

NORTH ELMHAM PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the
MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
held at 7.30 p.m. on Wednesday 3rd February, 2021
(via Zoom)**

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177 Those Councillors Present by Logging In Were:

Mrs. J. Borgnis (Chairman), Mr. M. Phillips, Miss A. Ferris, Mr. T. Fitzalan Howard, Mr. P. Grainger, Mrs. A. Keeble, Mr. J. Labouchere, Mr. M. Rayner and Mr. C. Smith

Also in Attendance: Mr. B. Gee and Mr. N. Markwell (both co-opted at the start of the meeting), Mr. K. Webb (Clerk) and Mr. Borrett (until 8.00 p.m.) – District and County Councillor.

178 Apologies for absence: None

179 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.

180 Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday, 6th January, 2021:

Resolved to approve the minutes as a true and accurate record. Agreed by all. (Proposed by Mr. Phillips and seconded by Mr. Labouchere)

181 Co-option of new members

Mr. Gee and Mr. Markwell were both co-opted on to the Parish Council. Mr. Gee was proposed by Mr. Fitzalan Howard and seconded by Mr. Phillips. All in favour. Mr. Markwell was also proposed by Mr. Fitzalan Howard and seconded by Mr. Phillips. All in favour. Both were welcomed to the Parish Council by the Chairman.

182 Report from Mr. B. Borrett (County and District Councillor)

- a) The recent December has been the wettest since 1929 with widespread flooding across Norfolk. Lord Dannatt is to chair a Flood Forum, the Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance (NSFA), a Norfolk wide body aimed at achieving improvements in the prevailing situation which has 36 organisations with flooding responsibilities. The body will report directly to Norfolk County Council's Cabinet and hopefully give communities affected by flooding a much more powerful voice going forward.

- b) The County Council budget is not yet set but there will be money for Norfolk rights of way later in the year. A recent local paper item featured the high rate of deaths in Care Homes. Staff are to be compensated if unable to work due to sickness and they will also be encouraged to work in one home, thus reducing the rate of transmission. Staff are being tested twice a week and residents once per week.

Mr. Grainger asked the process for reporting flood issues. Mr. Borrett said that they should be referred to him.

Mr. Labouchere was concerned that the local Norfolk coronavirus figures seemed to be worse than the rest of the country. Mr. Borrett said that as we are further away from London than, for example, Suffolk and Essex, the Norfolk figures tend to lag behind by as much as ten days.

UPDATED INFORMATION AND MATTERS ARISING

183 Land Management Matters (item 160)

- (a) Village Green With regard to a previous query in respect of a possible footpath from Oak Avenue to Spencers Close, Mr. Smith suggested a plastic mesh path laid on a grass surface. He will obtain a quotation for the cost. Dog bins are currently being emptied, as normal.
- (b) Cathedral Ruins Nothing to report.
- (c) Cathedral Meadows Two years ago, a rotation period of three years was agreed regarding hedge cutting. After consultation with the contractor, Mr. Fitzalan Howard has recommended that, because of the disruption caused by the weather over the last two years, some “catching up” needs to be carried out. To comply with the higher level environmental stewardship agreement, the hedges have to be cut in January or February. The hedge cutting window closes on 1st March and the work will be completed before that date, subject to it being dry enough to get on the land. It is considered that the hedges need flailing this year. The exception is the middle hedge which is very large. This has not been cut for at least six years and is now swamping the livestock fencing. A sub-contracted tracked shear is to be used to reduce the hedge height to its original level so that it can be managed with a cheaper tractor flail in future. The contractor’s recommendation is, in future, for a third of the work to be done each year. The quotation for the required work is as follows:-
- (i) Reduction of the large middle hedge to its original height, using a 360 tracked machine with shear and round up debris for burning - £2.80/m x 260m - £728 + VAT.
 - (ii) Top and side-up with a flail the second and third year hedge growth from all internal field hedges and tidy woody growth and suckers coming through the ground at the field edge before 1st March - £36 per hour + VAT (estimated time between 20 and 30 hours).
- Mr. Fitzalan Howard proposed that we proceed in accordance with the above and this was seconded by Mrs. Keeble. All in favour.
- (d) Broom Green Nothing to report
- (e) Millennium Wood (and Jubilee Wood) The contractor has some tree supports and an invoice is to be submitted for two items. Ten more angle irons are needed at a cost of £20 per post (i.e. £200, in total). All agreed to go ahead with this expenditure.

(f) Bridleway on disused railway line and other railway linked matters

Mr. Phillips had received a telephone call from a rambler who advised that he had been unable to proceed between County School and the arch at Broom Green. This is an annual problem that has occurred for many years. Cattle are encouraged to go on the bridleway by the farmer which results in the land being churned up and becoming impassable. The continued presence of the cows also prevents walking along this route. Mr. Phillips is to write to the parishioner who raised the matter to explain the difficulties.

The Chairman reported that Charles Robinson, Chairman of the Mid Norfolk Railway, had advised that the concrete bridge, to the east of the church, had been condemned. It is the intention to fence off the area to prevent pedestrians proceeding. Mr. Robison has obtained a quotation for the work which will take about two weeks. The Railway Company has an obligation to allow pedestrians and horse riders access to move from the bridge northwards to County School at all times. The fence will be opened at both ends so that people can walk without having to pass through the water. The bridge is not to be replaced.

(g) Prince William Wood Nothing to report

184 Allotments (item 161)

Mr. Phillips reported that the final plot is to be let in the near future. The hired digger has successfully levelled the track.

185 Street Lights (item 162)

Mr. Fitzalan Howard reported that the two lights previously causing problems are now working satisfactorily.

186 Highway Matters (item 163)

The path across the green seems to be in the process of being washed away. This is a Highways' responsibility and Mr. Grainger has logged the issue with Norfolk County Council. The drains are working but are not able to cope with the excessive amount of water that has been produced. Extra drains may be needed.

187 Pavilion and Playing Field (item 164)

The base is now down for the new seat which has arrived. All junior football leagues have been cancelled for this season. It is envisaged that there will be senior and junior football teams next season, playing regularly on both Saturdays and Sundays. In view of the numerous difficulties experienced with Longham Sunday F. C. over the past few months, the Clerk recommended that any future requests for hiring facilities from this club should be firmly declined.

The Police and Crime Commissioner Election is to take place on 6th May, 2021. A hiring fee of £210 has been agreed.

188 Youth Club facilities (item 165)

Mr. Fitzalan Howard reported that he has made contact with the Funding Officer of the Lottery Youth Council. He is to meet with her in the near future with a view to obtaining some help and advice.

189 Eastgate Centre (item 166)

Nothing to report.

190 On-line banking (item 167)

This matter is proceeding and the Clerk stressed the importance of implementing procedures which satisfy the current statutory regulations. The replication of the present payment by cheque system would be preferable but, at this moment in time, it is not certain whether Barclays Bank's internet payment system can provide this. The Clerk is to contact the Bank with the aim of getting information, in writing, regarding the action that we will need to take. Advice is also to be sought from the Norfolk Association of Local Councils (NALC) and/or Norfolk Parish Training and Support (NPT&S). It is anticipated that the situation will be clarified in time for members to confirm agreement to an appropriate course of action at the next meeting in March.

191 Affordable Housing - update (item 171)

Mr. Rayner had forwarded an updating report to members prior to the meeting. Following the decision to select Broadland Housing as the preferred supplier of any exception housing scheme, the following matters were discussed and, where appropriate, duly decided.

- a) A piece is to be placed in Elmham News and it was agreed that this should be produced by Broadland Housing but with the proviso that the Parish Council approves a draft in advance.
- b) A key consideration for the housing need survey is whether to only consider housing need within North Elmham or to also include immediately adjoining parishes. North Elmham has a relatively large number of nine adjoining parishes; Gateley, Horningtoft, Brisley, Beetley, Hoe, Billingford, Bintree, Twyford and Guist. It was agreed by all to limit the survey to North Elmham.
- c) Broadland Housing is to obtain a list of residents from Breckland Council.
- d) Any other suggestions are to be made to Mr. Rayner within the next week.
- e) A site is needed and one just outside the settlement boundary would be permitted.

192 Brookside Development update (item 172)

Nothing to report

193 Accounts for Payment and Schedule of Income

a) Resolved to approve the following Accounts for payment:-	
12/1/21 E-on (street lights – November)	£202.14
24/1/21 Biffa (wheelie bin service from 26/12/20 to 22/1/21)	£33.60
3/2/21 K. Webb (Clerk's pay for January)	£733.56
3/2/21 HMRC (tax on Clerk's pay)	£89.60
3/2/21 HMRC (National Insurance on Clerk's pay)	£12.42
3/2/21 Mandrake (payroll service for December)	£24.00
3/2/21 Norfolk Woods and Hedges Ltd (Christmas tree)	£60.00
3/2/21 Seated Furniture Ltd (recycled outdoor bench)	£360.00
3/2/21 J. R. Fletcher (key keeping – November, December & January)	£93.75
3/2/21 E-on (pavilion from 18/9/20 to 4/1/21)	£291.54
3/2/21 Anglian Water (playing field from 2/10/20 to 1/1/21)	£168.19
3/2/21 Anglian Water (sports pavilion from 2/10/20 to 1/1/21)	£63.58
3/2/21 Association of Local Council Clerks (annual membership)	£40.00
3/2/21 Paper-Klip (accounts book and envelopes)	£36.29
3/2/21 Joe Munns (digger hire at allotments)	£145.00

(Expenditure approved by all members)

b) Schedule of Income:

24/12/20	J. Rainbow, Slimming World (hire of pavilion)	£15.00
31/12/20	Breckland Council (Grant – Tier 4 assistance scheme)	£667.00
11/1/21	Breckland Council (Grant – Tier 4 assistance scheme)	£1,334.00
14/1/21	Donations (winners of Christmas lights competition)	£35.00
19/1/21	Breckland Council (Grant – Tier 4 assistance scheme)	£476.43
19/1/21	Breckland Council (Grant – Lockdown payment)	£4,000.00
1/2/21	Longham F.C. (rent of pitch – one game)	£30.00

Balances (as at 19/1/21):- Current a/c - £99,649.24, Business Premium a/c £32,987.03

Mr. Phillips presented the monthly Management Financial Report for the first ten months of the current year. This had been circulated to members in advance and was broadly in line with expectations.

194 Clerk's annual review

Owing to the coronavirus crisis, it had not been possible to carry out a formal performance appraisal. A one point raise on the salary scale, resulting in an increase of 47p per hour had been agreed. Proposed by Mr. Phillips and seconded by Mrs. Keeble. All in favour. The next review will take place in December, 2021.

195 Offer to purchase red telephone box

An enquiry had been received from Wendling Parish Council asking whether we would be prepared to sell them one of our red telephone boxes. All agreed that they should be retained and members will consider appropriate uses for them.

196 Report on Police and Crime Commissioner's Q&A session

The meeting was attended by the Chairman who reported as follows:-

The meeting was chaired by John Pennell (Director, NALC) and Russell Reeve. Present were PC Paula Gilluley (Police Community Engagement Officer) and about six council representatives.

Lorne Green (PCC) commenced the discussion by saying that Norfolk Police does very well – it is efficient and fit for purpose – even though it faces enormous challenges.

Simon Bailey (CC) commented that everyone is facing personal and professional challenges that they have never faced before. Norfolk Police have excelled, by placing ongoing legitimacy at the heart of what they do. They have not been the subject of any negative national media stories and have obtained amazing support from the community and the PCC.

Superintendent Lou Provar then presented crime figures/performance data for the last five years. The only categories which saw an increase were violence against the person and drug offences. All other categories saw a significant fall.

I was asked to put the following question:-

Our parish council was encouraged to buy and install two Speed Awareness Monitors in order that the data gathered could be forwarded to the police. The hope was that they would use this data to take action to ensure compliance with speed limits. This has not happened. What is the reason?

A: Superintendent Lou Provar responded by discussing the effectiveness of SAMs. He had been a behavioural scientist and is a proponent of ‘nudge theory’ as an effective tool. He said that the monitors play an important part in creating ‘social proofing’ and driving down poor behaviour. He said that the police look first at the most problematical areas, such as rat runs, but said that there is no one single answer. He spoke about co-opting roads policing teams and local beat teams but their emphasis is on community engagement, hence their previous recommendation that parish councils set up community speed watch schemes.

The police are also encouraging the use of special constables, but that they are not as visible as they would want.

Questions from other parishes:-

Q: The panel was asked about the policing of moto cross riding, especially at weekends.

A: The police call these riders ‘green laners’ and they have recruited four additional quad bike special constables who are tasked to carry out targeted patrols. Green laning is not always illegal.

Q: It was reported that social media posts encourage people to visit Norfolk as the police do not enforce the current lockdown rules. What is the response to this?

A: The Chief Constable confirmed that their response is very clear and that they are being very robust. 600 fixed penalty notices have been handed out and they are not ‘going soft’ on people who are breaking the rules

Q: What can be done about littering?

A: This is a question for the local authority.

The meeting closed at approximately 7pm.

197 Risk Management – considerations and updates (item 170)

Di Dann had offered to again carry out the annual internal audit for the current year for the same price, £90, as last year. This was agreed by all members.

198 To Consider Planning Applications and Determinations:-

a) Applications

- (i) Mr Gavin Redwood – variation of conditions on 3PL/2017/0361/F condition 2 (relocation of units 6-8) and condition 4 (raise slab height by 300mm) – 3PL/2021/0050/VAR – Granary Buildings, Eastgate Street – no objections.
- (ii) Mr. Gray – proposed side and rear extension incorporating existing garage – 3PL/2021/0130/HOU – 7 Oak Avenue – no objections.

b) Determinations

- (i) Mr and Mrs Skinner – new dormer windows, replace all windows and doors and new balcony areas – 3PL/2020/1414/HOU – The Millers Cottage, Billingford Road – approved.

- (ii) Garrod Developments Ltd – single storey rear extension together with roof alterations, new side porch and detached garage (amended description) – 3PL/2020/1122/HOU – 36 Station Road – approved.

A letter had been received from Breckland Council advising that they are currently investigating an alleged breach (unauthorised development) at Janninesa Farm, NR20 5HF.

199 Correspondence

- 1) Clerks and Councils Direct magazine for January, 2021
- 2) E-mail from parishioner regarding the possibility of an all-weather footpath between Oak Avenue and Spencer Close (please refer to item 183 (a))

200 Agenda items for next meeting:

None

201 Next Meeting:

Wednesday, 3rd March 2021 at 7.30 p.m. (Zoom)

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.03 p.m.

Chairman

Date

