

# Minutes of the Meeting of Fiskerton Parish Council held on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 7:00pm in Fiskerton Village Hall

**Present:** Cllrs A Walker, P Whitt, C Darcel, C Hill, L Matthews, J McGeachie, K Brereton, C/Cllr I Fleetwood (arrived at 7.19pm), D/Cllr M Palmer, D/Cllr T Bridgwood, Mrs M Vail (Clerk) and six members of the public.

*Meeting started at 7.00pm.*

## 1. Open Session:

### **Public representation was made on the following matters:**

Verge parking; the resultant damage; and who is responsible for repairs. The Police have advised that nuisance and obstructive parking are matters to be reported to LCC via Fix My Street or via LCC's website. Photographic evidence is welcomed and helpful.

Is there any progress on the proposed solar farm? Approval has been given to the planning application, and amendments to it were recently submitted to WLDC for consideration. No timescale is known.

An explanation was requested as to the purpose of the Witham Valley Access Group. It aims to expand the local footpath network, and includes four Fiskerton residents. Several footpaths are considered not fit for purpose. These can be reported to LCC. There are signage issues when Short Ferry is flooded.

One resident advised that they could hear better at the previous meeting when a hearing device had been trialled; they had not been notified of this meeting as their FPC email had not been working; they requested that a letter of thanks be sent to a resident for facilitating road markings at Water Hill (to be a future agenda item); and requested that the Closed Session item be discussed at 8.30pm.

2. **Apologies for absence:** None.

3. **Declarations of interest:** None.

4. **Approve draft minutes of meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024 as a true record:**  
**RESOLVED** with one abstention (Cllr C Darcel) to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024 as a true record, and they were duly signed.

5. **To receive observations of the District and County Councillors:**

*D/Cllr T Bridgwood* – nothing to report.

*D/Cllr M Palmer* – WLDC's budget has balanced and is in a healthy state.

*D/Cllr C Darcel* – new auditors and accountants have been appointed at WLDC. He noted the importance that due diligence is exercised in monitoring expenditure by Officers. His Flooding Report is due to be circulated to District and County Councillors. Flooding is a wider issue than in the immediate locality.

*C/Cllr I Fleetwood* – the road into Short Ferry has reopened.

The bank on the Barlings Eau is being repaired which will give better protection for Fiskerton. There has been very little communication from either the Environment Agency or Witham Third Internal Drainage Board.

LCC are undertaking pothole repairs.

6. **Chairman's report:**

Residents have received their Council Tax bills. The only component NOT to have increased is the Parish Council part, which has actually decreased percentage-wise.

An email regarding nuisance parking was read out to the meeting, and it was noted that LCC is the responsible authority for such matters, not the police.

The Police have advised that, despite what had been reported in a previous meeting that Cherry Willingham was second only to Gainsborough in County Lines matters, they actually have no evidence that Cherry Willingham is high risk.

LCC have advised that, following assessment, white junction lines have been installed at Water Hill.

Reepham Parish Council has recently held its annual litter pick and ventured as far as Primetake. Thanks were extended to both Reepham Parish Council and Cllr I Fleetwood.

## **ALLOTMENTS:**

### **7. Report from Allotment Inspectors: consider and resolve on the following as required:**

- a. Update on production of draft risk assessment report:** Report completed.
- b. Update on untended plot:**

The plot has very recently been inspected and is still untended. There are only 2 plots actually under cultivation, so this is an issue. One last plot holder is still to be met. Letters are being drafted and issued to manage this situation, including deadlines to comply.
- c. Update on talks with tenant of the grazing land:**

An update was given, noting the tenant's understanding of matters. The grazing land can be used to generate additional allotment plots, if and as required. FPC needs to arrange for grass cutting of the grazing land. **Action: Clerk**
- d. Update on putting plans into place to increase number of plots:**

Item on hold pending progress of previous items.
- e. Agree any further steps:** Item on hold pending progress of following items.
- f. Agree when to issue invoices for 2024 season:**
- g. Consider increase of rents:** Items f and g were taken together.

Noted that current plot rents are randomly priced and very cheap, therefore plot holders can just sit on plots. **RESOLVED** to increase annual rents to £20.00 for a half-sized plot, and £40.00 for a full-sized plot from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, and for the invoices to be issued immediately. **Action: Clerk**

Noted that a skip may be needed for a tidy up of the allotments. **RESOLVED** that up to £200.00 + VAT can be spent, if required on skip hire.
- h. Consider any revision to tenancy agreements:**

This work is ongoing and the FPC agreement is being cross referenced with the Cherry Willingham Parish Council tenancy agreement. **Action: Cllr L Matthews**

## **FINANCE**

### **8. ACCOUNTS**

- a. Receive circulated schedule of payments/receipts for February/March 2024:**

Received.
- b. Approve any known non-regular accounts for payment for March/April 2024:**

None.
- c. Confirm verification/signing of bank reconciliation/bank statements Qs 1, 2, 3, 4:** In hand.
- d. Approve request from Fiskerton News for £110.00 to cover two pages of Parish Council news per issue in 2024 ie. £10 per edition:**

**RESOLVED** to approve this expenditure. **Action: Clerk**
- e. Review asset register:**

A query was raised as to whether the solicitor fees in connect with the acquisition of the Holmfield Open Space should be entered on the Asset Register. **Action: Clerk**
- f. Review financial risk assessment:**

**RESOLVED** to approve the reviewed financial risk assessment.
- g. Approve insurance renewal for 2024 – 25 at £728.54:**

It was suggested to obtain alternative quotes. Previous difficulties in finding insurers willing to cover FPC's solar panels was noted. Cllr J McGeachie has details of an insurance broker to try. **Action: Clerk**

**h. Note LCC contribution rate for 2024-25 towards urban grass cutting will be £982.17: Noted.**

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

**9. Neighbourhood Plan – update, draft policies, liaison with school, public consultation, meeting with Church Commissioners on 30/01/24, resolve to submit NP draft plan documents to WLDC and move to Regulation 14 consultation,** Strong evidence is required showing landowner support of the Neighbourhood Plan. Comments have been submitted in respect of the developer's plans for land north of Corn Close following public consultation. The developer's response has glossed over most of the comments made. However, they have invited an offer for the Paddock. Therefore, at the proposal of Cllr K Brereton, seconded by Cllr A Walker, it was **RESOLVED** with two against (Cllr C Darcel and Cllr C Hill) that Cllr A Walker goes back with a starting point offer of £25,000. **Action: Cllr A Walker**

**10. Feedback on public consultation on 27th February 2024, 3 - 7pm in Fiskerton Village Hall on a proposed development for up to 150 dwellings on land north of Corn Close; including to ratify FPC submitted response to consultation (time sensitive):**

Noted that this was in accordance with policy in place at that time. Copies had been requested of every response which the developer had received from the public consultation, but none had been supplied. The request for these will be made again.

**11. To note only: 147962: Planning application for construction and operation of a solar photovoltaic farm, including fencing, internal service tracks, inverters, transformer stations, cabling, CCTV, landscaping, substations and ancillary cabins being variation of conditions 6 & 11 of planning permission 142117 granted 27 May 2021 - increase height of communication mast & allow 40 years operational life of solar farm: LOCATION: The Old Airfield:**

Noted. This application has been approved.

**12. Gallagher Developments - Land north of Fiskerton Road East, Cherry Willingham – note any date advised for public consultation event in Spring 2024:**

There has been no notification of an event received to date.

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

**13. British Gas – suspension of FIT payments until meter readings have been verified (bi-annual exercise):** In hand.

**14. To note: LCC - Section 19 Flood Investigators in area:**

Noted. Investigations are looking for trends.

**15. To consider a request for complainant to be accompanied within the Closed Session below by an independent witness of their choosing:**

At the proposal of Cllr A Walker, seconded by Cllr C Darcel, it was **RESOLVED** that D/Cllr T Bridgwood can accompany the complainant as the independent witness.

*At 8.15pm, Cllr C Darcel left the meeting for 2 minutes.*

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

**16. Implementation of Communications Policy:**

An early draft is in hand. Thought is to be given on consulting with residents about how to communicate with them on FPC matters.

**17. Summer bedding:**

Noted that this is budgeted for. **RESOLVED** that, if Cllr J McGeachie cannot obtain free summer bedding, Cllr A Walker be authorised to spend up to £150.00 + VAT. **Action: Cllr A Walker.**

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

**18. 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 VHM with an independent Chairperson:**

An independent Chairperson has agreed to assist. A meeting is only required if matters cannot be agreed but is likely to be held in June. What is required is to agree what the governing documents state. **Action: Cllr A Walker** to recirculate the documents.

**19. Resolve on proposal to return £5000 to the Hodgson Trust (Cllr C Darcel):**

Cllr C Darcel opined that FPC should never have asked the Hodgson Trust for this money. He proposed, seconded by Cllr C Hill, that the £5000.00 should be repaid to the Hodgson Trust. With 2 in favour, 3 against, and 2 abstentions, this proposal was not carried. A resident in attendance, who also sits on the Hodgson Trust Committee, advised that the Trust is happy for the £5000.00 to remain with FPC. **Action: Clerk.**

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

One post has been installed, and a second (from the Short Ferry direction) is being chased up for installation.

**21. Witham Valley Access Group – Nov 2023 and Feb 2024 minutes circulated, improving the Nelson Road-riverbank footpath:** Noted.

**22. Repairs/replacement play equipment, grants:** Grants are being sourced and quotes obtained.

**23. Emergency Plan:** In hand. Contact is being made with Short Ferry. The Plan requires input from all councillors. **Action: Cllr K Brereton** to circulate Plan.

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

**MEETINGS:**

**25. Matters for inclusion on next agenda:** Insurance renewal, laptop

**26. Approve rescheduling the May meeting from 23<sup>rd</sup> May to 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024 (Annual Meeting of the Parish Council):** **RESOLVED** to approve.

**27. Set date for Annual Parish Meeting as 30<sup>th</sup> May 2024, 7 – 9pm:** **RESOLVED** to approve.

**28. Approve expenditure on date panels for APM banners:**  
**RESOLVED** to approve up to £40.00 + VAT.

**29. Resolve to move into Closed Session as the following item contains information of a personal, sensitive and/or confidential nature:**  
**RESOLVED** to move into Closed Session.

*At 8.39pm, all non-councillors not required to be present in Closed Session, left the meeting.*

**30. To consider a formal complaint concerning the actions of Fiskerton Parish Council in connection with village survey returns:**

This will be reported to the next meeting of Fiskerton Parish Council (ie 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024), as per FPC's Complaints Policy.