

**Minutes of the Meeting of Fiskerton Parish Council held on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> January  
2024 at 7:00pm in Fiskerton Village Hall**

**Present:** Cllrs A Walker, P Whitt, C Darcel, C Hill, K Brereton, J McGeachie, L Matthews, C/Cllr I Fleetwood, D/Cllr M Palmer, D/Cllr T Bridgwood, Mrs M Vail (Clerk), and five residents

*Meeting started at 7.01pm.*

**001/24 Open Session: suspension of standing orders for up to 15 minutes**

One resident, in respect of flooding matters, noted that the minutes of the previous meeting had not mentioned Short Ferry. It is a part of Fiskerton parish and had been flooded. Over 100 Short Ferry residents had been evacuated during the flood event, and residents there feel abandoned and that there had been a lack of help forthcoming.

The Chairman apologised for the omission and confirmed that he had visited Short Ferry on several occasions. C/Cllr I Fleetwood and Sir Edward Leigh, MP, had also visited Short Ferry. It had been felt that there had been more activity at Short Ferry than in Fiskerton, to which the resident advised that this had been down to the actions of Short Ferry residents.

A Public Meeting has been held, and the Chairman now has contact with the Panel members.

He can put the resident in touch with the Emergency Planning Group.

D/Cllr T Bridgwood suggested that a separate Emergency Plan (but linked to Fiskerton's), could be created for Short Ferry, which FPC can assist with. C/Cllr I Fleetwood suggested one Emergency Plan with a separate section for Short Ferry.

**Action:** *Cllr K Brereton* to liaise with the resident.

**002/24 Apologies for absence:** None.

**003/24 Declarations of interest:** None.

**004/24 Approve draft minutes of meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023 as a true record:**

With one amendment to item 299/23 ii, to amend £5000.00 so that it reads £50.00, **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes as a true record, and they were duly signed. **Action:** Clerk

**005/24 To receive observations of the District and County Councillors:**

**C/Cllr I Fleetwood:**

- Flooding continues to be an issue at several locations. He has, and continues, to strongly press matters with Witham Internal Drainage Board. He has spent a day with the Environment Agency and talked to them about Short Ferry and Fiskerton.
- LCC has been asked if it can undertake repairs to the closed road, which may reopen soon as a single carriageway, as much of the groundwater is back in the channel.
- Breaches in the channel have made the banks unstable, and the road will close again if the waters rise again. He is reminding organisations about this.
- Two speed indicator devices have been erected with his help. One SID has had batteries stolen, and it was thought that batteries had also been removed from the bank monitoring equipment on the Witham.

**D/Cllr M Palmer:**

- Planning applications will soon require an ecology survey to be carried out (Biodiversity Net Gains impact), and WLDC has appointed an Ecology and Wildlife Officer. FPC may wish to consider this when commenting on planning applications.

**D/Cllr T Bridgwood:**

- WLDC has discussed flooding matters.
- Annual fees for green bins can now be paid.

**D/Cllr C Darcel:**

Nothing to report.

**006/24 Chairman's report:**

LCC are consulting on three options for their budget and council tax 2024/25 setting:

- Option A (2.99% plus £7.2m use of reserves in 2024/25)
- Option B (3.99% plus £3.5m use of reserves in 2024/25)
- Option C (4.99% with no use of reserves in 2024/25)

**Action: Councillors** to read and consider, then if there is common ground, a response will be submitted.

## **ALLOTMENTS:**

**007/24 Report from Allotment Inspectors, and to consider and resolve on the following as required:**

**a. Update on production of draft risk assessment report:**

The draft report has been circulated. Feedback on it should be provided to Cllr L Matthews, who would like it in place ahead of the 2024 growing season.

The following queries were raised:

- Does the hire agreement require updating to reflect the risk assessment?
- Regarding access, noted that the gate is not locked so not an issue for emergencies.
- Should the tenants be provided with the risk assessment for feedback?

**b. Update on untended plot:**

There has been no activity since Autumn 2023, and the weed suppressant has blown off the plot. After consideration, **RESOLVED** unanimously to write to the plot holder requesting improvement by end of March 2024. FPC will review the situation in April 2023.

**c. Update on talks with tenant of the grazing land:**

Noted that this had been put on hold whilst flooding matters had taken precedence but will be resumed ahead of the 2024 growing season.

**d. Update on putting plans into place to increase number of plots:**

This stage is reliant upon completion of the preceding actions.

**e. Agree any further steps:**

**Action: Cllr A Walker and Cllr L Matthews** to speak with tenant of the grazing land before the February 2024 meeting.

## **FINANCE**

### **008/24 ACCOUNTS**

**a. Receive circulated schedule of payments/receipts made for November and December 2023:** The schedule was noted.

**b. Approve any known non-regular accounts for payment for January 2024:**  
**RESOLVED** unanimously to approve £95.93 reimbursement to C/Cllr I Fleetwood for purchase of clips/padlocks to facilitate the installation of speed indicator devices. **Action: Clerk**

**c. Confirm verification and signing of bank reconciliation and bank statements for Quarters 1, 2 and 3:**

Three reports have been created. These, and the associated bank statements, are in Dropbox. **Action: Cllr A Walker** to provide Cllr J McGeachie with a link to these for the latter to verify. **Action: Cllr J McGeachie.**

**d. Consider grass cutting quotes for 2024:**

Of several companies approached to quote, only two had responded. After due consideration, **RESOLVED** unanimously to appoint Glendale at £4444.92 + VAT. **Action: Clerk**

**e. Approve final budget for 2024/25:**

The final budget had been circulated to all. Noted that monies have been placed into the Playground Reserves. **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the final budget as circulated.

**f. Resolve on final precept figure for 2024/25 to be submitted to WLDC:**

**RESOLVED** unanimously that a final precept request of £24,687.00 be submitted to WLDC. Noted that this remains unchanged from the previous year. **Action: Clerk**

## **PLANNING: to consider and agree actions as required:**

### **009/24 Neighbourhood Plan – update, draft policies, liaison with school, public consultation, email from Cllr C Darcel, resolve to submit NP draft plan documents to WLDC and move to Regulation 14 consultation:**

The Chairman read out the following statement:

Neighbourhood Plan Working Group - 25 Jan 2024

At the Nov PC meeting it was agreed to proceed to Reg 14 consultation ASAP provided the responses received from the drop-in sessions on 24/25 Nov didn't create significant change to the NP.

A cut of the 2023 questionnaire data was taken shortly after the Nov meeting and was used to refine the policies to be presented at the drop-in sessions. Three written responses were received during the drop-in sessions. The NP WG met on Sat 9 Dec 23 and all were content the 3 responses didn't require significant change and that WLDC should be contacted to advise on progressing to Reg 14.

As the NP allocates an alternative site to the one allocated in the CLLP, WL advised that evidence would be needed to show the PC have consulted with the land owner who originally proposed the site in the CLLP. The NP WG met on 4 Jan to consider this advice. The church commissioners' agents were then contacted to arrange a meeting which is planned to take place next week. Pending the outcome from the meeting with the CC's agents and any further advice from WLDC it is hoped to progress to Reg 14 ASAP.

### **010/24 Village questionnaire – update:**

An extended deadline (from 14/11/23 to 30/11/23) had been applied to the questionnaire to allow residents affected by the flood evacuation more time to respond. Noted that copies of Fiskerton News, which contained details of the survey, had been delivered to the reception desk at Short Ferry.

The deadline extension had allowed an additional 25 questionnaires to be printed and returned. However, subsequent reflection was whether the extension had been fair or not, as it had not been possible to equally and fairly inform every resident of the revised deadline. As such, could the additional 25 questionnaires therefore be accepted, as to do so would be unfair on the larger population of residents who were unaware of it.

One resident then spoke on this matter, opining that FPC is keeping things secret and that the only way to be fair would have been to deliver a flyer to every home.

At a proposal by Cllr A Walker not to accept any questionnaires returned after the original deadline date, seconded by Cllr K Brereton, **RESOLVED** with 5 in favour and 2 against (Cllr C Hill and Cllr C Darcel) to accept the proposal. **Action: Cllr A Walker** to write individually to each respondent to explain that an error had been made.

D/Cllr T Bridgwood then advised to consider the effect this decision will have on getting the Draft NP to Referendum. Cllr A Walker advised that a flyer would go to each home to inform of the start of the Reg 14 consultation.

A proposal by Cllr C Hill that the 25 questionnaires are accepted did not receive a seconder, therefore was not voted on.

### **011/24 Approve any actions in respect of meeting with Church Commissioners, including hall hire fees:** The meeting is scheduled for 30<sup>th</sup> January at 3pm. Hall hire charges will need to be paid in due course. **Action: Clerk**

**012/24 Reepham Parish Council – consultation on Reepham Neighbourhood Plan and supporting documents in accordance with Regulations 15 and 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.:** Noted.

**CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED: to consider and agree actions as required:**

**013/24 Freedom of Information Request – approve response:**

A draft response has been circulated to all. Cllr C Darcel opined that the notes of the Neighbourhood Plan public meeting held on 10th July 2023 were critical to the response to the resident. Noted that these notes already form part of the response.

The resident noted that the notes are relevant to the decision just made on disallowing some questionnaire responses.

**Resolved:** To send the circulated response. **Action: Clerk.**

**014/24 Home From Home Care asking how it may support the village with any developments currently underway:**

After consideration, **RESOLVED** to make the following suggestions. **Action: Clerk.**

- Request that parking in connection with the site be improved.
- Request a donation towards the play area, which is utilised by residents of the Home.
- Suggest integrating more with the community eg give talks, offer drop-in sessions.

**015/24 D/Cllr C Darcel re flooding in Lincolnshire & relieving the Witham:**

Cllr C Darcel holds a photographic record of the area both after it has flooded, and also when levels have dropped back to normal. The wider area, including the Witham part of the Wash basin, requires consideration as part of future solutions to local flooding.

**016/24 Bruno Peek CVO OBE OPR, Pageant master, about the D-Day 80 celebrations on 6th June 2024:** Noted. **Action: Clerk** to request that the church bells be rung.

*Two residents left the meeting at 8.42pm.*

**017/24 Police**

- i. **PC 991 Samantha Key: introduction and request for information on local CSW initiatives:** Noted, also that a CSW scheme does not run in Fiskerton.
- ii. **To note only: Police Inspector Head: priority set for this area for the next three months is the fatal 5 (Speeding, mobile phones, drink/drug driving, seat belts and driving without due care and attention.):** Noted.
- iii. **Feedback on Police Zoom meeting with parish councils held in December 2023:**  
A link to view the meeting has been circulated to all. Of concern, had been the mention of Cherry Willingham as second only to Gainsborough in County Lines matters. **Action: Cllr A Walker** to email police for confirmation and, if confirmed, to then reach out to the Priory Pembroke Academy school in Cherry Willingham.

**NEW ITEMS: to consider and agree actions as required:**

**018/24 Flooding:**

- i. **Review public meeting held on 11 January 2024 ref. flooding events:**

The meeting had been a positive one, allowing residents of Fiskerton and Short Ferry to communicate directly with Authorities, but few answers had been provided. The chairman acknowledged the devastating impact the repeated floods have had on the residents and owners of Short Ferry caravan park to the east of the Parish along with other residents in outlying homes and farms. Short ferry saw approx. 100 residents needing to be evacuated and suffered extensive infrastructure damage, while others lost livestock which couldn't be rescued due to the speed which water levels rose. Much of this occurred before the information centre was set up in the village hall leaving residents feeling isolated. The resourcefulness of the owners at Short Ferry to source assistance from the fire service, action their own evacuation plan and to build their own flood defence bund is notable. Although our resources are limited everyone should feel they can contact the Parish Council in times of emergency.

- ii. **Feedback from Lincs Resilience Forum's Community Emergency Planning session on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023; attended by D/Cllr T Bridgwood, Cllr A Walker and Cllr K Brereton:**

This had been a good session, with attendees focussed on flooding.

- iii. **Consider creation of a Fiskerton Community Emergency Plan:**

Cllr K Brereton to write an Emergency Plan, to include Short Ferry. **Action: Cllr K Brereton**

- iv. **Consider holding a FPC list of vulnerable residents:** To be considered.

- v. **Consider building up FPC stores of sandbags for residents:**

Noted that the cost of storing, maintaining and distributing thousands of sandbags is beyond the PC's means, and that residents should take on some responsibility by holding their own stock of flood prevention equipment, and that help is available from Government for some basic flood items.

- vi. **Continue to pressure EA to tell FPC the condition of the bank:** Noted.

- vii. **Challenge the decision on PROW closures:**

LCC had advised on the closure of the PROWs, but the physical measures to prevent access are the responsibility of whoever asked for the closures, in this instance the EA.

- viii. **Consider Parish to request – and pay for – permanent conversion to all night operation, where the necessary criteria are met:**

Noted that, if there were one light on each junction and one midway on each street which would be likely to be evacuated (ie 15 lights) this would amount to £4500. If all the lights were turned on, this figure would likely be trebled. It was agreed that FPC cannot afford this amount.

**Action: Cllr A Walker** to write notes of the Flood Public Meeting and issue them to the various Authorities who had attended the meeting.

**019/24 FCC grant fund opening:** Noted.

**020/24 Launch of 2024 IGAS grant scheme: deadline 28 February 2024:** Noted.

**Action: all** to consider any relevant projects and send summary details to the Clerk.

**021/24 Use of social media:** Planning is in progress for a Facebook account.

**022/24 Road markings in village:**

In respect of a matter raised in previous meetings regarding lack of road markings on Water Hill/Holmfield junction; LCC had advised that there was no data to evidence this being a dangerous junction. However, residents know of the dangers. **Action: Cllr P Whitt** to supply a response to the Clerk for sending to LCC. **Action: Clerk.**

*At 9.01pm, Standing Orders were suspended to allow the meeting to continue.*

**023/24 Updating the Circuit with the Village Hall defibrillator:** Completed.

**024/24 To consider matters raised in respect of the Village Hall accounts (Cllr C Darcel):**

- i. **grants from Big Lottery Fund, West Lindsey, The Hodgson Trust, The Bernard Sunley Foundation, and the parish council should all be listed against the restricted assets column in the accounts of the village hall rather than as income for the VHMC:**

Noted that a number of items had been bought by FPC for the village hall from grant monies, with VAT being reclaimed, and queried whether the FPC accounts should be revised to show restricted assets. **Action: Clerk** to research, and update accounts if and as required.

- ii. **receive proposal that VHMC return the £5000 to the Hodgson Trust:**

It was confirmed that this money had been awarded to FPC and not the Village Hall and it was the responsibility of the Hodgson Trust to decide how they spend their money not FPC, and for them to address matters if they considered that the monies were not being managed properly. Cllr C Darcel opined that the figure should read £50.00 not £5000.00 as he had originally stated and that the money had been paid to FPC not the Village Hall, (*Note: Cllr C Darcel subsequently advised that £5000.00 was the correct figure*).

- iii. **Consider if there was there a conflict of interest:** Not discussed.

**025/24 Winter planting:** Item no longer required.

**026/24 Consider funding towards village newsletter:**

FPC relies heavily on the magazine to disseminate information. The magazine is anticipating an approx. £300.00 deficit. **RESOLVED** to write to Editor to offer to relinquish our expectation of a free entry every month and to accept a charge if the editor felt the need to apply one. **Action: Clerk.**

**027/24 Consider purchase of refurbished laptop for Councillor use:**

Cllr C Hill has had issues with FPC emails. Noted that there is £140.00 held within the Transparency Reserve. **Action: Cllr C Darcel** to ask, within two weeks, if WLDC have any available laptops. If not, **RESOLVED** to purchase a refurbished laptop at £109.00 inc VAT for Cllr C Hill's use. **Action: Clerk**

**028/24 Resident's problem with trees near to property:**

The responsible party will not take action, and the affected resident requires financial help to cut the trees back. FPC has a grant application process which the resident can try. It was also mentioned that FPC cannot support an application to cut the trees without the permission from the tree owner for them to be cut.

**UPDATE REPORTS: to consider and agree actions as required:**

**029/24 Draft constitution documents for Village Hall: car park agreement, play area agreement, and Village Hall Management Committee constitution – any update from Charity Commissioners, joint meeting with VHMC with an independent Chairperson:**

No progress.

**030/24 Village gateway project – installation of speed indicator devices, update on gates, LRSP review of new locations, LRSP speed survey:**

Two SIDS have been erected, and batteries were stolen shortly after from one of them. One post is still to be installed for the solar powered SID.

Locations for the mobile camera are yet to be agreed.

**031/24 Witham Valley Access Group – minutes 26/09/23, improving the Nelson Road-riverbank footpath:** Minutes are to be uploaded to Dropbox.

**032/24 Repairs/replacement play equipment:**

**Action: Cllr K Brereton** to contact WLDC for details of potential grant funding sources.

**033/24 Warm Spaces:**

Cllr J McGeachie has visited some older residents whose main feedback concerned provision of activities. Many appeared disinterested in Warm Spaces. Further thought on this project is required, and it will be focussed on next winter.

*During this item, at 9.31pm, C/Cllr I Fleetwood left the meeting.*

**034/24 Action log – to consider any other items which have an update:** Item deferred.

*At 9.35pm, one resident left the meeting.*

**MEETINGS:**

**035/24 Approve meeting dates for 2024:**

**RESOLVED** to approve the following dates:

25<sup>th</sup> Jan; 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb; 28<sup>th</sup> Mar; 25<sup>th</sup> April; 23<sup>rd</sup> May; 20<sup>th</sup> June; 25<sup>th</sup> July; 19<sup>th</sup> Sept; 17<sup>th</sup> Oct; 21<sup>st</sup> Nov. APM - TBC

**036/24 Matters for inclusion on next agenda:** None.

**037/24 Date of next meeting:** 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024, 7 – 9pm, Fiskerton Village Hall

*Meeting ended at 9.36pm.*

**Mrs Michelle Vail Clerk/RFO to Fiskerton Parish Council**

**Dated 13.02.24**