

MINUTES of a MEETING of WHITWICK PARISH COUNCIL held on THURSDAY 14 MARCH 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, E Easom, T Gillard, D Howe, N Pearson, L Spence, J Straw and L Weaver

An Apology for Absence was received from Councillor D Everitt

In Attendance: Mr J Knight, NWLDC (in respect of Minute No 234)
Mr P Ellis, Clerk and Mrs L Ellis, Assistant Clerk

No members of the public

Declarations of Interest:

Councillor D Howe declared non-pecuniary interests in Minute No 236 (Planning Matters) as a member of NWLDC's Planning Committee

Councillor R Woodward declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No 236 (Planning Matters) as a district councillor

231. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

No members of the public were in attendance.

232. MINUTES

Arising out of the minutes, the Clerk reported that the Council's application to the County Council for a Big Society Grant in respect of the costs of the community survey had been successful. There had also been an unforeseen delay in publication of Close-knit which had originally been scheduled for delivery by the end of February but had only just gone to the printers. In the circumstances, the closing date for responses had been put back from end of March to end of April.

Resolved: That the minutes of the previous Meeting held on 24 January 2013 as previously circulated be approved as a correct record

233. COMMUNITY POLICING

Neither PCSO Sorrell nor PC Broomfield had been available to attend the meeting. They had, however, submitted a report on crime figures for the previous month as follows:

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Three thefts, two from public houses and one from a garden but 2 people had been charged with the theft from the garden; four damage to motor vehicles, all around the end of Leicester Road and Castle Street; three criminal damage, one person arrested and charged; two burglary other than a dwelling, one from a public house and one from a shed; two assaults, both domestic related. One theft of cycle on Leicester Road.

The police had also carried out a drugs warrant at an address in the village and as a result a male had been cautioned and a quantity of cannabis seized.

There had been no real trends to the crime at this time other than a small percent seemed to be in and around public houses.

Resolved: That the report be received

234. CEMETERY LIAISON/GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

The Chairman welcomed Jason Knight of NWLDC who was in attendance to speak on this item.

Mr Knight summarised the scope of the service currently provided including management of parks, play areas, open spaces, cemeteries, churchyards, allotments and grounds maintenance. Health and safety over-arched these functions. While there were grass-cutting frequency schedules, the aim was for quality and these would be amended as appropriate in the light of weather conditions.

The Clerk pointed out that as the transfer of land was proceeding, 2013/14 was likely to be the last year in which NWLDC undertook these functions on its own land financed from its own Special Expenses and that from 1 April 2014, they would be undertaking the work as agents for the Parish Council and recharging the costs which would be met through the Parish Precept. The coming year was therefore an opportunity for the Council to prepare for this change.

In reply to questions, it was pointed out that under the Parish Council Creation Order, once the land transfer had been completed the Parish Council was required to give a minimum of 12 months notice terminating on 31 March to end the arrangement. NWLDC currently insured all of the properties but this responsibility would transfer with the land to the Parish Council. The surplus in NWLDC's Asset Protection Budget also belonged to Whitwick and would transfer with the land.

The Clerk asked members to start to consider what reporting arrangements they would require – regular progress reports or exception reporting of incidents. The next budget meeting would be crucial for the Parish Council to decide if it wished to continue financing the same level of service as at present.

Resolved:

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(a) That Mr Knight be thanked for attending the meeting.

(b) That the Clerk be authorised to obtain additional reference books on charity trusteeship and management of parks and open spaces and allotments.

235. KEBAB SHOP – SILVER STREET/CITY OF DAN, WHITWICK

At the request of Councillor Colledge, consideration was given to what action could be taken to prevent customers and delivery vehicles from damaging the grass verge adjoining these premises and causing a traffic safety hazard. This had generated numerous complaints.

The land in question was highway land and fixed penalty notices could therefore be issued to any vehicles parking on it as there were double yellow lines which extended a prohibition on parking to the whole of the highway.

Councillor Gillard also reported that he had met the proprietor and warned him that damage to the highway could also incur penalties and that the matter had been reported to the County Council. The Chairman had also reported the matter to the District Council's enforcement team.

Resolved: That as the problem is a direct result of the operation of the business, the Parish Council support any enforcement action, including a solution involving provision of appropriate barriers at the expense of the proprietor.

236. PLANNING MATTERS

(a) Applications

NWLDC had consulted the Parish Council on the following applications:

12/00852/FUL – Demolition of existing buildings and construction of supermarket – Whitwick Sports & Social Club, 5-7 Market Place, Whitwick (amended plans)

13/00060/FUL – erection of 8 detached dwellings with associated access road – land adjacent to Whitwick Filling Station, Talbot Street, Whitwick

13/00014/FUL – erection of rear conservatory – 74 St Bernards Road, Whitwick

13/00089/FUL – two storey side extension – 36 School Lane, Whitwick

13/00096/FUL – replacement of flat roof on existing detached garage with new pitched roof which will include the raising of the height of the garage to provide a first floor store, new stone cladding to exterior and provision of a log store – Turry Log, Carr Hill Road, Whitwick

13/00115/FUL – erection of a canopy/structure with glazed roof to rear elevation – 25 Carterdale, Whitwick

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13/00128/FUL – erection of first floor level side extension – 27 Ashford Road, Whitwick

13/00149/FUL – Demolition of existing garage and erection of new detached garage (revised scheme) – 35 Silver Street, Whitwick

13/00166/FUL – Erection of part two storey/part single storey side extension following removal of existing garage – 5 Knights Garth, Whitwick

13/00177/FUL – Removal of existing asbestos roof on detached garage and replacement with pitched tiled roof – 4 Knights Garth, Whitwick

Resolved: That no objections be made to any of these applications

(b) Decisions

The following applications had now been approved by NWLDC:

12/00977/FUL – Erection of 2 storey extension with habitable accommodation in the roofspace, side extension and front porch (revised scheme) – 35 Gracedieu Road, Whitwick

12/01028/FUL – Erection of first floor rear extension – 14 Stainsdale Green, Whitwick

13/00050/FUL – Conversion of garage to habitable room/replacement of garage door with window – 33 Lakeshore Crescent, Whitwick

Resolved: That the report be received

(c) Consultation on Proposed Revision to Section 106 Planning Policy in the Wider Coalville Area

Consideration was given to a letter and consultation document from NWLDC (copy previously circulated and attached to the official copy of the minutes).

While some concern was expressed at the possible reduction of much-needed affordable housing provision, it was recognised that the Parish Council's role was to consider the issue from a purely Whitwick viewpoint.

Resolved: That the District Council be advised that the Parish Council does not feel it appropriate to comment on the proposal as no significant development in the Parish is envisaged in the emerging Core Strategy which would be affected by the proposal.

237. PROPOSED VILLAGE NAMEPLATES

The Clerk submitted a further response from Leicestershire County Council (copy previously circulated and attached to the official copy of the minutes).

The Clerk reported that he had expressed concern to the County Council that a

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nameplate simply reading 'Whitwick' outside KFC on Thornborough Road might cause some confusion as the postal address of properties on Thornborough Road was Coalville and part of the area was also known as New Swannington. However, the County Council were not prepared to add 'Parish of' as the Council had requested.

Resolved: That the County Council's offer to provide new nameplates at Thornborough Road in the verge near KFC, Hermitage Road at the junction with the A511, a smaller sign on Spring Lane and replacement of the existing sign on Leicester Road be accepted.

238. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Councillor Gillard reported that there had been local concerns regarding gritting in the recent wintry weather. The County Council was maintaining its stance of gritting designated routes but he had been able to get some local side streets treated as the cold snap had continued. Residents continued to ask for additional grit bins which the County Council expected to be financed by Parish Councils. The County Council would continue to stock grit bins but some had been emptied during the cold spell as some people used it on their drives rather than the highway. Overall, he felt that the highways team had handled matters as well as they could in difficult conditions.

The Clerk pointed out that a question regarding grit bins was included in the community survey.

Resolved: That the report be received

239. DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Councillor Spence reported that there had been cross-party support for a review of proposed pedestrian and vehicle access licence fees which included some households and businesses in Whitwick. A solution was being sought which was also fair to existing licence holders.

There had also been political unanimity in opposition to the HS2 rail proposals which had blighted many properties.

Changes to housing benefit were turning out to be more severe than many people had anticipated and he urged anyone affected to contact their district councillors so they could try to be of help.

Resolved: That the report be received

240. COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATIONS

(a) Whitwick Football Club

Whitwick Football Club had applied for a community grant of £250 towards the purchase of playing kit for a new reserve team. The full cost of the kit was £500+.

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The Club played at Hermitage Recreation Grounds and had a current squad of 18 adult players. They wished to establish a reserve team to provide playing opportunities for an additional 15+ players from the Whitwick area. They also proposed to link with local junior teams to provide progression from youth football.

Resolved: That a community grant of £250 be approved

(b) Whitwick Historical Group

Whitwick Historical Group had applied for a community grant of £250 towards provision of an additional cupboard for the safe storage of their archives and photography collection. This was a unique collection covering the heritage of Whitwick which was available to students and visitors and provides a basis for their publications and educational activities.

Resolved: That a community grant of £250 be approved

(c) LeicesterShire Citizens Advice Bureau

Locally, this organisation served North West Leicestershire and had an office in Coalville to ensure a local service was maintained. It was staffed by local volunteers and worked alongside partner agencies to offer high quality advice and information complemented by specialist Money Advice and MacMillan Cancer funded caseworkers.

They pointed out that they were again facing significant new challenges; the forthcoming Welfare Reform Act would result in some of the most fundamental changes to the welfare system since its introduction. There would be very few people left unaffected. This would put added pressure on vulnerable people and as a result increase the demand on Citizens Advice and its services.

They were a charity operating completely without central government support – unless they raised sufficient finances locally they could not continue to provide their service which benefited all sections of the community. All parish and town councils were being invited to consider making a grant.

Resolved: That the CAB be advised that while the Council recognises the value of its services, no grant can be made as the current year's budget is fully committed. However, a further application can be made next year which should include details of any financial support from the County and District Councils.

241. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

The Clerk submitted the following:

- Carphone Warehouse – Nokia mobile phone with top-up - £39.96
- LRALC – Social enterprise training - £35.00
- Whitwick Community Enterprises – Closeknit centrespread for survey - £300.00

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Whitwick Community Enterprises – Closeknit single page editorial - £90.00
 P J Ellis – Expenses (Mileage Jan – Feb £15.07) (Mobile top-up £20) - £35.07
 HMRC – Tax and NI (final quarter for 2012/13) - £240.20
 Nicholas Hancox Solicitors – Disbursements - £372.00

Resolved: That the above payments be approved

242. ANNUAL PARISH WEBSITE REVIEW

Consideration was given to a report by Leicestershire County Council's Information and Data Team (copy previously circulated and attached to the official copy of the minutes).

The Clerk reported that he had made a number of improvements to the website in the light of comments in the report. He drew members' attention to the suggestion that profile information be included for councillors.

Members requested that the possibility of obtaining a more straightforward domain name for the website be investigated and that the Reports page be amended so that the most recent additions appeared at the top of the page.

Resolved: That the Report be received

243. QUALITY PARISH COUNCIL SCHEME REVIEW

Consideration was given to an update report from LRALC (copy previously circulated and attached to the official copy of the minutes).

The Clerk reported that at a recent Society of Local Council Clerks conference, it had been suggested that it might be later in the year before the new scheme emerged and that it was likely to be substantially different from the previous one.

Resolved: That the new scheme to reviewed once it is published to assess its relevance and achievability for this Council

244. TRANSFER OF LAND FROM NWLDC

The Clerk submitted a progress report (copy previously circulated and attached to the official copy of the minutes).

Progress was now being made albeit slowly though some anomalies would remain to be addressed once transfer of legal title land was completed.

Resolved: That the Report be received

Cllr Gillard left the meeting at 7.56pm (at the conclusion of Minute No 239).

The meeting terminated at 8.21pm

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