

GREAT & LITTLE WHELNETHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Parish meeting held at Whelnetham Community Centre on Wednesday 11th September 2013.

Present

Chris Thomson - Chairman Rob Ireland
David Howes Peter Royce Howard Singh
Christine Peck - Parish Clerk
Terry Clements – St Edmundsbury Borough Councillor

Public Question Time

14 Members of Public, and a journalist from the Bury Free Press, attended from 730 pm to express concerns regarding the proposed parking spaces within the Railway Line. Their concerns were discussed prior to the meeting starting at 810pm. *Note to readers: we are advised that this discussion is not part of the formal council meeting and should not therefore be minuted. The concerns expressed were similar to those available to read on the St Edmundsbury website, all of which had been read by councillors before the meeting.*

1 Apologies for Absence

Tim Webber

2 Members Declaration of Interest

Howard Singh is a member of the Community Council Committee.

3 Railway Line

Chris proposed, and it was agreed, that Councillors should immediately proceed to discuss points made during public question time, so that members of the public could observe that debate.

Rob expressed support for the idea of better access but would like the Council to take time to explore alternative means of access.

Terry agreed that if the Council is spending precept money there should be good access for all. The Council could look at the ownership of the area on which some park at present but pedestrian access from there to the line was not ideal and any parking there was likely to cause as much inconvenience to neighbours as the area proposed. Terry added that since the Council had changed contractor there had been a vast improvement to the line.

Howard feels that many people in Great Whelnetham do favour the proposal but agrees that we should take time to look at alternatives that would accommodate the concerns expressed earlier.

David feels that there is not adequate access at present, particularly not for those with restricted mobility, the elderly and parents with small children. Nevertheless he felt that we should balance that against the concerns raised and look at alternatives.

Peter felt that the Council was doing the right thing to listen to what was said earlier and is concerned that there could be anti social behaviour.

Chris said that originally the council had been concerned that it was increasing spending on maintenance without giving good access to everyone who was paying. The preference had been to address that by improving access but it was clear that lead to other concerns. Another way would be to reduce expenditure and he was interested to see whether at least some of the maintenance could be undertaken by volunteers, on a similar basis to that which applied when the line was first taken on by the Council some 30 years ago.

He suggested that generally the will of Councillors seemed to be to take more time to explore alternatives so he suggested that the Council take no further action to progress the planning application until at least the meeting in November. In the meantime alternatives should be explored in the hope that an alternative liked by all will emerge. That was agreed unanimously.

As members of the public then started leaving the meeting Chris suspended the formal part of the meeting to thank them for coming. All members of the public left. The meeting was then resumed.

4 Meeting held on 10th July 2013 and matters arising

Minutes having been circulated to Councillors were signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

5 Police Matters

Although not attending, the Police reported the following crimes
Criminal damage dwelling in Gt Whelnetham on 5/8/13 during daylight hours a large stone thrown through front bay window.

Theft from a motor vehicle in Gt Whelnetham 14/8/13 petrol cap stolen.

Burglary Gt Whelnetham dwelling entered via rear kitchen window on 26/8/13 search conducted and a white gold ring stolen.

Burglary Little Whelnetham entry gained to a secure office on a rural industrial estate cashbox removed.

Police are now on Twitter @StEdsPolice

From their priority meeting on 10th September, they now have the following priorities

Speeding – enforcement and to update parishes of the results

Hare coursing – pre-emptive patrols
Burglary – active patrols

6 Chairman's Report

Chris reported that he had met with Lewis Woolnough, Elaine Overnell and Tom and agreed a plan for the cutting of Little Whelnetham churchyard based on two cuts per year.

Chris reported that third parties had criticised the Council for not holding a public meeting, posting signs, delivering flyers or otherwise consulting more widely before proposing the parking spaces. He had therefore sought advice from Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC), particularly to learn what the Council should do in future. In relation to the car parking proposal they advised that the planning authority is the decision making body, statutory notices advised people of their right to express views to them and they had done so. That was the proper procedure and it had been done correctly. More generally their advice is that meetings of the Council are open to the public. So long as notice of meetings is published and proposals are discussed in such meetings there is no obligation to do more.

Chris had also taken advice in relation to our Facebook page. We had agreed to have a website and Facebook page on which third parties could comment, on condition that we would not allow comments that were illegal, “unduly commercial” or offensive. Since the last meeting it had become apparent that the condition could not be met on Facebook. The Facebook page had therefore been taken offline. It was agreed that the page should be discontinued. SALC had confirmed that was the correct action for the Council to take. The website would continue to be available on the above basis. David proposed that we should add to our policy that we do not allow comments on planning applications made by us or by third parties, as the appropriate place for such comments is the planners’ website, not ours. That was agreed.

7 Updates

• Planning -

Mr and Mrs R Snelling 16 Raynsford Road Gt Whelnetham
Erection of single storey rear extension, demolition of existing conservatory.
PERMISSION GRANTED

Mr Farrow 4 Tutelina Road Gt Whelnetham
Erection of detached garage
PERMISSION GRANTED

Mr P Baldwin 4 Hambrook Close Gt Whelnetham
Two storey side extension

Mr P Kirkwood Newbury House Sudbury Road Sicklesmere

Retention of fence to rear boundary

Mr S Hitchcock Willowbrook House Sudbury Road Gt Whelnetham
Demolition of existing bungalow
Erection of two storey dwelling

Mark Elliott Old Premises Sudbury Road Gt Whelnetham
Fell three conifers, one holly, and one oak
Cut back hedge to boundary lift any overhanging trees to 3 metres

Parish Council objected to this application in view of fact that there seemed to be some confusion as to the boundary between the applicant's land and the railway walk. Revised plan now agreed, protecting the railway walk. No objection to revised plan.

- **Gt Whelnetham School -**

Parents Teachers and Friends Association (PTFA) Annual General Meeting is on 26th September.

Parent Partnership Courses are being held on three Monday mornings.

An E Safety evening is being held on 18th September.

Terry stated that Ofsted are currently visiting schools in the area and 30 are scheduled to have visits.

- **Transport -**

Peter reported that he had spoken to Guy Smith head of Suffolk County Council regarding the condition of the A134 road from Bury St Edmunds to Sicklesmere following resurfacing which was carried out in extreme heat. Guy Smith was meeting with the contractors and would be in touch. However, Peter had not heard prior to this meeting and he subsequently contacted Guy Smith who stated that the resurfacing season ended three weeks ago and possibly any further work would have to be left until next year, but he feels the road has stabilised and is in a safe condition, and cyclists are not at risk with the quantity of stones at the verge edge.

Terry stated that new contractors were taking over in October.

Peter had been made aware of an unsafe tree in Gt Whelnetham churchyard, Clerk would write to churchwarden to report this.

Peter reported that there were still some blocked drains in Stanningfield Road area by Erskine Lodge and junction of A134. Clerk would report this to Highways.

The footpath remains closed outside Sicklesmere House following collapse of wall. Howard confirmed this would take time to be completed as owner of the property had died within days of the incident.

- **Housing**

No known developments

- **Railway Walk** - dealt with above

- **Play area**

David reported that the new piece of equipment was on order and should be delivered within the next two – three weeks.

The fencing around the play area has been vandalised twice. Repaired by Tony Gillam. He has used the special substance to fill the gaps between the safety surface but unfortunately this was carried out on a very hot day hence it was not too successful and could be a tripping hazard. When the new equipment is installed, Tony will make enquiries as to how the tiles are fitted.

David suggested that a wall might be built on a tarmac area with goal posts painted on it for older children to kick a ball against. Considered a good idea, David to obtain estimates and then discuss with Howard and Community Council.

Peter suggested having vandal proof tables and seating.

Terry left the meeting at this point - 9.000pm

8 Correspondence

The Clerk had received the renewal for the insurance at a premium of £365.79 but with an option to receive a lower premium of £347.50 for taking a three year agreement or £329.21 for a five year agreement.

After discussion it was agreed to go for the five year guarantee.

9 Finance

Current a/c balance	£9,347.18	(checked with bank statement no. 47)
Direct Access	£1,131.13	
Total	£10,478.31	

Payments since last meeting	BDO external audit	£120.00
	Old Parsonage Garden Services	£840.00
	Mlt Architects	£880.70
	A Gillam play area repairs	£300.00
Payments to be approved -	HMRC PAYE	£ 99.00
	Clerk's expenses	£ 32.34
	A Gilliam play area repairs	£150.00

The Clerk reported that the books had been returned by the external auditor and there were no issues to report, other than an explanation was requested as to why we spent £1,854 less in this financial year compared to the previous period.

10 Any other business

David enquired as to whether the gate at the end of the pathway to the main road opposite Cocks Green Lane from the Railway Line could be repaired as the posts were rotten. Agreed that he should obtain estimates.

Rob Ireland had obtained a costing of £99 plus postage and packing for an address sign. Confirmed he should order for both School Cottages and Tutelina Rise.

Tim had mentioned to Chris that the steps leading down to the river by the bridge opposite the Rushbrooke Arms were overgrown. Decided to defer this matter until Tim in attendance.

David has spoken to the shop owners and they do not treat the notice board as previous mentioned. David obtained costing from Tony Gillam of £100 to clean and oil. All agreed this should be done.

As there was no further business the meeting closed at 9.35 p.m.

Next meeting 13th November 2013 at 7.30 pm

Signed Chairman

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Date

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