the layby at Back Lane and also near the bridge at Broom Green.

The slab near the Post Office has been repaired but the yellow lines have not been replaced, a situation that has existed for some nine months.

Mr. Tasker was sad to see the demise of the Community Farm and said that he was aware that the land, 2.25 acres, would be let to the highest bidder. He felt it should be utilised as a small starter farm for a young person. Mr. Phillips explained the history of the land and the requirements laid down by the donor. A copy of the will is to be circulated to members so that the matter can be fully discussed at the next meeting.

North Elmham Parish Council

**Minutes of the
MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
held at 7.30 p.m. at the Sports Pavilion on
Wednesday 1st November, 2017**

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200 Those Councillors Present Were:

Mrs. J. Borgnis (Chairman), Mr. M. Phillips, Mr. J. Brown, Mr. P. Grainger, Mrs. A. Keeble, Mr. J. Labouchere, Mr. C. Smith and Dr. P. Wade-Martins. Mr. M. Groom was co-opted at the start of the meeting.

Also in Attendance: Mr. K. Webb (Clerk), Mrs. M. White (Elmham News + Dereham and Fakenham Times) and 6 parishioners

201 To Consider Apologies for Absence:

Mr. T. Fitzalan Howard, Mrs. D. Warner, Mr. G. Bambridge (District Council) and Mr. B. Borrett (County Councillor)

202 To Receive Declarations of Interest:

The Chairman reminded the meeting that, should the occasion arise, interests should be declared by Councillors as soon as this was realised, and the interest should be minuted.

203 Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday, 4th October 2017:

Resolved to approve the minutes as a true and accurate record with the following addition in respect of item 193 (a) - confirmation to make the payment of £300 to D. Fish was obtained after the meeting. Proposed by Mr. Labouchere and seconded by Mrs. Keeble. Agreed by all.

204 Co-option of new member

Mr. Mike Gower was co-opted as a new member. Proposed by Mr. Grainger and seconded by Mr. Phillips. All in favour. He was welcomed to the Parish Council by the Chairman.

UPDATED INFORMATION AND MATTERS ARISING

205 Land Management Matters (item 169)

- (a) Village Green 10 Larch Grove has had a fence erected. The Chairman removed a broken match box from the shelter and some live matches which were caught in the grooves in the floor of the shelter. The missing slat in the seat has not yet been replaced.
- (b) Cathedral Ruins Nothing to report
- (c) Cathedral Meadows Nothing to report
- (d) Broom Green Nothing to report
- (e) Millennium Wood Dr. Wade-Martins said that he had noted some tree guards on the ground in the Jubilee Wood. These needed replacing to protect the trees from deer damage. The Chairman said that she had recently picked up several guards.
- (f) Bridleway on disused railway line Nothing to report
- (g) Prince William Wood Daffodil bulbs have been planted

206 Street Lights (item 170)

Nothing to report

207 Highway Matters (item 171)

The buildout: It was agreed that if the Parish Partnership bid for 50% of the cost of the new buildout is successful, a plan with details of the design will be passed to Elmham News to keep the community informed of the proposal and the reasons for it.

Dr Wade-Martins reported that the outstanding Highway issues still not dealt with (two blocked drains, dislodged curbstones in Orchard Close and the muddy areas on the Safe Route to School) will be included in a longer list of jobs to be submitted in advance of the Highway Rangers next visit. The question of the overhanging trees on Back Lane will be discussed at the next meeting.

208 Eastgate Centre (item 172)

Nothing to report

- 209 Pavilion and Playing Field – Play Area (item 173)**
Tractor tyre tracks (hedge cutting) had resulted in the cancellation of a football match. A roller had been hired from the Garrod Partnership. This had been delivered, provided free of charge with fuel and then collected. This very generous action was greatly appreciated by all members. Jackie Price had advised that she would be forwarding funds in respect of the Football Club's rent.
- 210 Dog Fouling (item 174)**
Nothing to report
- 211 Allotments (item 175)**
All rents had been collected. There are three spare plots.
- 212 Community defibrillator (item 176)**
Nothing to report
- 213 Play equipment and car park proposals (item 177)**
Mr. Labouchere said it would cost about £100 to repair the camel. Mr. Grainger proposed this sum should be allocated. Seconded by Mr. Phillips. All in favour, It was agreed to do the work to coincide with the next RoSPA inspection in about six months' time.
- 214 Community Farm (item 178)**
Nothing to report
- 215 Detailed information map for village/Notice and Information Boards (item 179)**
Nothing to report
- 216 Volunteers (item 180)**
The windows in the telephone box have been repaired
- 217 Village Maintenance (item 181)**
Nothing to report
- 218 Village Institute Hall (item 182)**
Nothing to report
- 219 Village Resilience Plan (item 183)**
Nothing to report
- 220 Bus routes (item 184)**
Nothing to report
- 221 Discussions with the Mid-Norfolk Railway Company (item 185)**
Nothing to report
- 222 Website (item 186)**
A note had been received from Ivan and Sue Ball regarding the future direction of the website. A full discussion will be held at the next meeting.

223 Shared Access – telecommunications mast (item 188)

Open Reach arrived two weeks early to do their work and will return on the date previously agreed.

224 Vacancy on Parish Council (item 189)

The vacancy has been filled (see item 204)

225 Neighbourhood Plan (item 190)

Please refer to item 229

226 State of the village (item 191)

The list of village defects listed by Norman Lowe under public participation at the last meeting had been dealt with as follows:

The cutting of the village green hedges: Mr Brown reported that they had already been cut (on the sides and on the tops) before the last meeting.

Deterioration of dog waste bins: Two new bins had been purchased and Mr Brown offered to see that they were installed.

Weeds on the pavilion car park: Sprayed.

The hedges at the bottom of Church Hill: It was decided not to ask for them to be cut back further.

New street lighting in areas where new houses have been granted planning permission: Carried forward as Mr Fitzalan Howard was not present at the meeting.

Overhanging trees on the bend at the bottom end of Eastgate Street: Carried forward as Mr Labouchere had been unable to speak to the owner.

Maintenance of the telephone boxes: Repaired by Mr Brown and his volunteers.

Curbstones dislodged in Orchard Close opposite No 61: Dr Wade-Martins had reported this with a photograph to Highways, but without success.

Parking in Eastgate Street: No change.

Weeds along street curbs: Awaiting action by Highways.

Blocked street drain near the Institute: Reported to Highways but without success.

Potholes in Dereham road: Filled the next day.

227 Report from District Councillor (received from Mr. Bambridge by e-mail)

I have had few matters relating to Elmham raised with me this month.

*The planning application at Billingford Lakes granted in April was revoked by Breckland planning committee last Monday and will now no doubt be raised again in the fairly near future.

*The Breckland Local Plan goes to the inspector this week. I heard from a resident you are considering a new Neighbourhood Plan. If I can help let me know.

* I will be presenting to Council on Thursday a scheme to help local communities provide housing within their areas. If you feel as a village you have need of specific local housing, and this is approved, please ask.

* I will be attending the Association of Drainage Authorities conference in London later this month in my role as Breckland representative.

228 Budget and Precept

Mr. Phillips produced a draft budget for the year to 31st March 2019 which showed projected income of £56,324 and expenditure of £56,088. This received unanimous approval subject to one or two minor adjustments. The Clerk produced figures explaining the precept calculations. The estimated tax base for 2018/2019 is 463.6, an increase of 1.3 on the current year. Subject to the individual household contribution remaining at the same level, i.e. £70.24 for a Band D property, this will produce an additional £91 (£70.24 x 1.3). The central grant, as previously advised, has been reduced from £1,033 to £516. There will be no central grant in future years, i.e. from 2019/2020. On this basis the total amount to be received (precept plus central grant) is lowered by £426 (from £33,505 to £33,079). This represents an overall reduction of 1.3%. The budget and precept will be formally approved at the next meeting when the necessary documentation will be completed.

229 Neighbourhood Plan (alternative)

Mr. Grainger and Dr. Wade-Martins had produced a paper for discussion which had been circulated to all members prior to the meeting for consideration:-

Proposals for new approach to planning issues or ANP (Alternative to Neighbourhood Plan)

Objective

At the September Parish Council meeting we voted unanimously not to work up a Neighbourhood Plan for North Elmham. These Neighbourhood Plans have to be planning-based, yet for all practical purposes the key planning decisions about the main new areas for residential development, as allocated under the Local Plan (effective until 2035 under current policy), have already been taken. Any opportunities we might have to influence the design of these allocations or indeed any previous decisions have already passed. A Neighbourhood Plan would have been a time-consuming and costly exercise, yet opportunities to influence the future course of village development are by now limited.

However, it is recognised that the Parish Council must fulfil its obligations to provide review and feedback on planning applications as they arise, and where possible exert influence on the outcomes of these matters as a collective body representing the views of the parish as a whole.

This paper is intended to provoke debate, and ultimately agreement, within the Parish Council and beyond where appropriate, as to how these obligations can be discharged for the greater good of the village.

Currently, the Parish Council only gets around to considering planning applications towards the end of our often long meetings when we are, quite frankly, tired and eager to close the meeting and go home. This is not the ideal time to be making key decisions about future village development. So, are we thinking deeply enough about village design and development?

Background / Recent Examples

As an example it is interesting to compare and contrast the progress of the two main new housing land allocations identified under the Local Plan. In the case of the Brookside Farm development the parish council was heavily involved from its inception and was able to encourage the creation of real community benefits (public car park, public footpaths and a new public green space) as a part of the project.

In the case of the other new housing development in Eastgate Street opposite Old Hall Farm there was no opportunity for any interaction between the parish council and the developer until we were given sight of the final design. By then it was "take it or leave it" and any opportunities to include any community benefits or to modify the design of the scheme in any way for the benefit of local residents was lost.

Another example of lost opportunity has been our complete failure over many years to ask for pavements to be included at the design stage for new houses in Eastgate Street, and so as a result we have finished up with a narrow village street, densely built up with minimal pedestrian safety.

In the case of the railway yard development, the parish council's representatives were able to attend the initial meeting between the railway company and the developers to lay down some ground rules. This meeting identified three key issues: (1) the safety of the users of the Safe Route to School and the safety of the level crossing, (2) the need for adequate car parking for any new railway station and (3) the need for an outlet for the footpath running north along the railway line.

So, there is still a clear case for the Parish Council taking a more pro-active role in the evolution of the village through the planning process in order to avoid another "take it or leave it" situation, although the remaining opportunities are now limited.

A way forward?

To put this into practice it is suggested that there a number of key principles that should be surfaced and agreed upon by the Parish Council in isolation to any specific application. The purpose of this is to create a generic framework against which future applications should be considered. Suggested questions to inform the shaping of these principles include:

- Do we have a policy of encouraging the designation of new employment areas so people don't have to drive to Dereham or Norwich to work?
- Are we doing all we can to ensure maximum road safety for the school on the dangerous bend?
- Are we doing enough to encourage road safety generally?
- Does the village have enough green spaces?
- Do we have the right mix of two-, three- and four-bedroomed houses?
- Is there enough social housing?
- Do we have enough sports facilities?

In addition, is it not time for us to look again at the 2011 Community Plan to see if we can act upon more of its recommendations? (So far we have only implemented two: placing the play equipment on the green and building the trod to the allotments.) Can we do more to influence the design details of developments at an early stage to take account of our concerns before they become too set in stone? Do we give applications enough thought?

So, we are suggesting that there needs to be more "blue sky thinking" and for the Parish Council to take more control over what the village will be like in the future. It is our village after all.

While we recognise that the planning powers of parish councils are limited, that does not mean that we should do nothing.

Options to consider

1. We could bring planning issues to the top of each Agenda before going through Matters Arising, and / or
2. We could set up a Working Party to review the key principles and inferred direction taken from the 2011 Community Plan to see what more we can do to respond to the recommendations and promote a consensus view of what matters most when considering applications presented.
3. Decide as a council whether the responsibility of reviewing applications against the agreed principles should fall to a sub-committee to present a view at each meeting or we all adopt the principles and arrive at a consensus view at the meeting itself.

Options 2 & 3 would take up Councillors time, and they may not have the time, in which case it would not be practical. But are we trying hard enough to influence the planning process?

It was agreed by all to proceed with this project and Mr. Grainger proposed that members should produce a list of proposals, with guidelines, in a collaborative way. This was seconded by Mr. Smith. All in favour. It was also agreed that the working sub group would consist of Mr. Grainger, Dr. Wade-Martins and Mr. Smith. The importance of obtaining input from Mr. Bambridge was recognised.

230 Accounts for Payment and Schedule of Income

a) Resolved to approve the following Accounts for payment:-

12/10/17 E-on (street lights – September)	£139.41
1/11/17 Mazars (annual external audit fee)	£390.00
1/11/17 R. Brown (fire heat alarm)	£15.29
1/11/17 R. Brown (hedge cutter and petrol)	£263.23
1/11/17 D. Tyson (pavilion cleaning – September)	£112.50
1/11/17 Norse (monthly grounds maintenance – October)	£822.67
1/11/17 North Elmham PCC (grant - assist with cutting of tree branches)	£230.00
1/11/17 Wensum Print (business cards – V E T S)	£108.00

1/11/17 Anglian Water (playing field – 8/7/17 to 7/10/17)	£106.43
1/11/17 Anglian Water (pavilion – 14/6/17 7/10/17)	£36.81
1/11/17 Hardy Landscape Management (remote mower–2015 & 2016)	£1,440.00
1/11/17 Hardy Landscape Management (remote mower cut banks 2017)	£720.00
1/11/17 A. C. Crisp (hedge cutting)	£300.00
1/11/17 Norfolk County Council (rent re M/Wood extension – 6 mos)	£50.00
1/11/17 Glasdon (two dog bins)	£207.64
1/11/17 Ace Fire (fire blanket and pressure test)	£72.00
1/11/17 K. Webb (Clerk’s pay for October)	£557.52
1/11/17 HMRC (tax on Clerk’s pay for September)	£82.80
1/11/17 Thinking Rural (payroll for October)	£12.00
1/11/17 J. Duffield (work in Cathedral Ruins)	£315.00

(Expenditure approved by all members)

A request had been received the previous month from the PCC asking for a grant to assist with the cost of trimming back dangerous branches overhanging the graveyard. The work was to cost £460 and it was agreed that the Parish Council would cover 50% of the cost, i.e. £230. Mr. Labouchere proposed that the Parish Council should also provide a further £230, i.e. to fund the total cost of the work and this was seconded by Dr. Wade-Martins. The other members were not prepared to support this course of action.

b) Schedule of Income:

5/10/17 Pavilion lettings	£130.00
12/10/17 Allotment rents	£430.00
19/10/17 Crawford and Co (insurance excess re demolished street light)	£125.00

Balances (as at 30/10/17):- Current a/c - £62,289.39, Business Premium a/c £23,103.19

231 To Consider Planning Applications and Determinations:-

a) Applications

- (i) A. Avery, Parkside, Ryburgh Road (3PL/2017/1138/F) – single story building for use as holiday let and family use (no objections)
- (ii) G. Redwood (3PL/2017/0361/F) – demolition of buildings and construction 11 houses with integral garages (amended plans) – (accuracy of plans to be queried)
- (iii) Land at Station Yard, Station Road (3PL/2017/0863/D) – application for reserved matters of the appearance, landscaping, layout and scale of 19 residential dwellings and the access routes within the site (amended information)

(iii) Land at Station Yard, Station Road (3PL/2017/0863/D: There had been no reply to the Parish Council's letter to the planning officer setting out our concerns (itemised in the minutes of the last meeting) asking for a meeting between the developers, the railway company and the Parish Council to resolve outstanding issues. It was, therefore, not possible to respond to further papers covering reserved matters (amended information). The clerk has reminded the planning officer that we were still waiting for a reply. Breckland will be asked to postpone a decision until these discussions had taken place.

- b) **Determinations**
None

232 **CORRESPONDENCE -1/11/17**

- 1) Clerks and Councils Direct magazine – November 2017
- 2) CGM Group – introduction of grounds maintenance services
- 3) Broadland Rivers catchment newsletter
- 4) Norfolk County Council’s Total Transport project
- 5) Highway Rangers visit – w/c 4/12/17
- 6) Heating Oil Club – details
- 7) Norfolk Vanguard Offshore Wind Farm – update
- 8) Norfolk County Farms Tracks newsletter – Autumn 2017
- 9) Police crime update for September 2017
- 10) Breckland Brownfield Land Register

233 **Announcements**

There is to be a Bingo evening at the Institute on December 4th commencing at 7.30 p.m.

234 **Agenda items for next meeting:**

- a) Website
- b) Land previously occupied by the Community Farm
- c) Individual duties/responsibilities of members

235 **Next Meeting:**

Wednesday, 6th December, 2017 at 7.30 p.m.

This part of the meeting closed at 9.40 p.m.

236 **Confidential item: Clerk’s hours**

In view of the increase in workload, it was agreed to adjust the Clerk’s paid hours from 43 to 52 per month. The Clerk expressed his appreciation for this decision.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.48 p.m.

Chairman

Date

