

MINUTES of a MEETING of WHITWICK PARISH COUNCIL held on THURSDAY 29 AUGUST 2013 at the St John the Baptist C of E School, Parsonwood Hill, Whitwick.

Present: Councillor R Woodward (Chairman) (In the Chair)

Cllrs A Barker, S Colledge, D Howe, E Easom, T Gillard, L Spence and J Straw

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors N Pearson and L Weaver

In Attendance:

Mr P Ellis, Clerk and Mrs L Ellis, Assistant Clerk

No members of the public

Declarations of Interest:

Councillor T Gillard declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No 291 (Planning Matters) as a member of NWLDC's Planning Committee

Councillor D Howe declared non-pecuniary interests in Minute No 291 (Planning Matters) as a member of NWLDC's Planning Committee

Councillor L Spence declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute 291(a) (Planning Applications) as a County Councillor

Councillor J Straw declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute 296 (Community Grant – Woodstock in Whitwick) as an associate of the applicant

Councillor R Woodward declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No 291 (Planning Matters) as a district councillor and a pecuniary interest in Minute No 305(b) as a trustee of Whitwick Community Enterprises

288. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There were no members of the public in attendance.

289. MINUTES

Resolved: That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 July 2013 as previously circulated be approved as a correct record

290. COMMUNITY POLICING

The Chairman welcomed PCSO 6000 Suzie Hunt to the meeting. She reported an increase in burglaries in the area with suspects identified and under investigation. There had also been an increase in thefts from and damage to motor vehicles. A campaign against nuisance motorcyclists was covering the whole area including Whitwick, NWLDC was being assisted with litter problems in the Park and a parking initiative on Parsonwood Hill was addressing issues on school traffic in partnership with the school.

.....Chairman's initials/signature

Members referred to a serious road accident which had recently occurred in Brooks Lane when a car had left the road and ploughed into the front garden of a bungalow. Parked cars were felt to exacerbate problems along this road and residents were getting up a petition calling for traffic calming.

Resolved:

(a) That the report be received

(b) That the PCSO be requested to investigate the road traffic accident record on Brooks Lane and report back to Councillor Spence

291. PLANNING MATTERS

(a) Applications

The Council had been consulted by NWLDC on the following applications:

2013/VOC/0210/LCC - Leicestershire County Council - retention of double classroom mobile (block E, UPRN 518) - Whitwick Church of England Primary School, Parsonwood Hill, Whitwick

13/00571/FUL – Demolition of builders store and erection of one single storey detached dwelling and one detached two storey dwelling – 110 Silver Street, Whitwick

13/00627/FUL – Erection of single storey rear extension and balcony – 7 Lakeshore Close, Whitwick

13/00645/FUL – Single storey extension to provide new kitchen and dining areas – 133 Church Lane, Whitwick

Resolved: That no objections be made to these applications

(b) Decisions

NWLDC had now permitted the following applications:

13/00443/FUL – 2 storey side extension, single storey rear and front extensions, new vehicular entrance, parking and turning – 47 Temple Hill, Whitwick

13/00471/FUL – Erection of 2 storey side extension – 75 Parsonwood Hill, Whitwick

Resolved: That the report be received

292. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Councillor Spence submitted the following report:

- **Leicestershire's Future** – Members and residents would be well aware that local government was facing exceptionally tough times. Over the next five years it was projected that Leicestershire County Council must make savings of approximately £100 million, around one third of all money the council spends. The County Council was asking for views on how it could save the money. An online consultation was being carried out until Sunday 15th September. Anyone who had not yet responded was urged

.....Chairman's initials/signature

to do so

- **Highways Issues** – It had proved exceptionally difficult to progress highways issues over the summer predominantly due to members of staff being on holiday. He was continuing to liaise with officers about the issues mentioned at the last Parish Council meeting. In addition, the serious accident referred to under Community Policing had taken place earlier that week on Brooks Lane. He had contacted residents who had grave concerns over the issue of speeding. He would be raising this matter at the Highways Forum and with the Police.
- **Street Lighting** – Part night street lighting continued to be an issue in specific locations. In one incident local residents had confronted trespassers in the early hours of the morning who subsequently ran off. He was in contact with officers with a view to getting lights switched back on where crime was a material consideration. Officers had advised that in such cases they would consult with the local Police. In specific cases he was lobbying the Police directly.
- **Third Sector** – He had been working directly with various third sector organisations who were seeking to improve our communities in various ways. If anyone knew of, or was part of, a third sector organisation which wanted to improve their links with local government or access grant funding he would be happy to meet with them.
- **Governor Vacancies** – Leicestershire County Council still had Governor vacancies for many schools, including local schools. If anyone would like to give a few hours of their time each month and make a real difference to the development of our young people by becoming a school governor, then please let him know.
- **Discretionary Bus Services** – Over the summer the Cabinet had approved changes to discretionary bus services in the County. Changes were far reaching and would be introduced at different times but in broad terms the following existing provision would be withdrawn:
 - Free travel for disabled concessionary pass holders before 9:30am Monday to Friday.
 - Free travel after 11pm for disabled and older concessionary pass holders.
 - £33 of vouchers for use on local taxi and bus service as an alternative to the statutory concession scheme where the older / disabled person lives over 800 metres from a frequent bus service.
 - Half fare on community transport services (e.g. Marlene Reid Centre).
 - To charge full cost recovery for 16+ transport to educational establishments (£425 per year) and for all children travelling to denominational schools (£640 per year).
 - To charge £640 per year for all fare paying places.
 - Various other minor changes.

Resolved: That the report be received

293. DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Councillor Gillard reported that councillors had gone as far as they could to help resolve the school parking issues on Parsonwood Hill and it was hoped that the new partnership initiative between the Police and the School would be successful. He had also received a suggestion that the Parish Council should arrange for hanging baskets in the village though it was too late to do so this year.

.....Chairman's initials/signature

Councillor Spence had received suggestions that the Parish Council should be doing something visible such as Christmas lighting.

The Chairman referred to issues regarding the District Council's Core Strategy. A number of councillors indicated that they would attend the Exploratory Meeting on Wednesday 25th September with Michael Hetherington of the Planning Inspectorate who had been appointed by the Secretary of State to examine the soundness of the Council's submitted document.

Councillor Howe thanked both the present and former County Councillors for successfully getting bollards erected in the verge outside the Kebab Shop at Silver Street/City of Dan and the Black Horse Public House on North Street. Councillor Barker referred to the rubbish being deposited outside and in close proximity to the kebab shop.

Resolved:

(a) That the reports be received

(b) That the litter issues outside the Kebab Shop be taken up with the proprietor and the District Council

294. NWLDC PARISH LIAISON MEETING

The Clerk reported that the next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, 30th October, 5.00pm to 7.45pm (5.30pm start), in the Council Chamber at the Council Offices, Coalville. It would be open to clerks and councillors. Parishes were invited to suggest items for the agenda.

Resolved: That the issue of prior consultation with parishes before decisions are taken which affect them be suggested for inclusion on the agenda.

295. NWLDC REVIEW OF STREET TRADING POLICY

Members were invited to consider whether to make any response to this consultation (details previously circulated).

Members expressed concern regarding scrap metal collectors who drove round parping hooters. Amongst other scrap, they collected old fridges and freezers from people's doorsteps. There was a suspicion that some removed the parts they wanted cutting pipes to release greenhouse gasses and then fly-tip the carcass, which was unsightly and a danger to children who could get trapped inside.

Resolved: That NWLDC be asked if mobile scrap collectors fell within the proposed policy and if not, whether any other licences were required for such activities.

296. APPLICATION FOR COMMUNITY GRANT

Consideration was given to an application from Whitwick Scarecrow Festival (copy previously circulated and attached to the official copy of the Minutes). A member reported that over 40 scarecrows had already been agreed.

Resolved: That a grant of £250 be approved subject to the Council's standard conditions

.....Chairman's initials/signature

297. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Members were asked to approve the following payments:

Thompson & Morgan - 100 packets Flanders Poppy seeds - £198.00

HMRC – tax and NI (2nd quarter due 05/10/2013) - £361.80

Whitwick Community Coffee Shop – Closeknit page (Issue 5) - £100.00

Nicholas Hancox Solicitors – Legal fees and disbursements (to date) - £5114.40

Grant Thornton – Audit fees - £240.00

Resolved:

(a) That these payments be approved

(b) That the payment to Thompson and Morgan be made under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972

298. EXTERNAL AUDIT FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2013

The Clerk reported that notification had been received that the Council's external auditors Grant Thornton had now concluded the audit for the financial year 2012/13 and there were no matters to bring to the Council's attention.

Resolved: That the report be received

299. BANK RECONCILIATION AND RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS TO 31 JUNE 2013

The Clerk submitted an update of the Council's accounts (copy previously circulated and attached to the official copy of the Minutes). The Receipts and Payments Summary for the first quarter had also been scrutinised and approved by the Chairman in accordance with the Council's internal financial control procedures.

Resolved: That the report be received

300. 2013 PAY AWARD

The Clerk reported that a 1% pay award for 2013-14 had now been agreed by the NJC for Local Government Services. This applied to all employees on the NALC/SLCC model contract. The new pay rates applied with effect from 1 April 2013 and the total additional cost to this Council for the current financial year would be £133.33.

Resolved: That the report be received

301. REASON FOR ABSENCE

The Clerk reported that Councillor N Pearson had last attended a meeting on 14 March. She had subsequently had health issues and had supplied a copy of her latest GP's certificate. Under Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, any councillor who was

.....Chairman's initials/signature

absent for a period of 6 months automatically ceased to be a member unless the reason for absence had been approved by the Council before the end of the 6 month period.

Resolved: That Councillor Pearson's reason for absence be approved and that she be sent the Council's best wishes for a speedy recovery.

302. SECTION 106 CONTRIBUTION - DEVELOPMENT BY TONY MORRIS (BUILDERS) LTD, LAND BETWEEN 36/58 PARSONWOOD HILL (04//00730/FUL)

The Clerk reported that notification had been received from NWLDC that a Section 106 contribution of £19,400 was available "as a contribution to the provision of play equipment at a recreation ground near the site".

There was debate as to whether equipment should be concentrated on a single hub within Whitwick Park or extended to Parsonwood Hill Recreation Ground. This was already popular with children but could be more prone to vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

Resolved:

(a) That future options be considered in the light of the community survey results and following completion of the land transfer

(b) That in the meantime, Members take the opportunity to inspect the existing equipment in Whitwick Park

303. TRANSFER OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE – BRIERS WAY, WHITWICK

The Council was invited to accept the transfer of the 1337 sq metre public open space at Briers Way, Whitwick from Crest Homes as shown on a plan previously circulated and attached to the official copy of the Minutes.

Resolved: That the signing and sealing of the necessary documentation to effect this transfer be approved.

304. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved: That having regard to the confidential nature of the following business to be transacted as it related to terms of contractual negotiations, publicity in respect of which would be prejudicial to the public interest, the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as amended

305. TRANSFER OF LAND FROM NWLDC

(a) Progress Report

Consideration was given to an email from the Council's solicitor (copy previously circulated and attached to the official copy of the Minutes).

Resolved:

(a) That the Council continue to seek a transfer of all the NWLDC titles en bloc at the same time

.....Chairman's initials/signature

(b) That NWLDC be urged to complete all transfers before the end of November to facilitate a smooth transition of maintenance costs from Special Expense to Parish Precept with effect from 1 April 2014

(c) That the Chairman seek an urgent meeting with senior NWLDC representatives to address the delays in completing the transfer and that all other councillors be invited to accompany him.

Having declared a pecuniary interest, the Chairman left the meeting for the following item and took no part in debate or voting thereon

(Councillor Howe, Vice-Chairman, in the Chair)

(b) Land at City of Dan

Consideration was given to a request from Whitwick Community Enterprises regarding land at City of Dan (Clerk's report previously circulated and attached to the official copy of the Minutes).

In considering this matter, Members had regard to protecting the interests of the Parish and to ensure that this public open space is developed and used for community purposes.

A Member pointed out that disposal of this land had previously been approved by NWLDC's Cabinet subject to valuation and conditions.

In view of the uncertainty regarding when ownership would transfer and the planning position, Members thought that it would be premature to be taking decisions about the future of this site and possibly incurring further legal costs for the parish at the present time.

While funding for the full community centre remained a future aspiration, the proposed horticultural training facility would appear to be a very different proposition and there were some concerns regarding the acceptability of this use on this prominent site in view of its planning history. That should be tested by a stand-alone planning application and councillors would be pleased to reconsider the matter should Whitwick Community Enterprises successfully apply for planning permission.

There was also a suggestion that a horticultural training facility for Holly Hayes Wood might be better located closer to the Wood, perhaps on the former garage site at Holly Hayes Road which is another site to be included in the NWLDC transfer.

Resolved: That the position be reviewed following transfer of the land and once Whitwick Community Enterprises have resolved the position regarding planning approval

Councillor Gillard left the meeting at 7.35pm on conclusion of debate on Minute No 301 (Reason for Absence)

The meeting terminated at 8.11pm

.....Chairman's initials/signature