

GREAT WITCHINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting held at 7.45 p.m. at The Memorial Hall, Great Witchingham on Thursday 27th November 2003

Present: Ron Cornell, Pauline Brown and Kevin Francis. Roy Church in the chair.

Clerk: Peter Dilloway, Simon Woodbridge (District Councillor), Brenda Ravencroft (County Councillor), Andy Barkway (Community Police Officer), Christine Robson (Broadland Homewatch Co-ordinator) and eight members of the public.

(593). Apologies. John Willmore

(594). Minutes of the meeting held 25/9/03 were agreed to be a true record and duly signed by the Chairman.

(595). Matters Arising: None

The following two items were moved to the top of the agenda for expediency.

(596). Land adjacent Hall Walk/Housing needs survey.

The Chairman outlined the present situation and reported that the Parish Council have agreed to allow the Rural Housing Enabler to carry out a housing needs survey, with the inclusion of a selection of pertinent questions specific to the views of the village on other matters. The survey will probably take place during February, following introductory articles in the next issue of the Wensum Diary from the Parish Council and the R.H.E. The Chairman invited comment.

Mr Fitzpatrick asked who would be responsible for analysing the answers given in the survey. This would be done exclusively by the R.H.E. and the results given to both Parish and District Councils. As the information given by householders is deemed to be confidential, that information will only be seen by the R.H.E. or approved analysts and not by either Council. Mr. Fitzpatrick questioned the range of circulation of the survey. He had a document that showed Gt. Witchingham together with five adjacent parishes forming the composite parish of Gt. Witchingham and asked if the circulation was to include the whole area. The Chairman replied that the survey was solely for distribution to the 292 dwellings in the Parish of Gt. Witchingham. He added that whatever results were forthcoming, if any further surveys were required in the locality to obtain a broader spectrum, these would be the responsibility of the District Council and the parishes concerned. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked that if the survey showed a need for thirty houses would thirty be built, or if less, would less be built and re-stated his argument from an earlier meeting that Gt. Witchingham was low on the housing priority list. Simon Woodbridge had at an earlier meeting advised that a survey carried out for the whole district was deemed to be flawed because information had come from such a small sample. He repeated this information for the benefit of those present, adding that the District Council had needed to carry out parish housing need surveys but was presently limited by the level of public and government funding. He added that this parish was being considered ahead of others because it is one of the few places where the District Council owns land. Housing is one of the top priorities for the District Council and to be able to give the land to a Social Housing Provider such as Wherry Housing is a low cost exercise as far as the ratepayer is concerned. The matter of the development at Whissonset was raised again, where the selection of 'local' tenants had proved unsatisfactory to the Parish Council. This was a matter for the Housing Association concerned to deal with. Mr. Fitzpatrick felt that by allowing a survey to take place the Parish Council was heading into the unknown and would lose control of the project. The Chairman re-iterated that the District had bought the land for development many years ago, and could develop the land without Parish support if they so wished. The Parish Council had therefore felt that any Parish involvement was preferable. Having dwelt on this subject for some time the Chairman closed this item by highlighting the points of discussion.

(597). Home watch Scheme.

There have been a number of criminal activities in and around the village and the need for participation in Homewatch schemes has increased. Several people had expressed an interest and the Homewatch Co-ordinator and Community Constable had been invited to attend. Despite being advertised, the turnout from the public was poor as most people present were concerned with Hall Walk. The Chairman asked PC Barkway if there was an easy way to contact to him as presently calls go through a central switchboard and they have trouble locating him. PC Barkway gave the Clerk a telephone and mobile number that will be made available to the public and be displayed on the parish notice board. He stressed that urgent calls should go through the central switchboard or 999 as normal. Christine Robson, Homewatch Co-ordinator for the area, addressed the meeting. She covers two police sectors centred in Norwich covering some 600 schemes, each scheme consisting of a cluster of 20 houses. Additionally there are Commercial watch, Business watch, Church watch and Boat watch schemes running in the Broadland area. There are starter packs containing useful items and information, which can be made available for each scheme and street Homewatch signs, which cost £25 to erect. These signs are known to act as a deterrent. One of the important features of the scheme is that information is passed to all local co-ordinators on any offences being committed (bogus callers etc) so that they can make the public aware before the event. The scheme promotes the concept of neighbours looking out for one another and reporting anything suspicious. Marking all valuable household items is highly recommended by the scheme, this is very useful to the police when recovering stolen property. It also deters the opportunist thief. The scheme relies upon people acting promptly upon what they see.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Robson for her introduction to the scheme and invited questions from the public.

Anna Sutton said that her neighbour had recently had property stolen and that the thief had spoken to her, giving a completely plausible story. She felt that if the village had a regular policeman patrolling a beat this would reduce such crimes. The meeting agreed with this. There followed a discussion on visible policing levels, which the Council realises, is unlikely to improve with the manning levels available for the area covered. The Chairman felt that the public would feel safer if they could rely upon the swift attendance of an officer when needed. PC Barkway advised that paperwork was one of the biggest problems to officers. In addition having caught a suspect the officer could then be tied up for several hours processing that person, before he could return to his beat. He reminded the Parish Council that the Special Constable Scheme was still running and allowed a parish (or parishes) to pay for the

exclusive services of a special constable.

The Chairman stated that the subject warranted a public meeting for the sole purpose of creating awareness and enthusiasm for setting up Homewatch schemes in the parish. An article will go into the Wensum Diary asking for volunteers to act as co-ordinators. A meeting will be arranged at an appropriate time.

The Chairman thanked Mrs. Robson and PC Barkway for attending and paused the meeting to allow them and anyone else wishing to leave the meeting to do so. (All members of the public left the meeting)

(598). Independent Village Hall Committee:

The Chairman outlined a resolution on the way forward to settle the future of the Memorial Hall and if required its replacement. He felt that a committee formed from members of the Parish Council, Parochial Church Council, Fuel Allotment Charity and School Governors should be able to give direction to such a project and be able to attract funding from a diverse spectrum of funding bodies. This resolution was proposed by Ron Cornell and seconded by Kevin Francis.

The Chairman stated that he would be willing to chair an initial meeting but asked for a Councillor to volunteer to sit on the committee thereafter. Kevin Francis volunteered for the post.

(599). Correspondence:

- (i). Most correspondence had been circulated prior to the meeting.
- (ii). Letter to Norfolk County Council on behalf of Lyng, Sparham & Gt. Witchingham asking for speed reductions in the area, particularly on the A1067.
- (iii). Reply from NCC refusing speed restrictions on A1067
- (iv). Reply to NCC renewing request in light of recent fatal accident.
- (v). Letter to Chief Constable re: Community policing.
- (vi). Letter to BDC requesting dog bin for Lenwade House Drive footpath.
- (vii). Letter to Marriott's Way Project requesting repairs to railway bridge.
- (viii). Letter to BDC requesting confirmation of funding of housing needs survey.
- (ix). Letter from NCC advising improvements to Lenwade Bridge footpath will be completed by the end of November.

(600). Planning Applications:

- (i). Planning applications received since the last meeting had been circulated and responded to.
- (ii). Retrospective application for replacement industrial unit.

(601). Payments/Financial Matters:

- (i). Glasdon UK supply of salt bin. Cheque No.100351 £168.22. (retrospective)
 - (ii). J&M Builders. Erection of goalposts. Cheque No.100352 £223.25. (retrospective)
 - (iii). NCS. Grounds Maintenance 2nd ½ year. . Cheque No.100353 £211.63. (retrospective)
 - (iv). R. Cornell for litter clearance (£45), War memorial upkeep (£35), Playing field work (£6.98). Chq No.100354 £86.98
 - (v). R. Church. Chairman's expenses to 27/11/03. Chq No.100355 £12.70
 - (vi). J&M Builders. Installation of Millennium Patio. Chq No.100356 £1010.50
 - (vii). P. Dilloway Clerk's Expenses to 27/11/03 Chq No.100357 £62.36
- All payments approved by unanimous consent.

(602). The Smell:

The Chairman advised that the deadline for compliance with reserved planning matters upon Clay Hall Farm set by BDC was due to expire shortly. No remedial work had yet been commenced and he defined the reasoning by which he was certain that no works would be carried out. He will write to BDC to ensure that these matters are dealt with satisfactorily.

(603). Playground equipment: The Clerk was instructed to make enquiries with BDC, NCAPTC and NPFA to establish what grants may be available for the renewal of equipment.

(604). Co-option of Parish Councillor. The vacancy had been advertised by BDC and no applications for the post had been received. The Parish had subsequently asked if anyone were interested in filling the vacancy. 3 people had come forward: Brian Johnson, Bridget Wright and David Gurney. The Chairman asked for a show of hands against each person and Bridget Wright was duly voted onto the Council. The Clerk was asked to advise the applicants of the outcome.

Any Other Business:

- (i). Simon Woodbridge handed the Council a copy of a budgetary statement issued in light of the recent government funding proposals.
- (ii). It was asked whether there had been any progress in finding an alternative site for the bottle and paper banks. The Chairman advised that there appeared to be no firm decision from Diocese on the future of St. Faith's Church, and any changes were long away. For the moment there was no point in pursuing alternative sites until a decision was forthcoming.
- (iii). Ron Cornell had been asked if a street lamp could be provided for the public footpath from Heath Close to Fakenham Road. The Clerk was asked to raise the matter with Wherry Housing association who own the path.

(605). Date and time of next meeting: 26th February 2004 at 7.45 p.m.

(606). Addendum.

Meeting held at The Pightle 9th January 2004 to discuss precept 2004/5. Present JW, RC, SW, KF, RC (chair) & PD (clerk)
Apologies: BW & PB.

It was unanimously agreed to increase the parish precept by approximately 2 ½ % to £2300. This being the first increase since 1999.

AGENDA GWPC – 26th February 2004 at 7.45 p.m.

- (607). Apologies
- (608). Minutes of meeting 27/11/03
- (609). Matters Arising
- (610). Hall Walk
- (611). Rural Housing Project
- (612). Independent village hall committee
- (613). Correspondence:
- (614). Planning Applications:
- (615). Payments/Financial Matters)
- (616). The smell
- (617). Playground equipment.
- (618). Any other Business
- (619). Date & time of next meeting