

# FEN DITTON PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman – Councillor Charles Jones

## Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2010 at the Recreation Ground Pavilion

### Present:

Councillors: A. Cram, P. Snellgrove Hawkins, L. Woolfenden,  
Parish Clerk: M. Starkie  
District Councillor: R. Turner

### Election of Chairman for the meeting

As the Council Chairman was unable to attend, Clr. Cram proposed Clr. Snellgrove Hawkins as Chairman for the meeting; seconded by Clr. Woolfenden.

### Open Forum

In response to a letter from the Chairman explaining the need to co-opt more Councillors, the following members of the public attended the meeting; Mr. Ian Harvey, Mr. Mark Easterman, Mrs Debra Howard, Mr. David Howard, Ms Angela Sexton, Mr. Michael Johnston, Mr. Tony Weeser, Ms Kay Bispham, Mr. Geoff Peel.

Dr. Sarah Beeson attended to report back to Clr. Jones.

One member attended for any business related to the Land by the Barn, but did not address the Council.

One member addressed the Council on recent tree cutting activity by BT; this had prevented the bus getting down Green End. The Council had not been notified; the Parish Clerk to contact BT. This member also reported that the wall outside The Plough had been repaired but was now down again. Clr. Snellgrove Hawkins to contact The Plough.

### 1. Apologies for absence

Clr. Jones was unable to attend for medical reasons

### 2. Ratification of the Minutes of the meeting of 1<sup>st</sup> December 2009

The Minutes were agreed and signed by Clr. Snellgrove Hawkins.

### 3. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest

### 4. The future of Fen Ditton Parish Council and Councillor Vacancies (Clr. Turner requested that the agenda was changed so that this item should be discussed before his report as so many members of the public were attending).

Clr Snellgrove Hawkins thanked the members of the public for attending the meeting and showing so much interest in the Council. Clr. Turner added his thanks, especially in such bad weather, and explained that the current situation was unusual and that the District Council would not want to take over the running of Fen Ditton; it was important that Councillors were co-opted locally so that the Council is representative of the population.

Clr. Snellgrove Hawkins explained the role of the Councillor, the frequency of meetings, the special interests that Councillors might have and, in response to questions, how much time was likely to be needed. He invited those attending the meeting to leave their contact details if they were interested in the role and explained that the co-option process would be at the February meeting.

The Parish Clerk explained the process for filling a Casual Vacancy, the election process if there were more candidates than vacancies, distributed candidate qualification forms and offered to send the draft minutes to those interested. Clrs. Cram and Woolfenden expressed their pleasure that so many people were interested and offered to answer any questions on the role if required before the next meeting.

### 5. Reports from County and District Councillors

The County Councillor did not attend

District Clr. Turner explained the recent Briefing Note on Chairman's Delegation. Decisions on planning application must be made in open public meeting and must be on the meeting agenda. If a planning application is received after the agenda has been posted it is possible to ask the Planning Officer for an extension to the usual 21 days response period or an extra-ordinary meeting of the council should be held for which an agenda is posted and members of the public invited. Clr. Snellgrove Hawkins replied that Fen Ditton PC complied with this rule.

An extract from the Parish Briefing Note is appended. The complete Parish Briefing Note is on record.

#### 6. **Planning Applications and other Planning Matters**

a) **S/1504/09/F – 27 Green End.** Amendment to First Floor Plan had been agreed by Planning Officer – this was for information only

b) **Letter from Head of Planning SCDC to BT** regarding Grade II listed telephone kiosks. The District Council has asked for further information on responsibility for maintenance if the kiosks are sold to Parish Councils.

c) **A Section 106 Agreement indemnity** in respect of S/0902/08/F, 28A High Ditch Road was signed by Clr. Snellgrove Hawkins and will be signed by Clr. Jones. When this money is received it will be deposited in a separate bank account as a Public Open Spaces Contribution.

d) **Land by the Barn.** A Committee meeting to discuss the issues, planned for 15<sup>th</sup> December, was cancelled because of snow. Two letters have been received from Mr. and Mrs Oliver; one letter has been received from Mr. Gough Goodman, and his solicitors, Barr Ellison, have written to the Council through its solicitor, Hewitsons. These letters relate to the granting of a Deed on 28 February 2009. Mr. Gough Goodman requested copies of the Minutes at which the Deed was authorized. The Parish Clerk has sent him copies of Minutes of the Council Meeting in February and April 09 (there was no meeting in March 09). As this is a complex matter, Clr. Woolfenden proposed that a Committee meeting should be held and legal advice taken. This was seconded by Clr. Cram and carried unanimously.

#### 7. **Conservation matters**

a) **Request for help with Church Wall Maintenance.** The Parish Clerk has contacted a firm of surveyors recommended by the Church Architect. Their fees, just to give an estimate of how much a survey will cost, were more than the £150 which had been agreed as a Council contribution. The Surveyor has offered to look at the wall free to give some idea of what an estimate will cost. The Parish Clerk will contact other Surveyors. Clr. Woolfenden suggested that an appeal by the Church might be useful and should be included in the Newsletter which will be discussed at the February meeting.

b) **CGM (Herald) contract** for maintenance of verges, grass cutting etc. CGM is offering the same terms and schedule as last year. Clr. Cram questioned the arrangements as grass has been cut when wild flowers and daffodils were in bloom. Parish Clerk to ask for a schedule so that this can be monitored and so that villagers are aware. Parish Clerk to investigate other contractors.

c) **Parish Path Partnership (P3) Application** – more information is required; held over to next meeting.

#### 8. **Recreation Ground matters**

a) **Provision of Bike/skate ramp** – Clr. Cram expressed some concern that this might encourage anti-social behaviour. She proposed that it should be reconsidered later in the year; this was seconded by Clr. Woolfenden.

b) **Information on grants** (carried over from last meeting) – grants are available for open spaces and recreation grounds and these will be looked at again if needed.

c) **Pavilion** – concern was expressed about the standard of the pavilion such as the outside lighting, the walkway and the heating. Clr. Cram asked if S106 money could be used for improvements. Parish Clerk to investigate before next meeting.

#### 9. **Highways matters**

a) **A14 widening scheme consultation period** Clr. Woolfenden reported that she had organized an informal meeting of some villagers to consider responses. This had resulted in a letter which volunteers had delivered around the village encouraging people to write to the Highways Agency. Clr. Jones had written to the Highways Agency, on behalf of the council, expressing concern about the proposed scheme especially the increased volume of traffic likely to occur in Fen Ditton.

b) **Response on HCV draft map** – As full information has not been received the Council felt no response was yet possible.

c) **Community Transport Strategy Consultation** – The consultation period has been extended to 25<sup>th</sup> January 2010. Clr. Woolfenden offered to consult villagers and respond to the questions. Some members of the public expressed concern that there was very poor community transport available.

## 10. Cemetery matters

a) **Overgrown areas** – the Parish Clerk reported that she had inspected the Cemetery with the gravedigger prior to a burial and there are overgrown areas which are too thick for volunteers to tackle. This reduces the number of plots available. Clr Cram suggested that the council should consider a clearance programme by CGM (Herald) in the Spring but before the nesting season.

b) **Cemetery Price Review** – As only completed mid 2009, this is held over to March meeting.

11. **Possible volunteer scheme for Village Emergencies** – Clr. Woolfenden reported that side roads and pavements had become hazardous in the snow and suggested that a volunteer group should be formed to deal with such emergencies. SCDC has offered a special deal on Salt Bins but it is not clear when these will be available. Parish Clerk to investigate. Clr. Cram proposed ordering three bins if they could be delivered soon; seconded by Clr. Woolfenden.

## 12. Finance

a) **Bank mandates** to provide signatories for PC cheques – signed by Clrs. Cram and Snellgrove Hawkins

b) **Review of accounts 2009 – 2010.** The Budget and proposed Parish Precept for 2010 – 2011 were presented by the Parish Clerk. After some discussion it was agreed that the Precept should be increased by 3% instead of 2%; 11 new houses have been built in the village, new salt bins were requested and there are increased overheads. Proposed by Clr. Woolfenden, seconded by Clr. Snellgrove Hawkins and carried unanimously. The budget is appended as a separate Excel spreadsheet.

The Council will request a Precept from SCDC of £13,951.76 for the year 2010-2011.

c) **Affiliation Fees to CPALC** – carried over to next meeting

d) **Letter to Barclays Bank** requesting telephone and internet banking arrangements for Parish Clerk – signed.

e) **Accounts**

### The following Invoices were approved

i) Peter Oakes – Tree surgery	1,196.00
ii) CGM – Cutting and strimming grass and verges November	402.50
iii) Kevin Bennett – grave preparation 23 December 09	210.00
iv) Clerk's Salary & expenses for December	

### The following monies have been received

i) Richard Stebbings Funeral Director	210.00
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## 13. Report from Parish Clerk

a) SCDC Planning Parish Forum Meeting 10<sup>th</sup> December 2009 – information was given to facilitate planning application responses

b) Linton Police Panel Meeting, Fulbourn 15<sup>th</sup> December 2009 – information was given on Fulbourn shooting episode, reporting ASBOs, reduction in parking issues in Fen Ditton and other villages.

## 14. Correspondence

a) Letter of support sent to Chairman of Governors of Fen Ditton Primary School

- b) Letters of thanks sent to B. Felstead and M. Woolfenden
- c) Letter to Public Rights of Way Officer re. his request for Clerk to inspect possible tree down on Footpath 6
- d) SCDC invitation to Exception Sites Parish Review Meeting 18<sup>th</sup> January 2010 – Parish Clerk to attend.
- e) NHS Cambridgeshire – Launch of Public Consultation on the Future of Musculoskeletal Services - it was agreed that individuals responses were most appropriate
- f) Red2Green charity - request for donation; not thought to be appropriate for this Council
- g) CPALC Training Courses – available to Councillors
- h) SCDC Communities Facilities Audit – summarised by Parish Clerk. This relates mostly to the provision of halls and meeting places, their maintenance, accessibility and construction; Fen Ditton is rated as “average”.

**15. Dates of the Annual Parish Meeting and the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council**

As the Chairman was not present, and councillor vacancies are to be filled, this item was held over to the next meeting.

**16. To Accept Notices & Matters for the next Agenda**

Please note that no decisions can lawfully be made under this item. LGA 1972 s12 10(2) (b) states that business must be specified; therefore the Council cannot lawfully agree any matter that is not on the agenda.

No notices or items for next meeting were received except those carried over from this meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.30pm

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2010

**The public is welcome to attend meetings of the Parish Council**

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## **Appendix 1**

### **Extract from Parish Briefing Note Dec. 09 (from District Clr. Robert Turner)**

#### **How Parish planning consultations should properly be dealt with**

CPALC have advised that representations to be submitted on behalf of parishes should only be formulated in a properly convened meeting (whether full council or a specific planning committee appointed for that purpose), to which the public have access and for which appropriate public notice of venue and business to be transacted has been given. SCDC considers this is correct and endorses the view that this helps ensure the process is as transparent as possible. Parish representations are afforded weight by the LPA and it is entirely appropriate therefore that the same are the product of a formal and open process.

Whilst there is nothing at all wrong with information (such as plans etc) being circulated in advance, the actual decision as to what representations should be made is only one that can practically and lawfully be made in the setting of a formally convened meeting and, of course, all the usual rules about interests and bias/predetermination do apply.

Whilst it would be technically possible to avoid the need for such a meeting by specifically delegating powers to make decisions relating to planning representations to an officer (such as the Clerk), this is very unlikely to be palatable either to elected members or to those who have elected them and would not recommend this course as having any real merit. As you would expect, any arrangement where the Clerk exercised such a delegation at the direction of a particular member or members would not be lawful as this would not be a true exercise of his or her discretion.