

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FOXTON PARISH COUNCIL

HELD ON MONDAY, 9th JANUARY 2012 AT 7.45 p.m.

PRESENT

Dr Oakley, Dr Grindley, Mr Bore, Mr Barnes, Mr Elliott, Mr McCreery, Mrs Macintyre, Mrs McFadzean and Mr Sutton

County Councillor Susan van de Ven

District Councillor Deborah Roberts

IN ATTENDANCE

1 member of the public

APOLOGIES

None

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 December 2011, be signed as a true record. Mrs McFadzean seconded the proposal and all were agreed.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Mrs Roberts asked whether a letter had been sent to the SCDC Planning Department about the department's delay in submitting an application in respect of the former Q8 garage site. It was confirmed that the letter had not yet been sent.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Dr van de Ven reported as follows:

1. Heavy Commercial Vehicle (HCV) Strategy

Dr van de Ven said that CCC draft policy, which would "allow" parishes to influence HCV movements through villages, was simply unrealistic because all costs devolved to parishes, and the costs of signage and legal notices were in the tens of thousands. She said it seemed to be an awful case of "localism" window-dressing and passing the buck.

2. 50mph links from A10

Dr van de Ven had been in discussion with CCC Highways Department about speed limit anomalies on the links of road between the newly reduced speed stretch of the A10 and 30mph zones in settled areas –for example Shepreth Road in Foxton. She said this was a new generic problem across the county. The reason for the anomalies was that there would have been an additional cost in extending newly reduced speed limits to link roads and the resource simply wasn't there. While tools might exist for parish councils to apply for speed limit reductions, the process was arduous and uncertain and the results would be inconsistent. Dr van de Ven had asked if this could be re-approached on a countywide policy basis.

3. Civil Parking Enforcement Policy

This policy had been held back by the county council due to unhappiness at the slim consultation response. Dr van de Ven said that this seemed unfortunate and that she had protested – there was an expectation that the policy would be coming and she thought it would be generally helpful. Dr van de Ven asked people to look out for the reinvigorated consultation effort, or if they had a view and would like her to convey it on their behalf, she would do this.

4. Melbourn Division Oil Club Update

This bulk-buying heating oil club had been started a year ago. Part of the arrangement was for a donation from the bulk-buyer, Agricole, to a local charity, based on a percentage of the orders placed over the course of the year: a donation of £75 would be made. She and district councillors had suggested that the donation go to Melbourn Area Youth Development (MAYD).

5. New project for MAYD

The group was looking at a new pilot project for the youth club comprising a bicycle maintenance course. This would involve professional training by Outspoken (the same organization that now provides Bikeability training for primary schools) and would result in qualifications for those young people taking part, together with a free bicycle to take home at the end of the course. The Chief Constable had agreed to provide the group with unclaimed bicycles from the police collection of stolen and abandoned ones, and these would be done up as part of the training course. The project, called The Bike Bank, had been developed by a small district/county committee she had been involved with called “Community Connect”, and was to be piloted somewhere in South Cambridgeshire. It was felt that MAYD would be in the best position to act as host. The next step would be an application for grant funding from “Young Lives”.

6. Melbourn Children's Centre

Dr van de Ven said she had had the pleasure of visiting Melbourn Children's Centre in its new primary school location. The centre looked great with a whole range of excellent activities. It seemed that the biggest problem to address was transport. However, thanks to those who had found spare baby car seats to donate, these would be helpful when lift-shares were found.

7. Level Crossing pedestrian gates

The Rail User Group had met on 14th December when the latest update from Network Rail was discussed. The essential magnetic locking components that would make the new gates reliable were still outstanding, due to the cost (£50K). The new pedestrian gates were still operating on a 1960's wiring system and replacement parts for the frequent failures were costing £1400 each. In response to my complaints that it was dangerous for pedestrians to be forced along the A10 highway, a proposal was made for a temporary contingency path, using a large amount of the patch of land now enclosed by the white wicket fence on the station

side. The Rail User Group meeting, which included officers from First Capital Connect, the Fen Line Users Association (who have the same sort of problem only worse at Downham Market) and the Railfuture group, reached an overwhelming consensus that such a path would be inherently unsafe and that any available resource should be put toward completing unfinished new gates. Dr van de Ven had written a strong letter to Network Rail who had now assured her that a contingency path would be inaccessible if the vehicle barriers were down. Dr van de Ven said she would now seek detailed clarification and assurance.

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Mrs Roberts said that when Mrs Macintyre had contacted SCDC in September 2011, she had been informed that the felled trees in Station Road would be replaced, but not maintained, by the district council. Mrs Roberts said that Geoff Clarke, a senior officer, was now saying that SCDC supported the grinding out of the stumps of the felled Horse Chestnut trees and would both supply replacement trees and maintain them. *After a short discussion, it was agreed to recommend that the replacement trees should be Limes.* It was hoped the work would be carried out by the end of February.

Mrs Roberts said that it appeared that the affordable homes being constructed in Barrington unfortunately might not all be taken up by people with a strong connection with Barrington and that in this case Foxton people might be interested.

Mrs Roberts concluded by saying that all parish councils are required to agree their own Code of Conduct.

PARISH PLAN UPDATE

Dr Oakley said that the Parish Plan had now been completed following a thorough check and some revision by the clerk, Joan Burns. Dr Oakley said she deserved the council's thanks for the many hours she had put in on the task.

REPORTS FROM THE WORKING PARTIES

RECREATION AND AMENITIES

Mr McCreery reported as follows:

1. Recreation Ground

A further tree had been removed due to wind damage. Additional tree work would be carried out during the next couple of months to remove overhanging branches on the South side of the Recreation Ground and in the car park. Some thinning of the brambles etc. bordering the play area would also be carried out.

The group was continuing to look at the floodlit training area and the ball wall to see what improvements might be possible for next winter.

2. Play Area Improvement Group

Mr McCreery said the Group deserved the council's congratulations on being successful with its AmeyCespa Grant application that had resulted in an award of £20,000. With this award, together with the South Cambridgeshire District Council Grant of £12,500 and further small grants, including a contribution from the parish council and fund raising, he hoped that some new equipment would be installed later this year.

3. Grass cutting

Further quotations were being sought for the next three-year contract.

4. Bus Shelter Seat

The seat was finally delivered in December and had been installed by David Salmons.

5. Foxton Woods

Sarah Shepherd (CCC) had been active in following up all the matters discussed at the site meeting. The dog waste bin had been installed and, provided the cost was not too high, the fencing work would be done in February when some clearance of brambles would also be carried out.

During her site visits Sarah saw dogs running over the tenanted fields adjoining the path. Whereas dogs were welcome on the paths and in the fenced off wooded areas, they should not be allowed to run over the farmland causing potential damage to crops. The group was intending to put a note in the Laurentian reminding dog walkers to act responsibly.

Mrs McFadzean suggested that a formal letter of thanks be sent to the Play Area Improvement Group for its sterling efforts in raising funds for the project. The clerk offered to write a letter of thanks and this was agreed.

FINANCE

Mr Sutton reported as follows:

A budget for the financial year 2012-2013 had been circulated to councillors together with the recommendation that a precept of £21,000 should be requested. Amongst the budget items was a proposed revision of the clerk's remuneration to provide a round sum allowance for gas and electricity use, computer depreciation and antivirus software, and telephone/broadband expenses from 1st April 2012. These proposals are in line with CPALC recommendations.

£1,000 had been provided for renovation work to the worn area at the ball wall.

£3,000 had been allocated for the council's contribution to Play Area equipment, which would be a partial utilisation of the Section 106 receipt.

In previous years the External Auditors had contended that the council's reserves were excessive and this contention had always been resisted. With the receipt of Section 106 monies the council would show this part of our Reserves as Restricted, and the reduced balance, in the region of £33,000, as General Reserves available for use without restrictions.

Mr Sutton proposed the council accept the budget and precept recommendations. Dr Oakley seconded the proposal and all were agreed. The clerk was asked to write to SCDC requesting a precept of £21,000 for the coming financial year.

Mr Sutton then gave details of the bank accounts as follows:

Deposit Account	£16,317.80
(This included interest of £1.84 for 5/9/11-4/12/11)	
Current Account	£55.98

It was noted that the district council had responded to the fact that FPC had drawn attention to the position of the cart shed, and the fact that it might impede the farmer's right of way over the land, although it was noted that this was not a planning constraint and would need to be resolved privately between the two parties.

Planning matters covered at the present meeting:

Planning permission granted:

Mrs Chista Crowther	Application No. S/2107/11 for garage conversion to habitable room at 5 Hardman Road Various conditions
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Notice of Appeal had been received in respect of Goreway Holdings' application No S/1284/11/F for a dwelling on land adjacent to 7 Station Road.

Planning application to be considered at the next meeting of the Planning Committee:

Mr and Mrs Waring	Application No. S/2534/11 for first floor extension at 30 Fowlmere Road
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As no copy of the decision notice in respect of application S/1868/11 (Mr and Mrs Bailey) for a replacement garden room at 20 Barrington Road, the clerk was asked to request one from the SCDC Planning Department.

Mr Barnes observed that PG Ceramics had moved from its site on the A10 and that some work was being carried out on the site.

POLICE LIAISON REPORT

Mr Barnes said that he had no further incidents to report since the last FPC meeting. The next Police Liaison meeting would be held on 17th January. He mentioned that there was no Neighbourhood Watch cover in the village and that several elderly people had moved into care homes leaving empty properties.

Mrs Roberts said that Hillfield resident had reported that her vehicle had been damaged.

RECREATION GROUND TRUST REPORT

Mrs McFadzean said that the Trustees had met on 5th December 2011 when the 2011 accounts had been approved and subsequently sent to the Charity Commission together with details of the present Trustees.

Mr Bore said that it had been decided to dispense with the "modesty" partitions in the showers.

DOVECOTE/MEADOW REPORT

Mrs Macintyre said she had nothing to report except that she would spread bark from the pile at the end of the path should it become muddy.

CORRESPONDENCE

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

- 1) Letter dated 7th December from the CCC head of Environment Services, Chris Capps, re Street Lighting PFI – Cambridgeshire involving the replacement and upgrade of street lighting columns and the removal of some columns. Response requested.
- 2) Letter dated 13th December (addressed to Dr Grindley) from Endurance Estates expressing interest in being involved in the development of a Neighbourhood Plan.
- 3) “Clerks and Councils Direct” magazine, January 2012 and Councils’ Suppliers Guide and Yearbook.
- 4) Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS newsletter, Winter 2011.
- 5) Publicity material from Dynamic Fireworks and Amberol (rocks).

VISITORS’ QUESTIONS

Mrs Lisa Mulder of 8, Caxton Lane described the problems that she and other residents in the Caxton Lane cottages had encountered over many years. When the cottages were given a major refurbishment by Hereward Housing Association (now Sanctuary Housing) the works appeared to have made a great improvement. Unfortunately there have been serious problems with damp due to the lack of damp-proof courses in these houses leading to rotting wood and curtains. Sanctuary Housing had failed to remedy this defect despite repeated requests. The damp posed serious health risk to the occupants of the Caxton Lane cottages, particularly to children. Although the Housing Association had agreed to insert damp-proof courses in the cottages, this was to be only to the front of the properties.

Mrs Roberts said that SCDC had so far not dealt effectively with this matter and suggested that FPC write to the district council to request urgent action. The clerk was asked to write to the SCDC Environmental Health Department copied to Geoff Clarke at the SCDC Housing Department.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Dr Grindley said he would be having a discussion with the SCDC Planning Department about the need to amend FPC’s planning permission for the training lights.

Mr Sutton circulated the revised design for the new Village Sign and described the further amendments that would be needed before the design could be finalised.

Mrs Roberts notified the council that she would be in Ireland between the 16th and the 21st January

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was confirmed that the next meeting would be held on **Monday, 6th February 2012** at **7.45pm** in the **Meeting Room** of the **Village Hall**.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.07pm.