

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FOXTON PARISH COUNCIL

HELD ON MONDAY, 2nd APRIL 2012 AT 7.45 p.m.

PRESENT

Dr Oakley, Dr Grindley, Mr Bore, Mr Barnes, Mr Elliott, Mr McCreery, Mrs McFadzean and Mr Sutton
County Councillor Susan van de Ven
District Councillor Deborah Roberts

IN ATTENDANCE

2 members of the public

APOLOGIES

Mrs Macintyre

Dr Oakley welcomed all to the meeting.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All Parish Councillors have received a dispensation from the SCDC Standards Committee to permit them to discuss, without prejudice, matters concerning Foxton Recreation Ground Trust of which they are all trustees and thus have a personal interest.

There were no other declarations.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

As no amendments were needed Dr Oakley proposed that the Minutes of the previous Meeting, held on Monday, 5th March 2012, be signed as a true record. Mr Barnes seconded the proposal and all were agreed.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Dr van de Ven reported as follows:

1. The Independent Remuneration Panel looking at county councillor allowances had recommended freezing councillor allowances and this had been agreed. Dr van de Ven said she had met with the panel as a volunteer interviewee. As the council's administration budget for 2012-12 included £100K for councillor allowance increases Dr van de Ven said that she and a colleague had put forward a motion proposing that this fund be used to set up a free transport scheme for young people aged 16-19 who are not in education, employment or training. The motion was rejected and the £100K would now go back into the council's general fund.

2. Dr van de Ven said she was receiving emails from people in Harston and Melbourn wanting to see an upgrade of the A10 cycle path. Council officers had said it was worth “making lots of noise” about this.

3. The council, in its capacity as Mineral Planning Authority, was in receipt of proposals by Cemex to remove certain parts of the cement works plant as the company was now moving from the original mothballing state to an early stage of decommissioning (this was mentioned as a possibility at the Local Liaison forum meeting). Removal of key pieces of equipment would render the site effectively incapable of cement production (largely to avoid paying full business rates) although it was clear that no firm decision had yet been made by the Company on the medium to long-term future of the works and quarry at this point. The company would have to post a public notice in order to comply with legislation.

4. The double yellow lines in Station Road would be considered by the council’s cabinet on 17th April.

5. Rail issues

a) Rail user meeting costs

Dr van de Ven said that the Rail User Group felt it was important to hold one meeting per year in each of its main representative villages and the respective parish councils had kindly paid the room hire charges. She asked whether Foxton PC would like to continue with this practice. (*All were agreed*) the group had a standing offer of free premises at Meldreth Manor School so could use that as a fall back.

b) Parking on the land between the car wash and station

Dr van de Ven thanked Peter Sutton for coming to a site meeting on this matter, together with two County Council officers. It was agreed that there were a number of concerns: the lay-by at this location that could accommodate about three vehicles (and which would be lost) was rarely used and it was questioned how much the car park would be used given its necessary access from a difficult section of the A10. Also considered was the question of the cost of acquiring the land and creating a car park – would the parish council need to charge for parking to help cover costs, and if so would that keep people from using it? There were a number of issues to be considered and Dr van de Ven said she would be very glad to hear some counter arguments. She said County Council officers could draw up some rough plans indicating access and turning room etc inside the proposed area. The landowner was expecting Dr van de Ven to get back to him after she had discussed the matter with the parish council.

c) Level crossing safety

Dr van de Ven said she thought it was safe to say that progress had been made on this matter. This was due to the fact that a second significant flaw had been identified that Network Rail (NR) knew it could not ignore. In addition to the pedestrian gates (which Dr van de Ven now believed were in the process of being upgraded as required), shortcomings in the signal box protocol had been identified. CCTV footage of an incident, where a pedestrian was caught between locked gates that were in perfect working order, underscored problems around field of vision and propensity for human error in the signal box. The Managing Director for NR’s Anglia Route, Dave Ward, was obviously motivated to get things sorted and had committed to several key

steps in a disarmingly candid fashion: He would attend a public meeting on 21st May at 7:30pm in Foxton Village Hall to hear public concerns and knew he would get “a lot of flak”.

Mr Ward had outlined changes to the protocol of signal box steps and image capturing: the CCTV cameras were currently designed to view vehicle movements only, not pedestrian movements. There would be a visit to the signal boxes at both Foxton and Cambridge and Dr van de Ven would be taking along members of the Rail User group with rail expertise plus a County Council officer to ensure all relevant detail was obtained.

The group would also meet with senior County Council officers to begin tackling all the many wider issues at the crossing. However, Dr van de Ven said she had been warned that getting sign-off from within Network Rail for big projects remained extremely challenging.

The group would continue to press ahead on all fronts, but whatever else happened, Dr van de Ven said she was now hopeful that flaws relating to the gates and the signal box could be realistically addressed.

d) Rail user Group Website

The group’s website was now being managed by a rail commuter from Cambridge to Melbourn Science Park who was doing an outstanding job: among other things he had written a comprehensive document on traffic and pedestrian dynamics at Foxton Level Crossing, which would be posted as soon as Network Rail had had a chance to sign it off for accuracy. *(If people really wanted to get into detail, the group’s campaign had been noted in an internationally based level crossing publication: http://www.lxinfo.org/mar_12/euro.htm.)*

DISTRIC COUNCILLOR’S REPORT

Mrs Roberts said that the District Council’s planning regime was undergoing changes as a result of the Localism Act. Six villages, including Coton, Madingley and Grantchester had produced a document expressing their hopes of protecting their villages from being joined with the city. At the last meeting of the SCDC Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Manning quoted from a document produced by the County Council re the Localism Act and some disappointment was expressed that SCDC had not produced its own document.

Mrs Roberts reported that SCDC had now removed the stumps of the felled Horse Chestnut trees in Station Road. Unfortunately it was now too late to plant replacement trees, particularly as the ground was so dry due to lack of rain. She said that the council would need a written guarantee that the replacement trees would be planted in the Autumn.

REPORTS FROM THE WORKING PARTIES

RECREATION AND AMENITIES

Mr McCreery reported as follows:

1. Recreation Ground

Most of the additional tree surgery had now been carried out as had the first grass cutting of the year. The Cricket Club would now take over the grass cutting of the Recreation Ground until the end of the cricket season.

2. Play Area Improvement Group

The equipment for the Play Area has been ordered and it was planned to have the new equipment operational by mid May. Once final dates were clear the group would arrange for the RoSPA inspection prior to the opening of new facilities.

The group had been in touch with the two major donors to the Play Area improvement project regarding their requirements regarding notices, certification and official openings.

3. Picnic Benches/Seating

Two new picnic benches had been ordered for the Play Area made from recycled plastic at a cost, excluding VAT and installation, of £1168.

4. Foxton Woods

Mr McCreery reported continual problems with fencing being damaged. The County Council was concerned about the cost of repairs and had suggested that the woods were left unfenced. The group's view was that it was preferable to have fencing both for dog walkers and the adjoining farms.

5. Sports Clubs

A useful meeting had been held in mid-March with representatives from the Football Club, the Cricket Club and Foxton Dynamos.

The major decisions taken were as follows:

- The clubs would provide and spread fertiliser based on previously obtained soil sample analysis.
- Weed control spraying would be carried out twice this year, as the application last year was not very effective.
- The Parish Council would arrange for over-seeding of the training area.
- The project for moving the existing water supply had been stopped due to potential environmental problems.
- The Football Club's new goal posts would be brought into use next season, as work on levelling the goalmouths was required before they could be used.

Other areas discussed were:

The ball wall

The clubs' view was that a protective surface would not work and that the wall should be re-sited. The group would look at this again.

The hard standing area

The clubs thought a quotation should be sought for a 3 G (Astroturf) facility, although it was pointed out that this was likely to be beyond the village's finances. It was suggested that both volleyball and basketball could be played on this area.

The interest in a Half Pipe from a number of young people in the village was raised and the group was expecting a follow up on this in due course. This equipment would appear to be more popular than the BMX track, which suffers from an uneven surface.

The problems of dog fouling on the Recreation Ground were raised again and it might be appropriate to raise the matter again in the "Laurentian".

The question of possible danger from the "mushroom table" next to the junior 5-a-side football pitch was raised. *This was briefly discussed at the present meeting and the general feeling was that this equipment had not caused trouble in the past so that no immediate action needed to be taken.*

6. QEII Fields in Trust Application

The group was now progressing the re-registration of the various parcels of land making up the Recreation Ground area.

7. Other Matters

Work on repairing the War Memorial steps had started.

The clerk reminded council members that, on completion of the work, it would need to provide a letter of satisfaction for the contractors to send together with their invoice to the insurance company. Mr Barnes offered to check the work when it was completed.

David Salmons had found wine and beer bottles in the youth shelter.

The solar light on the corner of the allotments was still not working. It was agreed to replace this and to install a new solar light in the Dovecote field (probably on a metal pole).

FINANCE

Mr Sutton reported that finances had been improved since the the council's meeting earlier in the year to agree the budget for 2012/13 and associated precept application. A further VAT refund was received and the payment of contributions from the Football Club and Foxton Dynamos towards the running and maintenance costs of the training lights for the past 3-month period. Payments for the year were within £200 of the revised budget. Both Foxton Football Club and Foxton Dynamos would be further invoiced for the next three-month period at £60 and £120 respectively. (The amounts were lower than previously due to the training lights not having been in full use over the winter.

Mr Sutton had circulated the year-end figures for receipts and payments to councillors prior to the meeting and these were in agreement with those in the Receipts and Payments ledger, which he proposed now be signed by the chairman and the clerk.

Referring to the meeting at SCDC on 13th June that he would be attending, Dr Grindley said that, although the Localism Bill had been passed, its provisions were still only partly in force. Mrs Roberts recommended writing to the Local Government Association in London to express the council's concerns.

Dr Grindley said he would be seeking advice about forming a Neighbourhood Plan and that there was a special website re the funding of such plans.

In conclusion, Dr Grindley said he had received an offer from a Foxton resident to co-ordinate data on the enlarged conservation area.

POLICE LIAISON REPORT

Mr Barnes reported that from 1st April Cambridgeshire Police had changed the emergency contact number to 101 and that the old 0345 number had been discontinued.

Offences in the past month were:

- Cambridge Road 1 Burglary
- High Street 1 incident of anti-social behaviour
- West Hill Road ditto
- Rowlands Close 1 incident of theft

RECREATION GROUND TRUST (RGT) REPORT

Mrs McFadzean reported as follows:

The Trustees had met on 5th March (after the FPC meeting) when Dr Oakley proposed the RGT support the Play Area Improvement Group by underwriting the £4,000 Tesco grant application and the £2,000 overall shortage. This would enable the £43,000 improvements to begin prior to the outcome of the final grant application due at the end of April 2012 and negate the risk of running out of time to use the AmeyCespa grant which would expire at the end of May 2012. Dr Grindley proposed that the RGT apply for the return of the funding through Section 106 grants which are due to be paid to the Parish Council during 2012. The Trustees were unanimous on both proposals and it was agreed the Play Area Improvement Group would be given the all clear to go ahead with the improvements.

Mr Sutton proposed the payment of £2,919.36 for the emergency work carried out to replace the heat exchangers at the village school and all the Trustees agreed this.

DIAMOND JUBILEE

Mrs McFadzean reported that posters had been displayed in the village and an article had appeared in the "Laurentian". There would be a meeting on 11th April to discuss the suggestions put forward, progress matters, and to agree a further article for the "Laurentian" with the Village Hall and pavilion booked for a street party on the Recreation Ground on either Monday or Tuesday 4th or 5th June. One suggestion so far put forward was a "Best-dressed House" competition. A free Jubilee support pack had been applied for.

It was hoped that by the time of the Jubilee celebrations the improvements to the play Area would have been made and the Recreation Ground would have received recognition as a QEII Field in Trust. It was also hoped that the new village sign would be in place.

Mr Sutton gave a short update on the new village sign. He said the design and colours for the sign had been finalised although the shape of the base had still to be decided – the issue being whether or not the base should be stepped.

DOVECOTE/MEADOW PROJECT

It was noted that the hedge needed to be tidied up.

CORRESPONDENCE

The clerk summarised the correspondence since the last meeting, which is given in full below:

- 1) Two letters received in March from pupils at Foxton Primary School suggesting the council buy paper and wood from sustainable sources.
- 2) Letter dated 8th March from Endurance Estates expressing concern about how the response to its questionnaire distributed to residents of Station Road (re proposed development with new access to it from Station Road between the Press cottages) might be presented to SCDC.
- 3) Letter dated 12th March from Anglian Water re the drought situation and imminent hosepipe ban: enclosing a leaflet entitled “Drought Matters”.
- 4) Letter dated 15th March from Cambridgeshire ACRE re its Community Oil Buying Scheme.
- 5) Memo from CPALC re completed and current projects plus Service and Support feedback form.
- 6) Letter received 30th March from CCC briefing on the County Council’s position on bus subsidies and the Cambridgeshire Future Transport project.
- 7) SCDC Standards Committee Newsletter for March 2012. *Copied to all FPC councillors.*
- 8) Cambridgeshire ACRE magazine “Community Action”, Spring 2012 plus leaflets and poster re its Community Oil Buying Scheme.
- 9) Local Council Review Spring 2012.
- 10) Publicity material from Avalon Software, Online Playgrounds and Norris and Fisher (village hall insurance).

VISITORS’ QUESTIONS

Mr Challis said he thought it was worth pursuing the possible site (mentioned earlier in the meeting) for parking at the station. He also mentioned that cars were parking at the bus stop at The Green and he had read somewhere that this was illegal.

Mr Howard said that a good job had been done on the trees bordering the Recreation Ground, but pointed out that a lot of the trees were affected by Ivy.

Mr McCreery said this was not something the council could ask contractors to deal with.

Mr Howard also reported a motorised scooter having been seen on the Recreation Ground.

Dr Oakley said that the council would keep an eye on this matter.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Dr van de Ven said she would ask County Council officers to produce a design for the development of land at the station for a car park.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was confirmed that the **Annual Parish Meeting** would be held on **23rd April 2012** at **7.45pm** in the **Meeting Room** of the **Village Hall**.

The next meeting of the parish council would be the **Annual General Meeting** to be held on **Monday, 14th May 2012** at **7.45pm** in the **Meeting Room** of the **Village Hall**.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.27pm.