

Minutes of the meeting of Moulton Parish Council held at Moulton School on Monday 2nd March 2020 at 6.30 pm.

Present	Cllrs	D Almond Chairman	D Clarke
		J Derry	Tim James
		R Bragg	Jane Horsnell
		D James	

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Cllrs M Price, and Ed Chambers excused due to prior engagements. C Cllr Andy Drummond.

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

DECLARATION OF INTEREST – J Derry (Planning 22a The Street) & Douglas James (village maintenance contract)

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th January 2020 had been circulated, and it was unanimously agreed that these should be signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

COUNTY COUNCIL MATTERS

County Councillor – Andrew Drummond had been elected to serve the Newmarket and Red Lodge Ward. A copy of his February 2020 Parish Newsletter had been circulated. It was hoped that in future he would be able to give a report into specific matters relating to Moulton parish, including an update on Highway and Footpath concerns.

HIGHWAYS

The Chairman reported that he had met the newly elected County Councillor Andy Drummond to briefly discuss all the outstanding issues and concerns, prior to the long awaited meeting with the Cabinet Member. Cllr John Derry had agreed to accompany him to the meeting which had been fixed for 10.30 at the Rougham depot on 31st March. It was suggested that it would be more appropriate if the meeting could take place in Moulton. The Cabinet Member represented Wilford, near Woodbridge in East Suffolk, and it was felt it would be more beneficial if he could see first-hand the longstanding concerns and issues which affected Moulton village.

In the meantime the list of unresolved matters included

Chippenham Road - the jet is still stuck due to defective pipework and is listed for future drainage works but did not qualify for the 20/21 programme. Surface water will continue to pond on the opposite side of Chippenham Road due to the drain being higher than the previously renewed road surface, rather than a defect to the underground pipes. This will only be resolved and the route made safe for pedestrians if the road were resurfaced around the drain or if it were lowered.

The ditch running from the road down the side of the Carrot Wash site needed digging out where the outlet pipe drained from the layby outside Nos 24 & 26. The Clerk had asked the landowner's agent if this were possible so that the necessary flow could be achieved.

Currently ground conditions due to the excessive amount of rain had delayed this, although the Estate had confirmed that they would look into this.

Newmarket Road – the County Council had advised that there were no future plans to regrade the road. The surface water was not substantial enough to warrant action and neither would the ponding by the bus stop. This was noted, but the PC were of the view that this needed to be prioritised due to the close proximity to the bus stop and the surface water was on the walk to school route.

School Road – the ditch on the verge opposite the school by the layby required maintenance to allow water to drain off the road. Whilst the County Council may have cleared this ditch in the past, the Highways Records team were investigating the ownership of the ditch. If it belonged to the adjacent landowners, a ditch notice, detailing what action needed to be carried out, would be sent to them. This was noted and the PC awaited the result of the investigations.

Cheveley Road - following surface dressing the junction with the B1085 was already breaking up. The CC Surface Dressing Team was investigating and the PC were awaiting an update.

Signage & Road Markings – the repainting of the SLOW signs on **Gazeley Hill** had finally been carried out. But the white lines, and warning triangle (upside down) at the junction of Brookside and Bridge Street had not been repainted at the same time. The missing road markings had been logged under reference 00269255 and the SLOW warning mark which had totally worn away, under 00270354. Worn junction lines at Maltings Close/Newmarket Road junction had been reported under 00269952.

Improved signage and road markings at junction of B1506/School Road - the CC had advised that the site would be considered and prioritised against all other potential signage works but Give Way signs would not be replaced by STOP signs. The PC had reported that there had been a road traffic accident at this junction sometime since the start of the year – all road signage was demolished and the wreckage was on the verge. Reported under reference number 00269258. The PC requested that this site must be prioritised as this was a fast flowing busy B road. Crossing vehicles were a serious safety concern & at high risk. Better signage was essential including a STOP rather than GIVE WAY sign.

School Road – worn pedestrian crossing markings outside school gate to car park. As the crossing was not a recognised road marking in terms of the regulations, and with a limited budget the Highways Authority was not willing to refresh. The PC had replied stating that the school crossing was part of a road safety scheme which was deemed necessary when installed. The crossing may not be a standard Highways marking but should be recognised as a health & safety feature which must be re-instated to enhance safe passage of children from the school gate to the car park. Vehicles travel at speed down this road.

Road bridge Church Road – in poor condition, lead paint flakes falling into river, railings in poor condition and posts rusted. The bridge deck also needed maintaining and the PC had been advised that this would increase the likelihood of action being taken. An update on proposed date for repair was awaited.

40mph speed restriction along the B1085 from School to Kentford this longstanding request by both Moulton and Kentford Parish Councils for a continuous 40mph limit for just over 1 km in length was now supported by the newly elected County Councillor, and it would be followed up at the meeting with the Cabinet Member for Highways on 31st March. In the

meantime Matt Hancock MP had been in touch with the Cabinet Member supporting the PC's request that the route be considered an exception site

Safe Active Travel Plan – the PC was unanimously of the view that a short 40 mph buffer zone would not enhance safety along the length of the B1085 for existing pedestrians and cyclists. The CC were not keen to encourage use of a route already assessed as 'not safe for an accompanied school age child' and did not support the PC's view that the reduction of the speed limit along the whole length should be put in place before improvements to the verge to create a safe route between the villages.

A copy of an estimate for an extension of the footway from the Carrot Wash site to connect with footpath 4 had been circulated. The more cost effective option was a hoggin type semi-permeable surface at an estimated total cost of around £42,500. A shared fully bound cycle/footway 3m wide would cost around £310,000.

The Senior Transport Planner had submitted this proposal for pedestrian connectivity – but it failed to address the need of a safe route between Moulton and Kentford, a safe walking route from Kentford to Moulton school, and a safe cycle/pedestrian route from Moulton to Kennett station.

It was agreed that the long term strategic aim was to improve pedestrian/cycle connectivity between the villages, school and station and to this end there was no merit in considering a stand-alone scheme with a semi-permeable surface.

Other issues

Last autumn Cllr Millar had asked Highway officers to investigate **safety concerns in the vicinity of the Packhorse Bridge and junction with Brookside and Gazeley Hill**. The PC's suggestion of a 20mph speed limit on Bridge Street leading down to the Packhorse Bridge had been considered but had to meet CC criteria to justify. As there had been no recorded road injury accidents, a speed survey would need to be carried out, to justify a 20mph limit and would require local funding in excess of £5,000 to implement a speed limit. The CC could also look at additional warning signs, subject to payment by the PC. It was resolved to take no further action at the present time. The Council's main priority was the speed limit on the B1085 and all available resources were to be concentrated on this safety enhancement, before others could be considered.

Potholes on Brookside near the 'pretty' footbridge had been reported under ref. 0027035. The reported potholes on the junction of Newmarket Road/The Street ref. 00267920 had been viewed as not warranting remedial action. **Footways** - it was also reported that there was a build-up of moss on the pavements along Maltings Close creating a slip hazard, and the pavement at the junction of Bridge Street and the B1085, by the newly installed seat was uneven and a serious trip hazard on this well used section of footway in the centre of the village.

PUBLIC FOOTPATHS

Griffiths Yard - the Public Rights of Way officer was of the view that the installation of waymark signs might be seen as acceptance of the newly installed wooden gates, currently under investigation. The Clerk had disputed this - waymark signs on the wrought iron pedestrian gate would give clarity to visitors regarding the permitted access along the public footway No 6, and the Parish Council had offered to install these. This would prevent further delay (first requested 8 months ago). The Clerk was asked to follow up her last (of many) email dated 8th January 2020.

DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cllr Dicker gave a briefing on recent Council matters affecting Moulton parishioners.

These mainly concerned the newly enforced arrangements for the Local Authority to take over responsibility from the Constabulary for parking enforcement, car parking charges in Newmarket, and the increase in Council Tax for 2020/21 – the previous Forest Heath area up by 7.7% compared with 0.9% for St Edmundsbury area.

The agenda for the West Suffolk Parish and Town Forum on the 17th of March at Newmarket Memorial Hall 6pm – 8pm had been circulated. The agenda would include presentations by Tom Delaney – West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group ‘The local Health and Wellbeing picture across communities’ and Amy Wright – West Suffolk Council – ‘the local plan as an opportunity for parish and town councils to engage prior to the formal consultation’.

Councillors were unavailable to attend this meeting.

COMMUNITY SPEED WATCH

Cllr Tim James advised that there had been few checks due to the bad weather, but one had recently been carried out in the vicinity of the School. There had been limited evidence of speeding here on that day. Similarly the last check near the Pack Horse Bridge had not shown up any obvious speeding issues.

The local constabulary would be able to give some assistance in the provision of parts for the speed guns in future.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

22a The Street - 2 Bay Cart Lodge

A letter from the applicant explaining the history of this application had been circulated. 16 years ago permission was given for an identical structure (F/2009/0744/EOT) save for the more recent removal of a diseased walnut tree which enabled the location to be moved further back from the boundary with NO 26 The Street (approx. 2m). The proposed overall height of the structure is 4.5m, being 2.5m in height to the eaves.

There was some discussion over the proposals and design of the cart lodge, and on balance councillors were minded to make no comments regarding the proposals.

Unanimously resolved – no comment

15 Brookside – variation to approval DC/18/1865

A small number of changes to the first floor bedroom accommodation, and an amendment to the layout of the ground floor living room and repositioning of the utility area had been submitted and had been circulated. These resulted in a modest increase in the floor area to the rear, and corresponding amendments to the layout and elevations, although the overall dimensions broadly accorded with the original approved drawings.

Unanimously resolved - support

5 Brookside – application to fell 1 conifer. Tree listing towards neighbouring property.

There was concern that it may fall.

Unanimously resolved – support subject to a replacement tree being planted in the grounds.

PLANNING DETERMINATIONS

Re-submitted plans for the front porch and single storey rear extension **28 Church Road** approved.

Filberry Haven, Griffiths Yard – single storey side extension to existing garage and raising roof to form first floor annexe – approved and permitted only if occupied in conjunction with, and for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the existing dwelling. Together they shall form a single dwelling house. Cllr Dicker was asked to enquire whether this restriction applied to the sub-letting of the property.

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT SHELLA

Details of the SHELAA (Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment) report had been published on

https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/Planning_Policies/shlaa.cfm

This was not an assessment of whether the sites would be allocated in the future West Suffolk Local Plan nor did inclusion in the SHELAA imply or grant any planning permission. The document on previous call for sites process held no weight in decision making. A future call for sites would form part of the consultation when there would be the opportunity to submit sites for assessment in terms of suitability, availability and achievability, and that would form part of next year's SHELAA.

It was noted that Moulton PC's view that the boundary should be extended to reflect the properties which form part of the village around the playing field, village green and Brookside, as well as homes on Gazeley Hill and Griffiths Yard had not been taken into account and the sites in the consultation were recorded as being outside the existing settlement boundary and would remain deferred.

Marie Smith had made contact with the Chairman who reported that the time for making full representations to sites will be through the Local Plan consultation process commencing in late May. Any further queries were to be directed to Alex Pointer.

LOCAL PLAN

The Clerk had circulated details of the West Suffolk amended programme for the Local Plan, which would include the long-term planning and land use policies for the area. The programme could be viewed at: www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/supportinginformation
The first consultation stage of the Local Plan preparation process - "Issues and Options" would take place during May-July 2020.

PARISH COUNCIL PLANNING NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2020 had been circulated and the contents noted.

RURAL PARISHES ALLIANCE – Hatchfield Farm a decision following the third enquiry which ended last June was still awaited.

PLAYING FIELD & PLANS FOR THE 2020 FUN DAY

The Council had been approached by a Pre School representative regarding the possibility of hosting an organised Petting Farm at the Fun Day. Details of the company - Wycomb Pastures Mobile Farm had been circulated, together with details of the various packages and amount of space needed to put on such an event. The company had the required public liability insurance and provided the necessary fencing and hand sanitizer.

Councillors had considered these proposals and were of the view that all the necessary precautions were covered by the Company and that permission should be granted for a petting farm event on the playing field. Access could be obtained by the vehicle gate at the entrance to the village green, and Pre School representatives should liaise with Cllr Douglas James in the week leading up to the event, to agree plans for parking on the Green and access for the mobile farm, and the precise location for the farm animals (not in the centre of the football pitch or close to the play equipment). Permission was subject to all the usual constraints including the need to check the area for debris before the event, the area was to be fenced off, supervised at all times by Wycomb representatives, and all rubbish and refuse from the event cleared and taken away, and the area thoroughly checked to insure the site is left clear and in good order.

The Clerk advised that the Village Hall had been booked for monthly markets starting on Sunday 22nd March and running through until Sunday 26th July. The event planned to sell local produce, arts and crafts, & provide tea & coffee from 11am through til 3pm. The organiser of the monthly markets had asked if they might use the grass area outside the village hall or by the zip wire for an outdoor play event run by the company Kids Drive who provided fully supervised battery powered electric cars suitable for 3-7 year old children. This request was considered in detail, and it was viewed that the playing field was not a suitable venue during the football season, and certainly not this year due to the wet weather, and the need to preserve the playing surface from any additional wear and tear. It was resolved to initially grant permission for a Kids Drive event on Sunday 24th May, subject to the usual conditions, and payment of a licence fee of £30.00. However this would be conditional on further information being provided about the size of the area needed for the track. The playing field was a public open space open to all, and the event could not monopolise the area and would need to be contained in an area away from the zip wire and play equipment, and centre of the football pitch. It was suggested that the most appropriate siting would be to the meadow side of the pitch.

If the event proved to be a success and there were no concerns regarding the condition of the grass or other issues, the Council would then review the grant of permission on the same terms and conditions for the remaining Sunday market events on 28th June and 26th July.

MOULTON LITTER PICK had been fixed for Saturday 21st March – volunteers were to meet at the Village Hall car park at 9.30am. Coffee and bacon rolls would be provided afterwards, and the Council authorised the re-imburement of the cost. The Clerk confirmed that she would be collecting the equipment from the District Council on Friday 20th March and would deliver it all to the Chairman. He would liaise with Jill Goodwin, who on previous years had managed the event at the entrance to the Hall. Cllrs Douglas James and David Almond would collect the sacks of litter and arrange for these to be stacked by the recycling centre for collection, and the Chairman would return the equipment on the following Monday.

VILLAGE MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

Cllr Douglas James had declared an interest and took no part in the discussion which followed

A copy of the 3 year contract issued to Packhorse Fencing on 25th February 2019 had been circulated. The Council was asked to confirm the second year of the contract for the ongoing maintenance under the terms agreed, and subject to termination by either party on giving 3

months' notice in writing, and to an increase in the price per cut to reflect the annual rpi increase. This had been reviewed in April 2019 and the rate per cut had gone up from £413.60 to £423.53.

It was unanimously agreed to approve the ongoing contract with Packhorse Fencing for 2020/21.

PLAY EQUIPMENT – a copy of the January & February inspection reports had been circulated. There were no issues which needed attention for the time being.

DOG FOULING

Dog Bin – The Street

A parishioner had contacted the Council over concerns of the increased incidence of dog fouling on the public footpath from The Street to Lark Hill and asked if it were possible to install a bin on the footpath. It was pointed out that Moulton already had a large number of dog/or dual purpose bins around the village, and the District Council would not provide or empty any more due to budgetary considerations. Also they would not be in a position to empty a bin up a track - there had to be easy access.

Permission had been granted to relocate the bin on the grass verge on The Street opposite the entrance to the footpath to Lark Hill, on safety grounds. It had been moved a short distance along the B1085 and was located at the entrance to the playing field opposite the PO Stores

The Council had put up 2 additional dog fouling signs on the footpath, and the Chairman had drawn attention to the problem of dog fouling in the latest edition of Moulton Matters. It had been drawn to the Clerk's attention that the bin on Brookside located on the riverbank at the start of the footpath to Dalham and by the entrance to the Church was damaged, and was so well used that it was permanently overflowing. The Clerk asked the West Suffolk Council if they would be prepared to replace the damaged, and very well used bin, and was advised that all parishes are now paying for replacements and new bins.

A bin for both litter and dog waste in the same receptacle, made of steel, floor mounted and with a 112-litre capacity would cost £289.99 (+VAT) plus installation.

Cllr Dicker had generously offered to contribute 50% of the cost of a new bin, and the Council were asked to confirm agreement to the proposal.

WAYSIDE SEAT

The Clerk had obtained a specification and quotation for a plaque from Mildenhall Monumentals. They only made stone memorials and the estimate for a slate plaque was £60, plus £2.45 per letter, totalling £312.35.

This quote was on the high side and it was resolved to make further enquiries to seek out alternative quotes/specifications. The Clerk had already contacted Ivett & Reed for a quote for a bronze style of plaque, and further enquiries would be made.

PEST CONTROL

Currently CRC Pest Control charged an annual fee of £350 to control moles on the playing field and village green. It was reported that moles were now a serious problem around the open spaces in the village generally, and especially on the grass triangle at the junction of School Road and the B1085, and on the grass areas on the riverbank by the ford and near the Church. For an additional £200 per annum the contract could be extended to cover all

these areas and it was proposed and unanimously agreed to accept this quote for £550 plus VAT. The contractor had already, at the express authority of the Chairman, had taken action to deal with the infestation near the School and Church and a pro rata sum of £33.33 for the months of February and March 2020 was authorised on receipt of an additional invoice to 31/3/2020.

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 2019/2020 financial year, attached to the minute book.

Annual Street Lighting Contract – the annual street lighting invoice for £1,050.10 plus VAT of £210.02 had been received was approved for payment. This was marginally cheaper than the previous year as the energy cost was 1p per unit less.

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 and published on Page 1299 of the minutes.

Recruitment of Clerk - it was confirmed that adverts had been placed in the Newmarket Journal & Bury Free Press, and on-line, for the last 2 weeks in February at a cost of £625.00 plus VAT. Re-imburement of payment was approved (having been previously sanctioned by councillors). There had been 14 email enquiries to date. The Chairman advised that interested applicants were asked to submit their CV together with a letter of application setting out any additional information of relevance to the Clerk, who would circulate these to the members of the interview panel later in March. The Chairman, and Clerk along with Cllrs Price, Clarke, & Horsnell would decide how many of the applicants should be invited to attend an interview, with a decision being taken to offer the successful candidate the position in advance of the annual meeting of the parish council fixed for 20th May.

Update on plans for storage facilities in the Village Hall

Cllrs Ryan Bragg and David Clarke volunteered to assist in fitting out the room with required storage units/shelving and a work surface. The Chairman had discussed the storage of the village archive work with John Gunson, and it was agreed that his folders should be locked in the storage room as well. Now that most of the records had been digitalised, plans could be considered for the data to be made freely available to parishioners in the village hall. The Vice Chairman undertook to advise on this and had initially suggested a screen running from a USB portable drive (with USB slot) bolted to the reception table. Further consideration and discussion would need to take place with representatives from the Village Hall Management Committee.

It was also suggested that this digital data could be published on the village website and Elissa Rampling would need to be approached on this.

Annual Report - a draft copy had been circulated and would be finalised and published before the Annual Parish Meeting.

SUFFOLK ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Details of the dates for the 2 Area SALC meetings for 2020 had been circulated. The West Suffolk meetings were usually held on Tuesdays commencing at 7pm. The venue for the March 10th meeting was Bardwell and on 8th September it would be held in Freckenham. A further email had been circulated encouraging participation and pointing out that it was an opportunity to share and exchange information and receive updates on local and national issues. Due to prior engagements no councillor was able to represent Moulton at the March meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE

Details on East Cambs consultation on the draft supplementary planning documents on Natural Environment and Custom and Self-Build Housing had been circulated.

The agenda for the annual parish meeting was discussed and it was suggested that representatives from various village organisations, and the School, and new owners of the PO Stores should be invited to give brief updates on their work, plans, future events etc

The date for the annual parish meeting was confirmed – 6/4/2020 at the Village Hall at 7pm, a short administrative meeting to sign off the accounts etc would be held at 6.30pm (or earlier subject to any urgent agenda items).

The annual meeting of the Parish Council was confirmed for WEDNESDAY 20th May. There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.00pm.

Signed *David Almond*

Date *4/5/2020*

FINANCIAL WORKING GROUP REPORT
AND THE REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INTERNAL AUDIT AND CONTROLS FOR THE
YEAR ENDING 31.3.2020

The internal audit of the Council's financial and administrative records was completed in January 2020. The Honorary Auditor reported to the Chairman that the Parish Council's records continue to be maintained to a high standard, and he had no further comment to make on this. He was satisfied that the appropriate controls and systems were in place to enable the Parish Council to discharge its financial obligations in an acceptable manner. A further audit check will be carried out at the end of the financial year, following the completion of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return and a limited assurance audit review, and prior to submission of the accounts for the external audit.

The Parish Council's Finance Working Group comprising the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Cllr David Clarke were satisfied that the Council was maintaining an adequate and effective control of its accounting procedures and records in accordance with the proper practices. The internal audit had been completed by Mr David Unwin, a chartered accountant and partner of Baker Tilly in Bury St Edmunds. He took over from Mr Steve Pleass of Barclays Bank, in January 2009, the Internal Auditor for the previous 4 years, and prior to this date the Council benefited from the services of the District Council's audit department. The accounts and records had therefore always been subjected to a thorough internal audit process. During this time all parties were totally satisfied that the financial and administrative controls were entirely adequate and worked satisfactorily.

The Working Group had also re-assessed the systems of internal control. The records were checked in December 2019 and would be again in April 2020. The bank was reconciled on a regular basis. All cheques were countersigned by 2 members of the Council, and copies of all paid invoices were approved and signed by the Chairman. The Clerk reported the payment of bills to the Council at each meeting, and there was an up to date running schedule of payments. VAT was correctly accounted for and reclaimed. A proper budget process had been worked through, including precept calculation and was considered at the January 2020 meeting – as recorded on Page 1286 of the minute book.

Mrs Stone had maintained the Council's records for the past 34 years, and the councillors and auditors had at all times been entirely satisfied by the manner in which she had undertaken her duties, and had presented the accounts. In addition, the Council's Risk Assessment was reviewed annually and had been updated on 13/1/2020.

Fidelity Guarantee (Employee Dishonesty) Insurance Cover – the cover had been increased to £50,000. Review of Insurance – details of the cover were considered on 16/9/19 – it was agreed that the amount of cover was adequate and no changes were required at that time. The Clerk holds an Asset register, which is updated when necessary – the Council's property is checked against the register each April by the Clerk and Chairman.

Standing orders were revised and updated on 13/1/2014 and financial regulations are in place, and are reviewed regularly.

The Financial Working Group is of the view that the internal audit and controls were effective, and had been undertaken in a competent and thorough manner, and proposes that the Parish Council considers and adopts this report at their meeting on 2/3/2020.