

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FOXTON PARISH COUNCIL

HELD ON MONDAY, 7th MARCH 2005, AT 7.30 p.m.

PRESENT

Mr Pusey, Mr Barnes, Mr Brooksbank, Dr Grindley,
Mr Hockley, Mr Kennedy, Mrs Thake

County Councillor Professor Milton

IN ATTENDANCE

6 members of the public

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from District Councillor
Roberts, Mr Broadley and Mr Chilton

Mr Pusey welcomed all to the meeting and introduced Mr Stan Reese of Cambridgeshire ACRE who had come to the meeting to talk about Parish/Village Plans

ADDRESS BY STAN REESE OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE ACRE ON PARISH PLANS

Mr Reese began by saying that the acronym ACRE stood for Action with Communities in Rural England. Parish Plans had originally been the province of the Countryside Agency but were now covered (in Cambridgeshire) by Cambridgeshire ACRE and the organisation had been promoting them for the last three years: in the last twelve months they had gained in stature and importance.

Parish Plans had begun in November 2000, at a time when rural shops and post offices were closing, with a funding allocation to assist 1,000 communities. Many parishes were considering doing a Parish Plan and if the clerk helped in the preparation of one, it helped the parish council achieve Quality Council status.

Mr Reese said that a Parish Plan indicates how a community would like to develop and identifies key facilities and services that are needed. If a council decides to produce a Parish Plan, it would receive help from Cambridgeshire ACRE and the County Local Strategy Board (LSP). The South Cambridgeshire LSP would include members of South Cambridgeshire District Council, and representatives from the police and fire service etc.

Mr Reese said that producing a Parish Plan was a community-led activity that would include social, economic and environmental issues that affected the community. The group working on the Parish Plan should include all ages from youngsters of 10 years to the more elderly.

Mr Rees said that Parish Plans should help deliver local planning policies and link with the LSP's, however, they could not override adopted planning policy. They should help to influence how developments take place and propose a plan of action to achieve their vision.

Only the parish council can make the decision to produce a Parish Plan and, once the decision is made, the whole community needs to be involved and one way of doing this is to hold a public meeting. The next step is to form a steering group and this should include two councillors and representatives of the community. The key positions of Chairman, Treasurer and Administrator should not be held by either of the councillors.

Following the formation of the steering group, applications for grant aid should be made.

The wider community should be consulted on the issues to be included. This would entail considerable effort and additional helpers might be needed to deliver and collect response forms. A high rate of response to consultation gives the parish a stronger position when approaching funders.

Once the responses have been received, they must be analysed and following the analysis, the community is sometimes given an update.

A results report is then prepared, followed by consultation on a draft action plan. The draft action plan is then used to distribute to all relevant bodies and committees.

Mr Reese said that the Countryside Agency had produced an action plan template that should be of assistance in producing Parish Plans. Once this is agreed, parish councils will be asked to highlight the main items in the action plan for which they would like support. The whole process of producing a Parish Plan takes between twelve and fifteen months.

Turning to grants, Mr Reese said when these were made by the Countryside Agency, these used to be 75% of the cost with a maximum of £5,000. There was a ruling that 20% of the cost could be through payments in kind. The parish council's contribution was 5%. However, although DEFRA had been asked to reintroduce fixed funding, from April 2005 to April 2006 the position was not clear. After April 2006 it was hoped to have a clearly defined system.

Before inviting questions, Mr Reese concluded by saying that Cambridgeshire ACRE had a lot of information on Parish Plans. He had brought some booklets with him and these were included with the circulating correspondence.

Questions and Answers

Dr Grindley Could the final document be photocopied?

Mr Reese showed two examples of Parish Plans, one expensively produced and another on a much more modest scale, and said that a Parish Plan would normally fit somewhere between the two in terms of sophistication.

Dr Grindley What would be the cost range?

Mr Reese said that this could be from £2000 to £12,000 although the latter figure was exceptional.

Mr Brooksbank At what stage in the process would funding be secured?

Mr Reese said that this would normally be the first task so that the parish council and the Parish Plan strategy group know what the budget is.

Professor Milton If parish councils have no control over housing what is the point of a Parish Plan?

Mr Pusey This was his point too – EERA is talking about a settlement of 25,000 houses on our doorstep.

Mr Reese said that on a major planning issue, it would be unfair to say that a Parish Plan could influence the decision: however, it could influence the implementation of such a decision and provides a tool for district councils and other bodies.

Mr Pusey How could a village plan have any effect if for instance a large new settlement were to be scheduled centred on Foxton?

Mr Reese said that at Longstanton, for instance, a buffer zone had been agreed and Longstanton would say that its Parish Plan had helped towards a more palatable decision

Mr Challis If Foxton went ahead in producing a Parish Plan, would grants eventually come from central government or from local taxes?

Mr Reese said that, in general, funding came from a whole range of bodies with only a minor proportion from the district council.

Mr Hockley The problem of funding is very real, and the community would need to have some issues about which it felt strongly.

Mr Reese said there was an element of truth in this and that there was very often an issue that gave impetus to the production of a Parish Plan. At the same time it was useful for parish councils to know how the community would like to develop.

Mr Pusey The council would have to consider whether to embark on such a project very carefully.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

One amendment was needed. On page 96 under “Matters Arising (Large-scale development)”, last paragraph, the last sentence should begin with Catherine Cairns (*not Mark Kennedy*).

With this amendment, Mr Kennedy proposed that the Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 7th February 2005 should be signed as a true record. Mr Brooksbank seconded the proposal and all were agreed.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Old School Site

A meeting about the old school site had been arranged at the SCDC office at Cambourne for 11th March at 2pm. Unfortunately Mr Pusey said he would be unable to attend at this time, and it was agreed that Mr Hockley and Dr Grindley would go to the meeting and that the clerk would confirm this with Mrs Roberts.

Large-scale development

Mr Pusey said that following the meeting at the SCDC offices in January, there had been a meeting of the A10 corridor group of parishes on 17th February, to which Alan

Moore of EERA had given an address and answered questions. He had explained the issues very well and related them to the local situation. The consultation period on EERA's East of England Plan extended until 16th March. A letter written by Mr Pusey had been delivered to all Foxton residents setting out the issues as he saw them, and urging them to make their views known before the deadline. There had also been an item in "The Laurentian". Mr Pusey said that more account was taken of individual voices than of petitions.

Mr Brooksbank asked whether any new issues had arisen at the CPRE meeting on 22nd February about the East of England Plan. Mr Pusey said he had identified the environmental impact of development and had included this in his letter to parishioners.

Traffic Issues in Foxton

Professor Milton said that as Mr Cooper (CCC South Highways Division) had been away, he had been unable to speak to him.

Q8 Garage

Professor Milton said there had been no further progress on this issue, and due to Mrs Robert's absence from the meeting, there was no further information on the planning aspects.

Parking at Hillfield

Any further information on this issue would not be available until Mrs Roberts could report.

Pavement Flooding

Again, due to the lack of heavy rainfall, Mr Hockley said he had been unable to take the necessary photographs.

Streetlamps in Edis Way

Mr Kennedy said that he had obtained 25 signatures (out of a possible 30) to the joint letter from residents to Meldire, the developers, about the unfinished work on the streetlamps.

CPRE Local Development Framework (LDF) workshop on 5th March

Dr Grindley had attended this meeting. He said that about 25 councillors had been present and that their planning consultant gave an outline of the strategic process, and the ideas for streamlining the planning process so that it could be speeded up and parish councils consulted more fully. The meeting had also looked at the local planning process, which is moving ahead quite well in South Cambridgeshire, though a lot of consultation is needed. It was stressed at the meeting that it was as important to indicate what one was in favour of as to raise objections. The proposed early review of EERA's East of England Plan (which would consider the possibility of a large settlement of 25,000 houses) was regarded as extraordinary: the whole workshop was based on the need for sustainable development. It was clear from the present EERA plan that such a development was not sustainable. The only thing justifying an early review was the consideration of the proposal for an extra 25,000 houses. Dr Grindley said that the interaction of the existing processes with district councils producing LDF's and the new processes being instituted could cause chaos.

Mr Pusey said that although the plan was job-growth driven, EERA was only now consulting businesses in order to establish the likely growth in jobs.

Dr Grindley said that the purpose of the workshop was to explain the new planning process and had provided some printed information. *This was included with the circulating correspondence.*

Rugby Cement

Mr Pusey said that the firm had now been taken over by Cemex. Andrew Lansley MP had called a meeting on Friday, 4th March with representatives of Foxton PC, Cambridgeshire CC, and Network Rail. The County Council's Local Transport Plan had originally included a roadbridge project at the Foxton level crossing for 2009, but this had now been either shelved or scrapped due to changes in selection of priorities to comply with new government guidelines. There had been some discussion of Cemex's interest in this matter due to its strategic plans for access that might include the A10.

REPORTS FROM THE COMMITTEES

RECREATION AND AMENITIES

In the absence of Mr Chilton, the clerk read his report to the meeting as follows:

- Costings for a seat to replace the vandalised Hardman seat and for additional goal post sockets had been obtained: a new Phoenix seat (like the one at the entrance to the dovecote meadow) would cost £355.44, and a set of new sockets would cost £112. *Mr Pusey asked Mr Hockley whether there would be any problem in meeting these costs, and Mr Hockley said this was unlikely.*
- The remaining signs had been passed to Vic Mead for fitting

Mrs Thake proposed the purchase of the seat and the set of sockets. Mr Kennedy seconded the proposal and all were agreed.

Mr Pusey was asked to give updates on the progress of the Skateboard/BMX Park project and on the extension to the Recreation Ground.

Skateboard/BMX Project

Mr Pusey reported that he had received a letter from Paul Thorby (SCDC officer) with some suggestions about equipment that would improve the amount of area available for play. *Mrs Thake said she would talk to Mr Broadley about organising a consultation with the youths who were involved with the project.*

Extension to Recreation Ground

Mr Pusey said that, following his visit to the Land Registry in February, he had circulated a report to councillors with a number of recommendations. He asked whether a meeting was needed and Dr Grindley said he would like one as he would like to know more.

Mr Pusey said that the land survey frees the process for the purchase of the land for the Recreation Ground extension. He was hoping to receive a letter the County Council's solicitor in the near future.

FINANCE

Mr Hockley reported as follows:

He said that CALC was holding a meeting the next day, the agenda for which included an item on new terms and conditions for clerks. Unfortunately, neither he nor the clerk would be able to attend and it was agreed that he would liaise with the clerk to send CALC a letter. Professor Milton commented that all too often, insufficient notice was given for these sorts of events.

Mr Hockley gave details of the bank accounts as follows:

Current Account	£54.87
(Cheques for £27 from the Recreation Ground Trust – contribution to the gift for Mr Sutton for his audit work for the council and RGT – and an SCDC recycling credit for £201.51 had been received and would be paid in by the clerk)	
Deposit Account	£12,720.23
Cambridge Building Society	£8128.74

Mr Hockley proposed that the following cheques be approved:

A10 Skip Hire (hire of 6yd skip for dovecote meadow)	£117.50
B Hockley (reimbursement for gift of wine for P Sutton)	£53.94
Hart Country Gardens (supply of hedging for dovecote meadow)	£49.00
Ian Sanderson (solving e-mail delivery problem)	£20.00
Foxton VHT (hire of meeting Room 7 th and 17 th February)	£23.00
J E Burns (salary February/March including 6.5 extra hours for meeting on 4 th March)	£525.36
J E Burns (expenses January/February)	£22.31
V W Mead (refuse collection and ground maintenance, February)	£28.03

Mr Barnes seconded the proposal and all were agreed that these payments, totalling £839.14, should be made and that £840 be transferred from the Deposit Account to the Current Account.

PLANNING

Mr Barnes reported as follows:

Planning application received:

D M Ash and H J Raynor	Application No. S/1674/04/O for 3 dwellings and garaging at land between 3 & 11 Mortimers Lane
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Mr Barnes pointed out that this was still an outline planning application. Mrs Scott (in the visitors' seats) said she had taken the plans round to all the residents in Mortimers Lane and the general feeling was that this was a much more acceptable plan than the proposal for a larger number of dwellings in the original outline planning application. However, the residents still had concerns over such issues as congestion at the top of the lane, lighting and off-road parking.

Mr Barnes said that an SCDC conservation officer had visited the site and there was some speculation about the reason for this. Mr Pusey said that SCDC should be reminded of the importance of considering the risk of flooding.

Dr Grindley suggested that the houses might be set further back than shown in the plan, but Mr Abbots (in the visitors' seats) said that this would put them in line with one of the new bungalows. He also pointed out that the lane is wider than appears because there had been some encroachment.

It was decided to approve the application: detailed concerns could be addressed when the full application was made.

POLICE LIAISON REPORT

Mrs Thake had nothing to report and commented that half-term had proved to be very quiet. Mr Pusey noted that Mark Kennedy's article about vandalism had appeared in "The Laurentian".

RECREATION GROUND TRUST REPORT

Mr Pusey said that there had been no meeting in the past month. Mr Callin had produced some figures for the Sinking Fund but more were needed for the road and other long-term replacements. Mr Callin had been asked to provide the further figures needed.

FOXTON COMMUNITY PROJECT

Professor Milton said he had been in touch with Gerald Browning (CCC) about outstanding issues and had been fobbed off. He had sent a copy of Tessa Howell's document and had received no reply. He had then written to Andrew Rowson with a copy of Mr Browning's response to the matter and urged him to do something about the situation.

Dr Grindley mentioned the water leaks in the pavilion (one of the outstanding issues) and suggested that the County Council should meet the bill for the considerable water wastage.

DOVECOTE/MEADOW PROJECT

Cornhill Insurance had not replied to the council's letter about cover to take for volunteers working on the dovecote/meadow site, and the clerk was asked to chase up a response. The line of the footpath had been agreed with the school and the matter was now with the County Council. When the council had met the School Governors last April about the path, the question of funding a fourth CCTV camera for the Community Building had been raised. A meeting had been arranged with the company who had installed the existing cameras and Mr Barnes said he would give an update on the matter when he had further information. It was hoped to be possible to avoid the need to dig up the blockwork in the car park to lay the electricity cable to the camera – provision should have been made for this.

Dr Grindley warned that at some time the County Council would sign a document of practical completion, which would absolve the developers of any responsibility for

remedying outstanding defects. Mr Barnes said that the School Governors were aware of the issue.

Mr Pusey said that there had been a workday at the meadow on 26th February. Some hedge work had been done and general tidying up round the field for which the council had provided a skip. An attempt to discover the depth of the topsoil revealed this was 27cm deep and pieces of 12th/13th century pottery had been discovered – these needed to be investigated.

Mr Pusey said that the deadline for the SCDC Green Spaces grant was approaching and a letter would have to be sent to the district council. A Historic Buildings grant of £8600 had been offered. Mr Pusey proposed that the council accept the grant. Mr Hockley seconded the proposal and all were agreed.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr Pusey had several items of correspondence to report. These were:

- A letter from Peter Sutton (that Mr Pusey read out to the meeting) thanking the council for the gift of wine and offering his help in the future.
- A letter from SCDC Housing and Environmental Services Department requesting the estimated numbers of rough sleepers in the parish on any one night. *No rough sleepers had been observed in Foxton and the clerk was asked to return the completed form.*
- A letter from CEMEX advising the council of its acquisition of RMC Group (Rugby Cement)

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

- 1) Letter dated 10th February from Stephanie Wade (CCC Environment and Transport Department) re her project to enhance the feedback mechanisms between parish councils and the County Council's Passenger Transport team: requesting a nominated contact for bus service information.
- 2) Letter dated 11th February from CCC Environment and Transport Department re improving countryside access: enclosing the draft of the Cambridgeshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan, consultation leaflets and poster (displayed).
- 3) Letter dated 14th February from CCC Environment and Transport Department giving details of dates and times when the level crossing at Foxton will be closed for resurfacing
- 4) Letter dated 17th February from the CCC Senior Democratic Services Officer re the meeting of South Cambridgeshire Environment and Transport Area Joint Committee to be held at the SCDC offices on Monday, 7th March at 2.30pm.
- 5) Letter dated 18th February from the Standards Board for England enclosing leaflets introducing the consultation on the review of the Code of Conduct for members and newsletter.
- 6) Notice of the launch of SCDC's Community Strategy at Milton Country Park on Wednesday, 23rd February.

- 7) Memo from DEFRA re the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill with increased powers for parish councils.
- 8) Letter received 25th February from Mrs Sandra Wilson, parliamentary Spokesperson for the Labour Party in South Cambridgeshire asking for the date of the next meeting of Foxton PC and whether she would be able to participate.
- 9) Letter dated 25th February from the SCDC Head of Policy and Communications enclosing a news release about SCDC's share of Council Tax for 2005/06.
- 10) Letter, undated, from the office of the Deputy Prime Minister enclosing two discussion documents entitled "Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter" and "Vibrant Local Leadership".
- 11) Letter dated 28 February from CCC Education, Libraries and Heritage Department re InfoCam website, which includes the category "Halls for Hire", and inviting the promotion of such facilities by this means: enclosing form and SAE. *There was a copy in the circulating correspondence and the clerk said she would pass the original to Tessa Howell.*
- 12) Letter dated 1st March from CCC Environment and Transport Department giving changes to bus stop names.
- 13) Letter dated 1st March informing that RMC Group (Rugby Cement) has been acquired by CEMEX.
- 14) Letter dated 1st March from the SCDC Head of Legal Services re the Burial Grounds Survey 2005 enclosing form to complete as necessary and return to the Home Office plus SAE.
- 15) Invitation from Cambridgeshire ACRE to enter the Calor Village of the Year competition 2005: enclosing entry conditions, guidelines and submission sheet and questionnaire (entries to be received by 23rd May).
- 16) Information from CALC including:
 - Notice and agenda for meeting on 16th March including a presentation on gypsy and traveller issues
 - Notification of free conference on 8th March on Quality Initiative and conditions for clerks and Freedom of Information
 - Various leaflets on training days and workshops
- 17) Poster from SCDC promoting the Healthy Walks Scheme (displayed).
- 18) Local Council Review, March 2005 with details of NALC Conference, September 2005
- 19) Publicity from Hays (Accountancy and Finance).

VISITORS' QUESTIONS

Sandra Wilson, Parliamentary Spokesperson for the Labour party in South Cambridgeshire, referred to the notice of the CALC meeting (mentioned above in "Correspondence, item 16), which included a presentation on gypsies and travellers,

and asked whether Foxton had any problems with them: her own parish had suffered serious problems that had cost the parish a large sum of money to deal with.

It was confirmed that Foxton had not so far had any trouble from gypsies or travellers.

Mr Howard suggested that the gate onto the Recreation Ground from the gravel car park should be kept locked.

It was pointed out that this would not stop vehicles getting onto the Recreation Ground from other directions.

Mr Howard also asked whether there had been an update of the list of residents wanting an allotment when the allotments were available.

Mr Pusey said that he had already asked Ross Powell (Foxton Gardens Association) to review the list but had not had a response. Mr Brooksbank said that, when the site became available, Peter Mead would deal with the existing weeds and then treat the area with Roundup.

Finally, Mr Howard said he would pass on Mrs Thake's details to the police for the Sawston Sector Police Liaison Group.

Mr Pusey thanked Mr Howard for this.

Mr Challis asked whether the council intended to proceed with a Village Plan.

Mr Pusey said the council would need to discuss the matter further. Mr Brooksbank pointed out that if each village were able to stipulate its own buffer zone, it could be difficult to find space for a large settlement. Professor Milton said that Meldreth now has a Village Plan. In the process of preparing its plan, Meldreth had collected a response leaflet.

Mr Brooksbank also suggested that the conservation officer who visited Mortimers Lane might have done so in order to ensure that everything on the proposed new development was in keeping with existing properties.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Hockley said that the Women's' Institute had asked permission to have a plant and produce stall on the piece of ground holding the Foxton Village sign on 28th May. All were agreed.

P.T.O

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was confirmed that this would be held **in the Village Hall Meeting Room on Monday, 4th April 2005 at 7.45pm.**

Dates for the Annual General Meeting and the Annual Parish Meeting would be held be arranged at that meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 10 pm.