

Minutes of the meeting of Moulton Parish Council held at Moulton School on Monday 25th February 2019 at 6.30 pm.

Present	Cllrs	W Rampling Chairman	D Clarke
		D James	T James
		M Price	E Chambers
		R Wallwork	Rachel Webb

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - Cllr Peter Collin (excused due to personal commitments).

ALSO PRESENT – the Clerk, County Councillor Robin Millar, District Councillor Roger Dicker, and 2 members of the public.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST – D James (village maintenance contract)

COMMUNITY SPEED WATCH

Update – nothing further to report since the last meeting – speed checks were planned in the village during the coming week.

Speed Display Signs were delivered on 18th January, and installed at the 2 agreed locations at either end of the village. Cllr Clarke asked if it would be possible to site the Dalham Road sign on the bank adjacent to his property, as this would slow the traffic at the start of the built up area. Currently cars were speeding up to the sign, and the reduced speed was only apparent by the time traffic was passing St Peters Avenue and Church Road.

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th January 2019 had been circulated, and it was unanimously agreed that these should be signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

MATTERS ARISING

All covered under agenda items.

COUNTY COUNCIL MATTERS

HIGHWAY MATTERS

Safe active travel path - including request for a 30 mph speed restriction on B1085 between the parish boundary and the School, and a safe walkable route from the School to Kentford.

A copy of the notes of the Highways meeting held on 4th January had been circulated.

Key points included:-

The priority was speed limit reduction. Belinda Godbold had indicated that officers would revisit an investigation subject to payment of an admin fee of £1,000.00. Cllr Millar had agreed to fund this.

If approved, the implementation costs had been estimated at between £5,000 to £10,000. It was suggested that Moulton should work with Kentford to secure the funding needed to achieve the reduction. It was viewed that this sum was excessive, and the Parish Councils would require the CC to justify the charges.

The long term aim was to provide safe pedestrian/cycleway along the grass verge. A feasibility study would need to be commissioned and the estimated cost for this was

£1,000.00. Highways Officer David Chenery was to write a brief on the engineering options for the bend, and the Chairman agreed to talk to the landowner to see whether there was a possibility of acquiring land to enable the footway to be installed on the opposite side. Belinda Godbold undertook to contact BT to find out the nature of the proposed work planned on the verge to lay cables, and when this was planned. She was also to check to see if any funding was available to encourage sustainable travel to help fund the footway. Belinda was to ask the Public Health and the External Funding teams if any money was available to encourage sustainable modes of travel – see changes in the School Travel policy. Cllr Millar advised councillors that he had met officers in December when an alternative proposal had been put forward. It was suggested that School Road should be closed (other than for local access) and it should be turned into a Green Route. This would afford a safe, albeit indirect route between the 2 villages, via The Boys Grave and the Bury Road. It was viewed by officers to be affordable and deliverable. Councillors were not convinced – the route was indirect, too long and did not afford an acceptable link to the railway station, or walk to school route. In addition, the closure of School Road to through traffic, which would be diverted to the Bell at Kennett, would result in even greater congestion at the road junction. The closed off School Road would become a target for illegal parking, fly tipping and could be used for illegal temporary settlements. It was resolved that this option was not viable, and negotiations should continue to pursue the safe walkable/cycle route along the B1085 between the 2 villages.

School Travel Policy

Details of the changes taking effect from September 2019 had been circulated. The introduction was being phased, but all parents had to opt-in by 31st May for school travel (if eligible) as this would no longer be provided automatically.

The County Council had suggested that parish councils could facilitate and encourage sustainable travel to school by reporting these changes in newsletters, displaying posters and by considering whether improvements could be made to school walking and cycling routes.

Flooding School Road – Flowline attended on 11th January but were unable to deal with the drainage ditch by the carpark, as it was deemed necessary to close the road. The outlets on the school side of the road were washed through. It was believed that the ditch opposite the entrance to the school may have been cleared out over the half term break.

School Road and Chippenham Road – drainage issues – Flowline were not instructed to inspect the drains here whilst in the village but it was understood that this had been programmed for action in February. An email from the resident on Chippenham Road to Cllr Millar detailing the Highways Authority lack of professionalism and ongoing failure to rectify the blockage had been circulated. It was hoped that the drain would be attended to at an early date, and Cllr Millar undertook to chase this up.

New Grit Bins – the bins on St Peters Avenue and Maltings Close had been stocked with the salt piles delivered in error in September. The one on Gazeley Hill by the entrance to Primrose Hill Farm needed filling and despite numerous requests from 10th December to the Winter Team, Customer Services, and finally a complaint to the Cabinet Member for Highways and C Cllr Robin Millar, this section of Gazeley Hill had no stock pile of salt for the freezing conditions at the beginning of February.

Following intervention by Cllr Mary Evans' assistant the situation was finally resolved 8 weeks after the initial request. All the grit bins in Moulton were full on 7th February. A parishioner had generously agreed to fund the cost of the bin on Gazeley Hill.

County Councillor Locality Budget Funding – the Chairman and Clerk had met Cllr Millar on 18th February and he had confirmed that he would make a contribution of £1,000 towards the cost of the VAS signs, and £1,000 to fund the admin cost for the extension to the speed limit on the B1085. It was necessary for the applications to be processed before 14th March due to the forthcoming local elections, and Cllr Millar had been advised on this deadline.

DISTRICT COUNCIL

LOCAL LETTINGS POLICY & HOUSING STRATEGY

The Chairman had been invited to a meeting with the Portfolio Holder for Housing Mrs Sara Mildmay-White and parish representatives from Ousden, Lidgate and Dalham to discuss the delivery of affordable housing. A copy of the notes of the meeting had been circulated. In addition the Assistant Director for Families and Communities at West Suffolk had pointed out to Cllr Millar that the more local lettings policies that were put in place the more difficult it was to place people from the housing register.

A press release had been circulated advising that all those on the housing list had to re-register so that their information could be processed in readiness for a new IT database coming into force on 1st April. Applicants would still be assessed in line with the existing housing policy.

Kim Barnes-Clark has been appointed as the new Families and Communities admin officer- contact details kim.barnes-clark@westsuffolk.gov.uk

PLANNING MATERS

APPLICATIONS :-

4 Park Close – application to fell 1 conifer and 1 leylandi had been received and it had been agreed that the Council did not wish to make any comments.

DETERMINATIONS APPROVED - Amended plans for 1 dwelling and detached 3 bay garage at **15 Brookside**.

PLANNING NEWSLETTER – an update on planning procedures and policy had been circulated. Quarterly newsletters would be sent out in future.

NEED FOR AN A14/A11 LINK ROAD - An email from the Chairman of Kentford PC had been circulated to all the village reps in the District regarding the ongoing concerns at the lack of a link road. The Chairman reported that Moulton shared these concerns which particularly impacted upon parishioners leaving or entering the village via the B1085/1506 crossroads at The Bell.

He had suggested that those parishes who wish to get involved should co-ordinate a plan and put forward a defined route, taking into account the effect this will have on longer term development. To legitimise this, a meeting would need to be held so that a strategy could be formalised and agreed by all parties.

HATCHFIELD FARM

The Clerk advised that on behalf of the RPA and Moulton Parish Council, she had submitted a formal response to the Secretary of State in advance of the reopening of the Hatchfield Farm

inquiry based on the submission following the November 2018 – January 2019 formal consultation to the Masterplan.

The Chairman of Herringswell Parish Council had contacted the Clerk and asked if Cllr Rampling would be prepared to consider retaining his role within the RPA following his retirement from Moulton PC in May. He had already given a lot of time to planning matters surrounding Hatchfield Farm and the formation of the FHDC local plan, and it was felt that it would be of great benefit to the RPA if he would continue to be the Moulton representative for this group.

It was unanimously agreed that the Chairman should continue to be the Moulton representative, but it was acknowledged that this decision would need to be ratified by the new Council.

KENNETT GARDEN VILLAGE – amendments had been published to include changes to transport issues previously identified. The impact of the recently withdrawn East Cambs Local Plan, following the Inspector's view that significant modifications would be required was considered along with the resultant delay on any decision to develop this site. The Chairman suggested that villagers in the area would need to take a balanced view on whether they were in favour of accepting large scale development here to acquire the much needed link road to alleviate the congestion and in particular HGVs. This would only get support and funding on the back of a significant increase in number of properties on the site.

VILLAGE MAINTENANCE – Cllr Douglas James had declared an interest and took no part in the discussion for this agenda item.

The 3 year village maintenance contract with Pack Horse Fencing had terminated at the end of March 2015, and had continued on a yearly basis as specified in a letter of engagement. The Council had resolved to abandon the previous practice of advertising and seeking tenders from maintenance contractors in Suffolk and Norfolk every 3 years. Packhorse Fencing's rate had proved to be competitive. Douglas James lived in the village and when necessary was available on immediate notice to meet village needs for special events and there was no compelling reason to award the contract to an outside operator who would have to travel into the village, and carry out the works to a set time scale and schedule regardless of weather conditions. The flexibility afforded by Packhorse Fencing had been demonstrated to the Council that it was in the village's best interest, and it would not be practical to seek competitive tenders. In addition, it was acknowledged with thanks that he undertook numerous jobs and extra cuts at no extra charge.

In view of the above the Chairman proposed that Packhorse Fencing should be contracted again, but for a period of three years (to be terminated by either party on giving 3 months notice in writing) as per the previously circulated specification. It was unanimously resolved to agree this, at the rate of £413.60 per cut, plus the annual rpi increase, as per the updated specification attached to the minute book Page 1228.

PLAY AREA & SAFETY INSPECTIONS – the latest safety report was acknowledged and had been circulated.

The Clerk advised that following the newly created single district council authority of West Suffolk on 1st April, the monthly playground inspection and annual safety audit would be undertaken without charge for the next 2 financial years.

New spikes were needed for the cradle swings and Cllr Price had installed these.

The cradle swings and slide needed to be repainted within the next couple of months when weather conditions prevailed.

PLAYING FIELD – the Pre School had been running for 45 years, and were planning to hold a fund raising event to celebrate this on 17th May. Permission had been requested to hold a sponsored run on the playing field, and involve the community with some stalls etc.

The portable goal posts were still creating problems as they were being moved without the consent of the Council. This was a safety concern, contravening the terms of the insurance cover, and their location off the centre of the pitch was to protect the playing surface from excessive wear between matches.

It had been pointed out to the football representatives that the facility had been made available for matches and general use, on the basis that the user groups would act in a responsible manner having regard to safety and the care of the playing surface. The goals had to be relocated with care, and from time to time screws became loose and need tightening. The Parish Council had hoped that the management team would help to maintain and care for the facility, and would ensure that the managers, coaches, footballers and villagers adhered to the rules, and took responsibility for the equipment the Parish Council had provided for their use and enjoyment.

It was unfortunate that a number of visitors were abusing the facility, and it was agreed, with regret, that there was no alternative but for the goals to be locked away between matches if they continued to be moved. This would be to the detriment of villagers who may wish to enjoy the facility.

Cllr Price advised that the goals would be relocated to the village green for the duration of the Easter school holidays.

VILLAGE GREEN – fitness classes

The Council had agreed that the personal trainer should be given a trial period to see whether his outdoor classes took off, and how many participants were involved on a weekly basis. The Chairman reported that there was sufficient support to continue and hopefully participation would increase. The Parish Council was keen to encourage healthy life style and exercise in the community and resolved that they should support this venture, whilst needing to be mindful of the impact the classes might have on those living in the vicinity of the Village Green. All participants were to be asked not to park on the Green or the surrounding tracks, which were for authorised users gaining access to their properties.

It was proposed to offer a licence for use of the Village Green on a quarterly basis, initially at a cost of £25 per quarter, which would be subject to review at the end of each period.

The licence was to stipulate that no music should be played during the sessions, there was no sole use of this public open space and there were no facilities on site.

The Council noted that the trainer had all the necessary insurance.

The Clerk was asked to make contact and ask for full details of the times and days the classes would operate, and request agreement to the proposal and a cheque for £25 to cover the initial period to 31st March. Following an update on the scheme in early April, the Council would then consider if it were mutually agreeable to renew on a quarterly basis.

OAK BENCH – insurance claim

As agreed at the last meeting the Council had obtained a quotation from a local craftsman to manufacture, supply and fit a locally sourced oak bench of similar design to the one destroyed as a result of vehicle impact. A quote for £1,500 was presented at the meeting and it was agreed that this should be passed to the Claims Representative appointed by the Insurers to deal with the matter. It was understood that a letter before action had already

been sent to the driver's insurers advising them of the claim.

WORKING PARTY - further work on the clearance of the tree belt between the playing field and meadow had been carried out in January and February. A tree had fallen down some weeks ago and the Chairman and Vice Chairman carried out a risk assessment on 23rd February and were of the view that having cut back the invasive ivy from the trees, there should be no issue with further instability, but would continue to monitor the situation.

A parishioner had drawn the Council's attention to a grant facility for free trees/hedges operated by the Woodland Trust <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/free-trees/> and the Chairman agreed to contact them and order a mixed supply of young trees for planting.

NEWMARKET ROAD – despite reporting the encroachment of grass onto the public footway – to date this had not been cleared outside Hempstead Lodge and by Nos 17-27

OVERHANGING LEYLANDII HEDGE – the Chairman said he would take this up with the owner of the adjacent property on the corner of St Peters Avenue and request that he addressed the public safety concerns.

LITTER PICK/SPRING CLEAN AND MAINTENANCE DAY – this was fixed for 23rd March starting at 9.30 am at the Village Hall. There was to be the usual agreement to share the cost of refreshments between the Council and VH Management Committee.

It was suggested that the road bridge over the river by the Church was now in urgent need of attention. Having failed to obtain a supply of paint from the County Council on a self help scheme last year – it was resolved that the Council would have to purchase the paint, and then the Scouts were willing to carry out the work under supervision.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

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

Annual Street Lighting Contract – the energy cost per unit had increased from £12.75 to £15.75 and the bill totalling £1,270.04 inclusive of VAT was approved for payment

Grant Aid – annual subscription Campaign to Protect Rural England £36.00 – approved.

Internal Audit of Accounts – the Clerk reported that Mr David Unwin had completed the review and internal audit of the Council's books and records for the current financial year. He had written to the Chairman advising that the records continue to be maintained to a high standard and he was satisfied that the appropriate controls and systems were in place to enable the Council to discharge its financial obligations in an acceptable manner.

A copy of the Finance Working Group's report into the **effectiveness of the internal audit** had been circulated. It was resolved that members were satisfied that the Council had maintained an adequate and effective audit of the accounting records and of its system of internal control in accordance with proper practice, and should adopt this review in its entirety. This resolution was unanimously agreed.

Annual Report - a copy had been circulated and published in the latest edition of Moulton Matters.

Parish Council Elections – 2nd May 2019

The 2019 SALC Elections Briefing had been circulated.

The Parish election was due to take place on 2nd May. Completed nomination papers had to be handed into West Suffolk House between 25th March and not later than 12 noon Wednesday 3rd April. The Clerk had sent out a letter of explanation and a set of papers to each of the currently serving councillors.

The Returning Officer would notify the Clerk by close of business on 4th April the names of the persons nominated, and advise if there was to be a contested election. The cost for administering an uncontested election would be £21.34. If the election were to be contested an additional charge of up to £2,000 would be raised on the parish.

Those persons elected or nominated (uncontested election) take office on Tuesday 7th May.

SUFFOLK ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS – the receipt of various E bulletins had been circulated, and were acknowledged.

The SALC briefing paper on the guide to annual meetings had been circulated.

It had been previously suggested that the date for the **Annual Parish Meeting** would be Monday 8th April at 7pm at the Village Hall, and a brief Council meeting would be held at 6.15pm to sign off the accounts.

However SALC had advised that extra care must be taken not to platform the achievements of the existing Council, if an election was to be held. It was therefore suggested that the meeting should be postponed until later in the month of April, so that there would be sufficient time to cancel the APM, in the event of an election on 2nd May. In that case the meeting would need to be held in May.

If there was an uncontested election the APM could take place in April, and a short Parish Council meeting to sign off the accounts and deal with urgent business would precede this. It was proposed to re-schedule the meetings to Monday 15th April – starting at 6.15pm with the APM at 7pm

The **annual meeting of the Council** would need to take place between Wednesday 8th and Thursday 23rd May, and it was resolved that a date would be fixed at the April meeting.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.35 pm.

Signed *David Almond*

Date *8/5/2019*

Packhorse Fencing
For the attention of Mr Douglas James

Moulton Parish – Village Maintenance Contract 2019/2020

You have been contracted by the Council for general grass cutting, weeding, strimming and hedge cutting under an agreement drawn up in 2012. The Council resolved at the meeting held on 25th February to renew the contract for three years to 31st March 2022, (subject to termination by either party on giving 3 months notice in writing). The specification includes:-

1. Cutting the village green, both ways at each cut
 2. Cutting of the area around the recreation ground, and strimming around the play equipment and trees. Cutting the pitch to a level suitable for ball games. Should extra cutting be required by the football club currently hiring the pitch, then any extra cutting for match requirements must be negotiated directly with Club representatives.
 3. Cutting and strimming of the grass areas around the village hall.
 4. The general cutting and strimming of the other grass areas, which are marked on the enclosed plan, including the river bank along Brookside previously cut by Mr John James dec'd.
 5. Sweep out, generally clean and apply disinfectant to floor of bus shelter on the Newmarket Road.
 6. The cutting of the beech hedge outside the Village Hall. This should be separately itemised in your quote, and will probably only need to be cut once per annum.
- Additional village maintenance is required as and when requested by the Council and is charged separately on an hourly basis. You also carry out 3 checks of the play equipment each month at a cost of £11.50 per inspection.

The contract is mainly for the extent of the growing season – starting week commencing 1st April, and the number of visits will be determined by weather conditions, but average attendance should be on a two weekly basis. Usually the cutting season finishes by the end of October. During the season the grass shall not be allowed to grow to a length of more than 75mm, and shall not be longer than 25 mm after cutting.

Prior to every cut, all grass areas should be cleared of rubbish, leaves, litter and stones, and the cost of the removal should be included in the rate. In addition where rough areas have been cut and clippings fall onto adjacent paths, playground safety surfacing, etc, these must be cleared. As you are well aware care needs to be taken to cut as closely as possible to edges and around obstructions, and extreme care must be taken when cutting around trees. Please note that the Contractor is to be solely responsible for the safety of his machines, and for any damage that may be caused to such machines, or to any person or any property, which suffers as a result of his actions. You will be required to hold necessary and adequate insurance cover.

The rate is currently £413.60 per cut, and will be subject to review to reflect the annual rpi increase.