

**Minutes of the meeting of Alconbury Weston Parish Council  
held on Monday 18 September 2017 in Alconbury Memorial Hall**

Present:

Councillors: M Bryan, R Coulson (from item 61.0), S Lomas (Chairman) C McGregor, & R Powley

Clerk: A Benfield

Others: M Brooks – Community Speedwatch Co-Ordinator

**58.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr R Powley declared a non-pecuniary interest in planning application 17/01650/FUL as the property is next door to his home.

**59.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from the Cllrs J Baker & L York (personal)

**60.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Two residents in attendance wished to bring to Members attention issues with both the quantity and the speed travelled by vehicles along Vinegar Hill during peak travel times, particularly between 06.30 & 08.30. Their concerns were particularly focussed over the safety issues for young people walking to school during the winter months. They requested consideration is given to ways to reduce both the speed and the quantity of traffic using the road.

A further resident wished to raise the conflict between private property and footpath 4 where walkers are using the private drive sooner than the allocated access route to the footpath. Comment was raised that part of the problem is linked to the owner of the land not cutting back the hedge that is their responsibility so that the official footpath access is restricted. A discussion took place on who responsibility for the hedge, footpath surface and removal of dog faeces including the actual boundary locations between the shared responsibility sections. It was agreed that Cllr McGregor would check the signage in place and make sure that it is clear that access to the public footpath is to the left of the gate.

**61.0 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 August 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

**62.0 COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH**

Cllr York arrived during this item on the agenda

M Brooks, Community speed Watch Co-ordinator gave a presentation to Members on the Community Speed Watch Scheme. He explained that he is working with Cambs Constabulary to deliver the scheme and as he lives locally is aware of the issues in the village caused by speeding and inconsiderate drivers, especially along the entrance roads to the village.

He provided details of how the scheme operates in different villages and indicated that the one operating in Alconbury village is active 2-3 times a month. He stated that to get permanent changes to speed limits on roads is expensive and has limited effect as they do not make a positive change in the attitude of drivers. It is known that most people caught speeding are not necessarily from the village they are speeding in but passing through.

To operate each scheme it needs a minimum of 3 volunteers for each session which lasts about 1.5hrs, generally during commuting hours. The perception of those who carry out the volunteering is that they do see a positive reduction in both the number of cars and the speed they are travelling at after each session.

The data that is collected in each session is forwarded to the police who arrange to send letters to the registered owner of each vehicle caught travelling in excess of the speed limit. The second letter sent is more strongly worded and should they be caught a 3<sup>rd</sup> time the letter is hand delivered by a police officer who will at that time check the vehicle is fully road legal and if not will take the appropriate action. 89-90% of all letters sent are first-time letters which indicates that it does work.

Mr Brooks provided details on the kit that is required and the options available to the Parish Council linked to purchasing outright or entering a sharing scheme with other local councils. He also indicated that it would be possible to borrow a kit directly from the police to establish the level of the problem in the village prior to a commitment to buy. It was noted that a co-ordinator would need to be appointed who would be responsible for the equipment and organising the group's activities.

Resolved That Alconbury Weston Parish Council supports the formation of a community speed watch group for the village

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**63.0 THE WHITE HART**

The Clerk reported to Members that she had been in communication with Criterion Asset Management, the owners of the White Hart who had indicated that they were actively seeking new tenants for the property to be re-opened as a public house. In terms of the maintenance of the fabric of the building, they will keep it wind and watertight but that any other repairs will be the responsibility of the new tenants.

Resolved That the verbal report from the Clerk as detailed above is received and noted.

**64.0 PARISH PATHS AND TREES**

Cllr McGregor reported that the paths had received their 2<sup>nd</sup> grass cut some time ago but with the growth rate as it is now a further cut would be ideal although not feasible due to lack of funds and manpower. Also, the paths are now getting wet so machinery would break up the surface and cause difficulties over the winter.

A resident's letter concerning issues with public footpaths was noted and discussed. It was noted that some of the points raised are linked to pavements and not footpaths. The difficulties experience on footpath 4 are linked to the overhanging hedges and nettles at the current time.

Concern was raised regarding the steps at the start of footpath 3. These are considered to be a danger due to the overgrowth that is obscuring them. It was suggested that area between the steps and the field should be cleared.

It was noted that the footpath along Church way had been cleared and that the Parish Council would be invoiced for the work. Comment was made that as the work that had been done was to privately owned hedges the cost should be passed on to the landowner.

Resolved 64.1 The verbal report from Cllr McGregor is received and noted  
64.2 The residents letter concerned with footpaths and other issues within the village is received and noted and that the Chairman should respond on behalf of the parish council

Cllr McGregor informed the meeting that the order for the new Oak Tree had been placed as agreed earlier in the year with Barchams Nursery and that deliver was expected early to mid-October. Total cost including delivery is £512 plus £25 for a planting kit. The kit will help to protect the tree in the early years from mowers etc. He is currently making the arrangements with local farmers for the planting to take place and a discussion on the practicalities ensued at this point in the meeting. The preferred final planting location was agreed as the centre of the green, equidistance from both Horse Chestnuts and the overhead cables.

Resolved 64.3 The arrangements for the delivery and planting of the Oak Tree are noted

Members received communication from the Insurance Company regarding the need for regular surveys of the condition of the trees by a qualified person to be carried out. Cllr McGregor reported that he had carried out a survey of trees on the council land and had included these on the parish footpath map for ease of identification to enable the Clerk to get quotes for a condition report to be produced.

Resolved 64.4 The communication from the Insurance Company indicating that regular surveys of the condition of the Parish Council trees by a qualified person to be carried out is noted  
64.5 Quotes for surveys are sought for consideration at the next council meeting.

**65.0 ALCONBURY WESTON FLOOD MANAGEMENT**

Cllr Bryan commented that no meeting of the Natural flood management group had taken place since the last council meeting but that one was scheduled and he would provide an update at the next meeting. He indicated that at this meeting the 3 previous studies that had been undertaken on the brook would be reviewed to see if any are feasible in the current economic climate.

He further commented that the EA would be placing monitoring stations across the brook to monitor rainfall and monitor flow. This will assist with the modelling of the flow that had received funding.

Finally, he made reference to the landowner engagement that the EA were undertaking to discuss the feasibility of the landowners putting in natural flood relief measures on their land.

Resolved 65.1 The verbal report from Cllr Bryan is received and noted

Cllr Powley provided an update on the activities of the Alconbury Weston Flood Management Emergency Plan –

- The team to manage and coordinate activity have been identified
- 3<sup>rd</sup> draft of the plan has been circulated and comments received
- Next stage is to discuss the draft with the fire brigade and to negotiate with the social club for it to be the resource centre
- Funding for radios can be included in the emergency flood kit from EA

Cllr Powley also informed that present that he had been in communication with the CCC bridge engineer regarding the replacement of the bridge over the brook and it was now scheduled for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of the next financial year. He indicated that this replacement is critical for the placement of the camera and marker board but that the Highway Authority (CCC) would fund the marker board and level of the ford as part of the work they are doing.

Resolved 65.2 The verbal report is received and noted  
65.3 That the draft Emergency Plan is received and noted

#### 66.0 PLAY AREA

Cllr Lomas reported that he had inspected the play area on 14 August, 4 September and 16 September and found everything to be in order.

Resolved That the report is received and noted

#### 67.0 PLANNING

Resolved 67.1 That it is noted that no response had been made by the Clerk in respect of planning application received between meetings

The following application was considered:-

APPLICATION REF: 17/01650/FUL: Application for changes to approved Planning Permission 15/01901/S37 to Unit no. 2 doors, windows, footprint, elevations, PV panels and that associated amenity spaces including, front and rear gardens, parking and patios. Land at Chestnut Farm, Hamerton Road, Alconbury Weston.  
RECOMMEND: That comment is made regarding the suitability of the access and materials planned for the driveway due to its location on a hill

Resolved 67.2 That the comments above are submitted

#### 68.0 POLICE REPORT

Members noted that the following items relating to crime in Alconbury Weston had been reported on the Police Neighbourhood Alert Crime updates since the last meeting:-

- (i) Between the 13.08.17 and 17.08.17 the Recycling Centre has been broken into 4 times. Electrical items and batteries were stolen and the office door has been smashed in.
- (ii) 15.08.17 – Field end of High Street. Owner of a tractor saw 4 to 5 unknown youths aged between 13 and 15 near his tractor, he shouted at them and they ran off. When the victim got to the tractor a rear tyre had been slashed and the linkage pins had been removed and stolen.
- (iii) 28.08.17 – Recycling Centre. Unknown offender(s) have broken into the centre, used electric cutters to cut the locks off of containers. Approximately 250 kilos of brass, 2 boxes of copper, a copper tank and a quantity of car batteries were stolen.

Member considered that the Police response was heartening as it does show that they are trying to do something. It was noted that there is ongoing discussion with Amey who are looking to install CCTV at all their sites to assist to keep instances of theft and break-ins down.

**Resolved** 68.1 That the above crime reports are received and noted

Cllr Bryan provided a brief verbal report on his attendance at the recent Police and Crime Commissioner Conference on 15 September 2017

**Resolved** 68.2 That the verbal report is received and noted

#### 69.0 FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT EVENING

**Resolved** That the donation of £200 towards a Family Entertainment Evening to raise funds for the local PTA is held on behalf of the Fun Day Committee until such time as their plans progress further

#### 70.0 COUNCIL INSURANCE

**Resolved** That the council's insurance is renewed with Community Action Suffolk for a further year

#### 71.0 ORDERS FOR PAYMENT

It was noted that no payments were made between meetings

The following payments were noted as requiring to be made:-

Four Seasons – Grass cutting	£660.00
A Benfield – August & September salary	£550.73
SLCC Regional Training Seminar	£82.80
Community Action Suffolk – Insurance premium	£424.50

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Hedge cutting – footpath 4

£40.50

**Resolved** That the above payments are agreed and made.

## 72.0 BANK RECONCILIATION

**Resolved** That the bank reconciliation up to 1 September is circulated by email to all members following the meeting

## 73.0 BUDGET REPORT

**Resolved** That the Budget Report up to 31 August is circulated by email to all members following the meeting

## 74.0 CCLA DEPOSIT FUND

Members received information relating to the CCLA Deposit Fund and agreed that an account should be opened and used to maximise the amount of interest the Council receives on its reserves.

**Resolved** That a CCLA Deposit Fund Account should be opened as soon as practicable.

## 75.0 STREET LIGHT CONTRACT

**Resolved** That the street light maintenance contract with Balfour Beatty is renewed for a further 3 years

## 76.0 ANNUAL RETURN 2016-17

**Resolved** That the comments from the External Auditor concerning the level of general reserves held by the council is received and noted

## 77.0 GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS 2018

**Resolved** That it is noted that the Regulations will come into effect from 25 May 2018 with the requirement that the Council will be required to appoint an Officer with responsibility for this duty.

## 78.0 LOCAL HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT FUND

Members discussed the issues raised earlier in the meeting regarding speeding into and out of the village together with the flooding experienced on the Great North Road corner with a view to submitting one for consideration for a Local Highway Improvement Fund. On balance although they acknowledged that speed is an issue they felt that it was more important to try and resolve the flooding issue first.

**Resolved** That the Great North Road corner is submitted for a Local Highway Improvement Fund project

## 79.0 REPORTS FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

No reports had been received for either District or County Cllrs in advance of the meeting

## 80.0 MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

80.1 The Clerk had no matters to report at the current time.

80.2 Cllr Mc Gregor agreed to write a contribution for the next edition of the Village Pump

80.3 The Clerks contract as circulated by the Chairman at the meeting was accepted and it was agreed that it should be implemented fully at the next meeting.

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chairman - Alconbury Weston Parish Council**

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