

## **Minutes of the meeting of Moulton Parish Council held at Moulton School on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2018 at 6.30 pm.**

<b>Present</b>	<b>Cllrs</b>	W Rampling Chairman	D Clarke
		P Collin	T James
		M Price	Ed Chambers
		D James	R Wallwork

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – Cllr Rachel Webb (excused due to previous commitment)

**ALSO PRESENT** – the Clerk, District Councillor Roger Dicker and 5 members of the public.

**DECLARATION OF INTEREST** – Cllrs Mark Price (member Vets Football Team) Cllr Douglas James (Track around the village green).

### **COMMUNITY SPEED WATCH**

The Chairman confirmed that he would be arranging for the VAS sign to be relocated with the help of Cllr James.

Cllr James advised that a number of speed watch sessions had taken place recently, and the police had carried out a check near the school and on Newmarket Road. A couple of new volunteers had joined the speed watch team.

### **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2018 had been circulated, and it was unanimously agreed that these should be signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

### **MATTERS ARISING**

None –all covered in agenda items

### **PLAYING FIELD**

**Kate James was in attendance representing the Panthers Football Club**

The pitch had been rested from mid May and had been treated with slow release granular feed and blanket sprayed for weeds.

The misuse of the portable goals was discussed. These had been moved to the village green at the end of the football season to allow the pitch playing surface to recover. The Council had purchased 2 signs which had been put up on either side of the vehicle gate leading from the village green onto the playing field, warning that there was to be no unauthorised movement of the posts. In addition a sign to replace the damaged STOP/LOOK sign on the gate post opposite the PO Stores had been ordered and erected. The total cost amounted to £66 plus VAT.

Quite soon after relocation there were issues concerning the unauthorised movement and dumping of litter, and practice by a team from outside the village. There has not been a re-occurrence of these problems.

Copies of the draft licences had been re-circulated and the Council was asked to consider the terms and agree the licence fees for the forthcoming season.

Last year a fee of £40 was made for the annual licence fee and a contribution of £50 per football team was requested to go towards the cost of maintenance and upkeep of the pitch. It was proposed, seconded and agreed that there should be no change to the current charges, and the Clerk was asked to re-issue the licence for the forthcoming season for the Panthers Club. Cllr Price advised that the Veterans Club would be meeting shortly to decide whether they would continue to play.

### **COUNTY COUNCIL MATTERS**

In the absence of Cllr Millar the Clerk advised that an email had been circulated on 22<sup>nd</sup> May advising that the new Leader did not have a role for him in his Cabinet. He would continue to work for the residents he represented, and as Deputy Leader at Forest Heath would be planning for the new single West Suffolk Authority.

### **HIGHWAY MATTERS**

The Chairman reported that he had attended the Highways Forum on 29<sup>th</sup> May with Cllr Douglas James. It was unfortunate that the agenda had been 'high jacked' and the meeting did not focus solely on highway issues as previously agreed. The first 40 minutes was taken up by a presentation on the Suffolk Cinema network with various clips of recent film releases.

The Highways Forum started with a presentation from the Operational Director, and many had heard this presentation at an earlier meeting. The Chairman advised that he was not alone in being very disappointed at the tone - if the County was not responsible the blame was shifted. If the County had a duty then the poor performance was excused due to lack of funding. He had hoped that interaction would have led to some positive dialogue and a more proactive response.

However, the newly appointed Cabinet Member, Mary Evans, had attended, and she saw first-hand the scale of the problem and the frustrations at the lack of engagement and absence of any joined up policy to address our concerns.

C Cllr Mary Evans volunteered to meet the Chairman to discuss these challenges, and he intended to do this once she has had the opportunity of settling into her new role.

There had been no update from Cllr Millar on the **Newmarket Road** – realignment and resurfacing – had this programmed for some future date in the next financial year?

**Benefield Road junction** – the repairs outstanding since the end of September were finally carried out at the end of June.

**Chippenham Road** – Cabinet Member Mary Evans had advised the Chairman that she would be following up this case following the submission of a detailed history of the drainage problems. The resident who had initially raised concerns with C Cllr Robin Millar in March had contacted Cllr Evans direct and had forwarded a copy to the Clerk, and had requested a meeting with a Highways Officer, and a Parish Council representative to make progress on the long outstanding issues.

Request for a **30 mph speed restriction on B1085 between the parish boundary and the School and a planned safe walkable route from the School to Kentford.**

C Cllr Robin Millar had advised that there was no funding, the 30 mph speed limit was rejected and there were no eligible sources of S106 funding from the Kentford developments.

The Chairman reported that he had hoped to progress the initiative for the safe route at the Highways Forum. Due to the lack of a positive dialogue or proactive attitude he realised that this was not the right opportunity.

For some time the PC had been thinking of getting up a local petition to gauge local support, and following consultation with councillors it was agreed to raise the profile of the initiative, which the Council had been working on since 2007.

It was proposed to start by getting the School to ask parents for their support. The Head Teacher was fully behind the Parish Council, and it was hoped to get a significant number of signatures before the end of term. In addition the Pre School organisers had asked to participate and the PO Stores had asked to get involved too. Parish Councillors were also canvassing locally and had been visiting properties in the village to gain additional support, not only for a safe school route, but a link to the railway station at Kennett.

Mrs Fiona Unwin was invited to address the meeting and she advised that she had recently briefed the newly appointed Cabinet member for Highways Mary Evans. She reported that Cllr Evans was very supportive, despite the obvious problem of funding, and it was suggested that finance could possibly be sourced from the 'Walk to your nearest School' government initiative.

It was suggested that both the Clerk and Mrs Unwin would continue to investigate all possible avenues for finance, and press for the 30 mph speed limit between the 2 villages. The support from villagers had been very positive and some 450 signatures had already been received.

It was agreed that villagers should be encouraged to email Cllr Evans demonstrating their support, and highlighting the very overdue need for a safe, walkable route along the B1085, which should have the speed limit reduced through the current derestricted section.

Kentford villagers had been aware of the petition running in the village and had asked to get involved and both the Chairman, Malcolm Baker, who had given his apologies as he had not been able to attend the meeting, and Parish Councillor Roger Dicker, had confirmed that Kentford PC would also aim to join in with this petition, so that a joint initiative demonstrating public support could be presented to the County Council.

District Cllr Roger Dicker had approached the S106 officer who had again reported that community gain payments made by developers from sites in Kentford, and currently held on deposit for public open space projects, could not be accessed although if there was an aspiration this should be raised with County Council Highways for them to consider a strategic plan.

In addition Cllr Dicker suggested that the County Council Sustainability Policy, currently in draft, supported the aims of both Councils to provide a safe walkable route to school, to encourage parents not to use their cars, in line with the CC fitness policy, which also encompasses the Green Suffolk image, and would encourage connectivity between the villages including the use of Kennett railway station and Moulton Village Hall, which runs many clubs and groups, which are aimed at young person's involvement.

## **DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Draft Recommendation for the West Suffolk Wards -**

The Commission's proposed Kentford & Moulton ward would comprise of the parishes of Gazeley, Higham, Moulton and Kentford. Two parish councils had supported this, stating that the parishes within the ward have similar issues.

## **LOCAL LETTINGS POLICY**

A Housing Needs survey had been sent out to all households in Moulton. The Council had received no prior notice, and the circular letter had caused concern, particularly the elderly, who were unsure whether they should divulge sensitive information to a third party.

The Clerk had raised concern with the District Council, and had asked how the information was to be used, and if protections were in place to ensure the data was not incorrectly handled and complied with Data Protection. Cllr Dicker was asked to investigate the source of the data used by Heritage Developments to mail shot all residents in Moulton – was it the public electoral roll?

Simon Phelan, the Strategic Housing Manager had advised that this survey was commissioned on behalf of a private developer who was looking at a potential exception site in Kentford as it was standard practice to try and establish local needs for affordable housing in the surrounding parishes. It had been suggested that the relevant Parish Councils should be consulted regarding this exercise, but they failed to do so.

An email from the developer had subsequently been received and circulated. This highlighted that the District Council's local housing needs figures were not up to date and therefore it had been necessary to carry out an independent survey to support their planning application at the end of Kentford village beyond the old village hall site.

As any affordable homes provided were required to be offered to those in greatest housing need within the District, as opposed specifically to those within the village of Kentford or adjacent parishes, it was viewed that there was a potential unmet local housing need.

The Chairman was of the view that the bad publicity, and parishioners reluctance to return the questionnaire would invalidate any data the Developer may wished to have used to justify the proposed scheme on the exception site.

The local lettings policy had been reinstated to ensure if any properties became available in Moulton that they would first be offered to those who met the local criteria. Unfortunately the policy did not relate to properties in Kentford, other than Anvil Way. For this development it was stipulated that there was priority for those with a local connection to the parish of Moulton, and applicants should not have a history of anti-social behaviour. The Clerk was asked to raise the fact that the policy should apply not only to Moulton, but to social housing in the adjacent parishes of Kentford and Gazeley.

## **CIVIC LEADERSHIP REVIEW**

Following the creation of the new West Suffolk Council in April 2019 there was now an opportunity to redefine the arrangements for civil leadership. A consultation exercise was running until 2<sup>nd</sup> September and the Council and councillors had been invited to comment on the future arrangements including whether there should be a mayor or Chairman. It was unanimously agreed that the Chairman should be asked to complete this on behalf of Moulton Parish Council, who were strongly not in favour of the creation of a Mayor to lead the new authority. Councillors would also have the opportunity of completing the on-line survey.

## **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

### **Crown reduction – silver birch at 6 Church Road**

Plans for the overall reduction of the crown by up to 2 metres had been circulated and were available to view at the meeting. It was resolved to support these tree works.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF 15 BROOKSIDE**

The Chairman invited the owner of the property to address the meeting. He produced draft plans showing the architect's designs for a new dwelling on the site, which would be similar in style and size to the redeveloped No 7-11 Brookside.

It was planned to submit an outline application in the next few months and it was hoped that subject to approval construction would start in the new year.

**DC/18/0886/TCA – Felling of beech trees along the boundary of 15 Brookside.** The Clerk confirmed that details had been circulated by email and as the consultation period expired in advance of the Council meeting – councillors had agreed to support the plans. The trees were not good specimens, had not been managed and allowed to get overgrown. The neighbour was happy for them to be removed and it was proposed to replace with a new beech hedge to extend the existing one, and plant some specimen trees. The application was approved on 14/6/2018.

**Drove End Milburn Drove** – the agent has requested that the application be extended until the end of August.

## **Planning Determinations**

**Approved - 25 Newmarket Road – single storey rear extension and loft conversion to create habitable rooms and a detached double garage.**

**LOCAL PLAN** - the Clerk reported that on behalf of the RPA the Chairman and Liz Marchington (Chairman Herringswell PC) had submitted a response to the latest round of consultations stating that the inclusion of Hatchfield Farm was a positive move, but the impact to the District as a whole would be negligible. Red Lodge and the Primary villages were still absorbing 44.9% of the total housing allocation for the district. In contrast the 3 market towns will still only receive 38.6%, with Newmarket only accounting for 14.9%. The objections remained fundamentally the same as before; the changes made by the Local Planning Authority had not gone far enough to address the over reliance of the rural villages on development for the district and there should be a clear commitment from the District Council to follow a sequential, sustainable approach to development when the review commences in 2018.

**LAND AT HATCHFIELD FARM** – the Secretary of State had taken the decision to re-open the inquiry as 3 years had elapsed since the inquiry was held in April 2015 and there had been significant changes in circumstances including the publication of the Local Plan in April 2018.

## **KENNETT GARDEN VILLAGE**

A briefing document with an overview of the outline planning application which had now been submitted had been circulated.

The application followed an extensive 18 month community engagement process.

The Parish Council had objected to the original draft plans as follows:-

*Our principal objection is the continued use of the B1085 as a through route between the A11 and A14 major trunk roads. The B1085 is unsustainable for any significant increase in traffic numbers, the Bell at Kennett road junction is already suffering serious congestion at peak hours, and until a link road is constructed from the A11 to A14 any large scale development at this location will have a dramatic and dangerous effect on the future of the surrounding rural communities.*

*However the western end of the proposed site is the obvious place to build a new link road to avoid the increasing volume of traffic passing through Kennett and Kentford yet no such road is proposed.*

*A number of our Councillors attended the consultation weekend on the proposals and were told that there would be insufficient 106 monies for such a road from the development. This point is accepted for a development of 500 houses but this site is 97.5 hectares and is therefore likely to expand to 2000 houses.*

*The provision of a major infrastructure improvement could attract money from the LEP's and other major developments in the area, ie Red Lodge, Kentford,*

*We therefore urge you to reject this section from your local plan until the delivery of a link road can be guaranteed.*

It was resolved that these concerns were still very relevant and the Clerk should write on similar terms objecting to the plans to build an initial 500 homes off Station Road, Kennett.

## **VILLAGE MAINTENANCE**

### **Maintenance of Public Open Spaces and Trees**

The local authority grass cutting service was now provided by an in-house team, and the grass areas were scheduled to be cut every 3 weeks during the growing season. The Parish Council was responsible for maintaining the village centre, the green, playing field and river bank.

The Chairman reported that more and more self-help and Parish Council maintenance was being required to keep the parish maintained to the previous high standard.

A resident had objected direct to the local authority concerning the reduced standard of the contract, in particular the strimming of borders and around the road signs appear to be been removed from the contract, or the staff are not aware of the specification. He pointed out that a number of volunteer villagers were providing and caring for floral displays under the road signs and for these to be worthwhile these areas need to be strimmed. The Council should therefore play their part in maintaining the level of service.

He had been told that obstacle spray is normally carried out in March prior to the commencement of grass cutting, but this was missed and had resulted in all obstacles including signs, lamp posts, benches, trees and fence lines looking unkempt. It had been agreed to give these obstacles a one off strim to improve the current appearance of these areas.

It was unanimously agreed that this was not a satisfactory solution – in the past a strimmer had attended at the same time as the grass cutter, and where necessary, had been strimmed to keep the areas around posts and fences neat and tidy. The maintenance contract should not have been amended to reduce the standard of service and the Clerk was asked to advise the local authority that regular strimming should be part of the scheduled maintenance contract.

The Clerk had been advised that FHDC had a four year cyclical inspection regime for all trees owned by the District and any work, which is identified to address H&S concerns/statutory nuisance concerns is actioned.

It was confirmed that:-

Lark Hill - the greens and the trees that stand on the greens are owned and maintained by FHDC.

Church Road - the green area opposite 20-30 Church Road and the trees that stand in this area are owned and maintained by FHDC.

Tweed Close – the green areas behind 2-24 Benefield Road, and the trees that stand in this area are owned and maintained by FHDC.

Maltings Close – the grass verges in Malting Close are cut by FHDC, but owned by Suffolk County Council who are responsible for the trees.

**Play Equipment** – the Clerk had received a complaint from a resident concerning the use of the Cable Way on a Saturday night after midnight. It was thought this was related to an event which had been held at the village hall. The music had stopped sometime prior to the disturbance. The Clerk had replied advising that the Village Hall bookings secretary has been asked to ensure that anyone hiring the hall for an event is requested not to use the play equipment, albeit sited on a public recreation ground, after dusk, and that the quiet enjoyment of neighbouring home owners is fully respected.

Subsequently, the hall hire rules had been amended to include “no use of play equipment after 8pm by children partying in the Hall and adults were not allowed on the equipment at any time.”

**Grass covered mound** – due to the dry weather the grass had worn, exposing the soil which would be washed off in the event of heavy rain. It was proposed that some safety matting be purchased. The Vice Chairman advised that interlocking rubber mats 9 foot square could be purchased from Amazon at a discounted price of £49.99 plus £4.99 delivery for 4 mats. It was resolved that the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Cllr Douglas James should consider the options and purchase the required matting to stabilise the surface of the mound.

The annual safety audit had been received and circulated along with Forest Heath District Council’s monthly inspection report. All findings were within the low or very low risk factor, and the Chairman and Vice Chairman undertook to monitor these and recommend action when it was deemed necessary.

**Infestation of rabbits** – rabbits were damaging the surface of the playing field and village green as well as fouling the area. It was agreed to seek the advice of CRC Pest Control, as if unchecked there was concern that it could lead to a health and safety issue.

**The river bank** – Ken Hutchinson had carried out the spring cut in the second week of June. The Chairman pointed out that dependent on growth it may require another cut before the Duck Race and BBQ on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> August.

**Track around the village green** – the Chairman and Cllr Douglas James had laid the planings recently purchased from D Haird.

The Clerk reported that it had been agreed in September 2017 to charge all 9 residents bordering the green an annual fee of £25, being a contribution towards the total cost of maintaining the access tracks. After some discussion regarding the level of the contribution it was agreed that the Clerk should ask for this sum in September.

**Working Party** – clearance of the tree belt between playing field and meadow.

This had not taken place on 26<sup>th</sup> May and the volunteers were asked if they would be available to help on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> September, before the start of the football season.

**Phone Box** – had now been fitted out. Cllr Ed Chambers was thanked for this work.

Councillors were asked now that it had been refurbished should it be covered for insurance purposes. It was resolved to overview the existing all risks cover on parish assets before the renewal date on 1<sup>st</sup> October, and take a decision at the September meeting.

**Recycling Centre** – village hall car park – the blue bin was continually being filled with unsuitable litter, and the lid forced. This had been reported to the District Council and it was suggested that it should be removed to prevent contamination and fly tipping around the bins.

**LAND REGISTRY - application to register rights of way to No 4 the Green.** The Clerk advised that she had been contacted by a solicitor acting for the owner of 4 The Green. The property was to be registered with the Land Registry to record change of the ownership and the solicitor wanted to add a clause to the Title Deeds regarding the right of way. The Clerk had been asked to supply a clause and she asked councillors to consider the necessary wording to protect the Council's interest.

*"The registered proprietor of No 4 The Green undertakes to pay on demand to the Parish Council a sum, as agreed, and currently £25 (payable annually in September) being a contribution towards the cost of future maintenance of the tracks around The Green (Registered Title SK375257) over which the owner of No 4 has vehicle access to gain entry to the said property under the 1895 Byelaw by way of the track bordering the Green and the river bank. This licence does not extend to the parking of vehicles for any period of time save for the loading or unloading of goods"*

The Clerk was asked to pass this clause by the Solicitors, and if they were not content with this proposal they were to be advised that the Parish Council would therefore need to instruct a solicitor to act on their behalf, and this would be chargeable to their client.

## **FINANCIAL MATTERS**

**Payment of Accounts** - the Council confirmed and authorised the payment of the accounts presented at the meeting, as per the list detailing payments for the 2018/2019 financial year previously circulated and attached to the minute book.

**Audit of Accounts** –The Clerk/RFO advised that the annual return had been sent off to the external auditors PKF, the period for the exercise of public rights had been published, and would run from 04/6/18 to 13/7/18. A copy of the accounting statement, noting that it was unaudited and subject to change, and a copy of the annual governance statement had also been published.

On receipt of the conclusion of audit notice payment of the audit fee was authorised.

### **Review of Expenditure to date**

A schedule detailing income and expenditure to date had been circulated, and the Clerk had produced the bank reconciliation, which had been approved by the Chairman, confirming a balance of £58,198.30

## **SUFFOLK ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS**

Updates were now circulated every Friday in the format of an EBulletin – this comprised mainly of briefings from other organisations and no longer contained specific local parish information and/or guidance relevant to small rural parishes

The June Area meeting had been cancelled.

**The next meeting of the Council was fixed for Monday 24th September at 6.30 at the School. There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.30 pm.**

**Signed** Bill Rampling

**Date** 24/9/2018