

Minutes of the Meeting of Fiskerton Parish Council held on Thursday 27th June 2024 at 7:00pm in Fiskerton Village Hall

Present: Cllrs A Walker, P Whitt, C Hill, K Brereton, L Matthews, Mrs M Vail (Clerk), D/Cllr T Bridgwood, and four members of the public (one arriving at 7.23pm)

Meeting started at 7.00pm

139/24 Open Session:

The following were raised:

- matters relating to the footpath to the rear of the village hall, including where does responsibility lie for cutting back the thorns at the entrance to the footpath. The resident was advised that this should be reported to LCC via their website.
- Matters relating to the riverbank. The Chairman advised that information received from the Environment Agency is 'very vague', there appears to be no money available to effect repairs, nor any plans to extend the closure of the riverbank. The Chairman is attempting to obtain clarity that this understanding is correct.
- The Close has never had a proper road surface and is not the safest to cross for disabled people. It was queried if this is a private road.
- Potholes never appear to be repaired despite LCC being repeatedly written to.

140/24 Apologies for absence: Cllr C Darcel, Cllr J McGeachie, D/Cllr M Palmer

141/24 To receive any declarations of interest: None.

142/24 Approve notes of meeting of 16th May 2024 as a true record:

RESOLVED to approve the notes as a true record, and they were duly signed.

143/24 To receive observations of the District and County Councillors:

D/Cllr T Bridgwood:

- gave an update on WL/2024/00036, formerly 147131 BESS Land South of Barlings Lane (Battery Storage). The developer has submitted a Fire Strategy Report to support the application. There are concerns that, for Fire Risk Assessment requirements, although the site should have two distinct and separate entry points from opposite sides in order to be able to enter regardless of the direction of the prevailing wind, this is not actually the case.
- WLDC has updated its planning portal, which had been found not to work on mobile devices. They have been working with their supplier to rectify this. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee have been asked to investigate this matter.

A resident noted that it had not been possible to access planning applications on a desktop computer either.

Noted that the Clerk had already forwarded on emails sent by D/Cllr T Bridgwood on these matters.

144/24 Chairman's report:

Public Rights of Way footpaths to the south of the parish are very overgrown. They have already been reported to LCC, and no response has been received, so LCC have been chased up.

Some footpaths have become overgrown by encroachment of verges (ie. Plough Lane, the Crescent, Five Mile Lane) and have been reported. LCC have responded that these footpaths are narrow to begin with; and that Plough Lane and the Crescent are not sufficiently overgrown to warrant action, but that Five Mile Lane is in the Winter programme of work.

A FPC Facebook presence has been established and will be evaluated over time.

145/24 To review and approve the following appointment and delegation arrangement for 2024/25: Member to oversee Accounting and Finance:

It was considered that, as Cllr J McGeachie reviews and signs off the quarterly financial audits against bank statements, and FPC checks the monthly financial reports, that this appointment is currently redundant. Therefore, **RESOLVED** not to appoint to this post and to remove it from the list of appointments made annually in May.

ALLOTMENTS:

146/24 Report from Allotment Inspectors: consider and resolve on the following as required:

i. Update on untended plot:

A recent plot inspection showed that there had been no improvement, and no cultivation was evident. FPC has been in talks for over a year with the plot holder and a deadline of early June 2024 had been imposed, which had not been met. **RESOLVED** unanimously that the plot be taken back. **Action: Clerk** to write letter.

During this item, Cllr K Brereton left the meeting at 7.35pm and returned at 7.38pm.

ii. Update on grazing land:

No invoice has yet been received from the ex-tenant for the cutting of the grass. An access point needs to be created before FPC's contractors can take over the grass cutting.

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

On hold whilst reallocating of existing plots takes place.

iv. Agree any further steps:

A potential new plot holder for plot 4A has been met with on site, who is keen to take on the plot subject to the following caveats:

- a) The plot be strimmed to ground level
- b) A water butt be moved back to plot 4B
- c) No rent be payable in 2024 as nothing can be grown in 2024

RESOLVED to approve the above caveats. **Action: Cllr A Walker, Cllr L Matthews, Clerk.**

The next person on the waiting list has not replied to correspondence offering them a plot.

Action: Clerk, Cllr L Matthews to arrange alternate means of contact.

Cllr L Matthews is attempting to contact one tenant as it is thought they may be thinking of giving one plot up.

v. Consider any revision to tenancy agreements:

Tenancy agreements are to be reviewed and updated for January 2025, and will be circulated to tenants by the end of 2024, ref. a January – December invoice period.

ACCOUNTS

147/24 Receive the circulated schedule of payments/receipts for May 2024: Noted

148/24 Note schedule of regular payments for July 2024: Noted.

149/24 To approve any non-regular accounts for July 2024 not listed above: None.

FLOODING:

150/24 Via D/Cllr C Darcel: Environment Agency's newsletter on the Lower Witham Flood Resilience Project: Noted. This project looks ahead to 2030.

151/24 Update on flood recovery plans following Storm Babet:

Cllr A Walker has been attempting to obtain updates from the various Agencies as little appears to have been happening: this is concerning as Autumn is approaching. Both the Parish Council and residents are very concerned at this apparent lack of action.

Responses from LCC and Witham Third Drainage Board were not helpful. It seems that there is no money to do anything to the riverbank. **Action: Cllr A Walker** will put these responses in Dropbox for Councillors to access.

Flooding will be a standing agenda item, and an area will be created on the parish council website relating to Emergency including flooding. **Action: Clerk**

PLANNING: to consider and agree actions as required:

152/24 Neighbourhood Plan – update, draft policies, liaison with school, resolve to submit NP draft plan documents to WLDC and move to Regulation 14 consultation, offer for Paddock:

The Church Commissioners' Corn Close planning application has been submitted to WLDC but is not yet visible on their Planning Portal. It is thought to make the alternative site for the Neighbourhood Plan null and void, therefore the thought is to make what there is as best it can for the village. The Planning Group are to meet to discuss the planning application and agree a response for submission to WLDC.

153/24 WL/2024/00371: side & rear two-storey extension: Woodlands Farm, Ferry Road, LN3 4HU:

RESOLVED that there are no comments. *Action: Clerk*

154/24 Gallagher Developments - Land north of Fiskerton Road East, Cherry Willingham – note any date advised for public consultation event in Spring 2024:

No date advised. Cherry Willingham Parish Council are not supportive of this and have told the developer so. It is not in the Local Plan.

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED:

155/24 LCC Rights of Way Survey: Witham Valley Access Group are aware of this survey.

156/24 Police Parish Council Engagement Teams Session - Thur 4th July

RESCHEDULED TO 16th July 2024 – appoint attendee:

RESOLVED to appoint Cllr L Matthews.

NEW ITEMS: to consider and agree actions as required:

157/24 Tree surgeon report on safety of trees in play area:

The 2 Sycamores were recently inspected and reported as 'ok, with flaking bark normal for mature Sycamores and the crown, leaves looks fit and healthy'. The recommendation is to re-inspect in the Autumn with a view to dead wood both trees at the end of the year.

158/24 Consider 'take your litter home' signage – resident's suggestion:

Item deferred. *Action: Clerk* to request Cllr C Darcel provides pictures/quotes for consideration.

UPDATE REPORTS: to consider and agree actions as required:

159/24 Communications Policy: A policy is being drafted.

160/24 Laptop for Councillors: A laptop has been purchased and needs updates.

161/24 Consider purchase of hearing device:

Action: Cllr K Brereton to obtain supplier details, model number and costings. Cllr C Darcel can offer funding from his Councillor Initiative Fund. As this device is to be shared across 5 parish councils' meetings, one idea is that D/Cllr C Darcel buys a device himself and all 5 parish councils contribute towards it.

162/24 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 VHM with an independent Chairperson:

The joint meeting may now be held in September due to peoples' availability.

163/24 Village gateway project – installation of speed indicator devices, update on gates, LRSP review of new locations, LRSP speed survey Ferry Road, approve quote to replace batteries that were stolen:

An Archer speed survey has been completed.

An extra battery has been located so there is no need to purchase another. **Action: Cllr K Brereton** to obtain an additional bracket.

Given the limited space for gates at the approaches to the village, only Reepham Road has sufficient space. As the speed signs reinforce speed awareness upon entering the village, it was suggested that the idea of gates be reviewed in 6 months' time, when data from the SIDs can be taken into account.

164/24 Witham Valley Access Group:

The Group has not met recently but will respond to the LCC Rights of Way Survey. It will speak to local Parish Councils to tie in and fill in gaps to connect local routes.

165/24 Repairs/replacement play equipment, grants: No progress.

166/24 Emergency Plan:

Cllr K Brereton needs the input of other Councillors, especially to allocate names to responsible roles. He will circulate the Plan as far as he has completed it. **Action: Cllr K Brereton.**

Two members of the public left the meeting at 8.39pm.

167/24 Action log – to consider any other items which have an update

Many items have been completed. Updates were given on the outstanding items.

MEETINGS:

168/24 Matters for inclusion on next agenda: None

169/24 Date of next meeting: 8th August 2024, 7 – 9pm, Fiskerton Village Hall

170/24 Resolve to move into Closed Session as the following items contains information of a personal, sensitive and/or confidential nature:

RESOLVED to move into Closed Session.

At 8.46pm everybody left the meeting except for Councillors and the Clerk.

171/24 To consider response from neighbouring parish council to request for assistance in respect of formal complaint, and agree actions

The neighbouring parish council had resolved not to assist with the formal complaint.

Therefore, **RESOLVED** that FPC continues with the complaint as per its Complaints Policy from the point where it had paused proceedings.

Confirmed that FPC can only consider the procedural element of the complaint, and that the elements concerning personal issues, actions of individual councillors, or Code of Conduct matters cannot be determined by FPC, but must go to WLDC for investigation.

RESOLVED to provide a timeline of events to the complainant, and confirmed that this document was not an extant document at the time of the complaints hearing.

There then followed lengthy discussion and consideration in respect of the procedural element of the complaint.

RESOLVED that the complainant should be invited to the August FPC meeting to receive the outcome of the complaint. **Action: Clerk**

D/Cllr T Bridgwood had, by resolution of FPC, been granted permission to act as an independent witness for the complainant at the complaints hearing. **RESOLVED** that, as the hearing has happened, matters moving forward are now confidential between FPC and the complainant. **Action: Clerk** to advise the complainant and D/Cllr T Bridgwood accordingly

Mrs Michelle Vail

Clerk/RFO to Fiskerton Parish Council

Dated 31.07.24