

**MINUTES OF COOKLEY & WALPOLE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT THE PAVILION 21 OCTOBER 2014**

Present: Cllrs. David Cask (DC) (Chairman), Mike Porter (MP) (Vice-Chairman), Nick Jarvis (NJ), Zoé Mair (ZM), Ian Newton (IN), John Winter (JW), Anne Thomas (AT). In attendance: Raymond Catchpole (Clerk) and 11 public.

Apologies: Cllrs. David Whitwood, Bill Camplin, PCSO Julie Hinton, District & County Cllr Stephen Burroughes

14/127 Declarations of Interest: MP declared continuing pecuniary interests in any CEA and Walpole & Cookley Playing Field Trust matters, AT in any CEA matters, but these members will be permitted to discuss and vote on these matters by clerk and members through a previous resolution. IN declared a pecuniary interest in matters relating to the proposed solar farm at Hill Farm, Cookley as an adjacent landowner, but was also permitted to take part in discussion by previous resolution, should he wish. NJ had previously declared a non-pecuniary interest in the same matter.

14/128 Public Participation: (a) Cllr Stephen Burroughes was unable to attend and had provided no reports for District or County.

(b) In the absence of PCSO Julie Hinton, the chairman read from her police report. There had been only one crime, a distraction burglary, which was declared undetected.

The chairman opened the meeting to public participation.

Christopher Leggett referred to approval of the minutes and asked if draft minutes could be published on the website ahead of formal approval by the parish council. Clerk explained this was not policy as until approval within a formal meeting of the parish council the minutes remained an invalid record of the meeting. ZM pointed out the website was not a council website and suggested that the request could be considered in more detail at the November meeting when other suggestions from Mrs Mewton would also be considered.

Mr Bygrave had researched the Quality Parish Council Scheme and passed his research to the clerk for inclusion also on the November agenda. Mr Bygrave pointed out that in the Quality Parish Council Scheme, publishing draft minutes is considered good practice.

Mrs Mewton referred to a problem with waymarking on footpaths in the parishes.

Cllr Camplin, holding the Footpaths portfolio was absent, but other councillors responded. MP said the only legal requirement on the County Council is to mark the start of a footpath where it leaves the metalled highway and maps should always be used. Mrs Mewton thought waymarks were necessary, but MP pointed out these are the responsibility of the landowners and are introduced at their cost and time as a courtesy only. MP further said in response to a question from JW that the County Council is responsible for keeping grass down, but landowners are responsible for keeping hedges cut. AT made the point that footpaths are not the responsibility of the parish council; Mrs Mewton was advised by AT and MP to make direct contact with the County Council Rights of Way Officer at the Saxmundham office of Suffolk County Council Highways.

There was also general conversation on the suggestion that the definitive footpaths map should be posted on the website, but as this is not a parish council website it would be necessary for the webmaster to purchase a licence from Ordnance Survey. ZM suggested the website could contain a link to the information on the County Council website which would mean the footpath information would be constantly updated.

There being no further public questions the chairman took the meeting into council mode.

14/129 Approval of Minutes: minutes of the meeting of 21 July 2014, previously deferred in the absence of the chairman, were approved unanimously and signed.

Minutes of the meeting of 16 September 2014 were approved and signed by the vice-chairman who had chaired that meeting. The clerk distributed hard copies of those minutes to the public present.

14/130 Matters arising from Minutes: none.

14/131 Planning: (a) DC/14/2150/FUL Hill Farm, Cookley: construction of a renewable energy solar farm. This application had been refused by SCDC. ZM had attended the meeting and reported. The application was refused on three main grounds: insufficient soil assessment, very general negative impact on landscape and Heveningham Hall and particular impact on 3 heritage assets - Buck's Farm, Further Hill Farm and Valley Farm.

ZM was disappointed that objectors at the meeting thought their objections were not considered, as this had not been the case. DC asked if Cllr Burroughes had confirmed the parish council meeting was properly conducted as he had been present, but ZM said he acted simply as a member of the planning committee. It was a pity that the parish council has been wrongly accused in a letter to the parish council chairman of not being properly managed.

(b) DC/14/3165/LBC Pear Tree Farm, Cratfield Road, Cookley: addition of single-storey garden room Listed Building Consent. The applicant was invited by the chairman to present his application. ZM and AT wanted to know if he had talked to the Listed Buildings Officer. The applicant had not, but his architects. The extension was glass and brick with a flat roof and MP was concerned about the closeness of the flat roof to existing windows. The applicant explained it was a deliberate attempt to make the extension look different and not just a listed building extension. ZM thought if it is well built and of the time it should be left in the hands of the Listed Building Officers.

The chairman took the matter to a vote of councillors and four were in favour and two against, with one abstention.

(c) Pre-application Charges for Planning Advice: clerk reported that SCDC is charging for planning advice from 30 September and gave an indication of the scale of fees.

14/132 Finance: (a) A request from Walpole & Cookley Playing Fields Trust for its usual annual donation of £500 was considered and agreed unanimously. ZM as chairman thanked the parish council. **(b) RFO Report:** clerk presented his report and financial statement.

The following invoices were approved and paid:

Clerk's Expenses	£ 47.12
W&CPFT Annual Donation	£ 144.00
Community Action Suffolk Insurance	£ 220.14
Local Council Public Advisory Service	£ 45.00

Balances to carry forward were submitted as under, taking into account the above:

Community Account	£6,101.62	
Business Saver	£1,094.65	£7,196.27

Financial statement was approved unanimously by show of hands.

14/133 Highways: (a) MP had nothing specific to report this time, but did refer to correspondence he had had with SCC regarding recent flooding on Peasenhall Road. (b) Clerk updated members on the retaining wall at St Mary's Walpole. He had established contact with James Halsall in the Diocese who would act as liaison between the church and SCDC as required. Clerk had reported the failing wall and growth on the church fabric to him.

14/134 Footpaths: In the absence of BC this item was deferred, but note has been taken of concerns raised earlier by Mrs Mewton.

14/135 Trees: MP reported on further trees being supplied free by Woodland Trust which could be used to replace those planted earlier and which may not have survived. The remainder could be used elsewhere on the playing field and allotments. Clerk will ask Will Austin to clear round the existing whips so their condition can be seen. ZM suggested Will Austin could trim round the springy growth at the base of trees on the Village Green to make his grass cutting easier.

The issue of silver birches overhanging an adjacent property, referred to in previous minutes, was further discussed and it was agreed unanimously that MP should contact Robert Lawrence about lopping the offending branches.

14/136 Village Green: ZM referred to the state of the existing bench on the Village Green and suggested that £200, being Village of the Year award, could be used towards replacement. ZM will supply details and prices for the next meeting.

14/137 Cemetery: (a) Clerk updated members on consecration arrangements. Bishop Gavin will robe at the Pavilion from 10.30am and the service will be held at the cemetery at 11am. Umbrellas will be welcome. DC offered the use of the Community Bus if needed and JW offered parking space at the end of his drive. (b) Cemetery charges were deferred.

14/138 CEA: (a) ZM reported the Winter Craft Barn will be held this year at Hill House Farm, Walpole on 15/16 November. A grant of £2,500 had been obtained from Green Suffolk for the electric bike project and it was hoped there would be samples of the bikes at the Barn. (b) AT presented a report in respect of Walpole Allotments and Community Orchard, reproduced below:

"Flower and Produce Show a great success and intention to make this an annual event. Fencing and gates all now in place, Fencing paid for with most of a £2,500 grant from SCDC'S Capital Programmes Fund.

The gates were a gift from SCC's Rights of Way Officer and look perfect. In fact the fencing and gates have improved the visual aspect of the site considerably and we all agree that it feels like 'our allotments' and not just a piece of rough land now.

Shed - some poor experience with Shire who have let us down several times. Linda Main from Flagship Housing has been invaluable and the shed should be delivered and installed on October 29th.

We have our Annual General meeting in the Pavilion on October 30th at 7.30.

Shed installation should come just in time for Suffolk Wildlife Trust event on October 31.

Aimed at encouraging children's' and allotment holders' interest in wildlife there will be opportunities to make bird feeders and boxes, a 'bug hotel' for the allotments from old pallets, bricks, canes and straw, and a scarecrow. There may also be a few pumpkin lanterns etc to celebrate Halloween!

Looking forward to next year, I have asked 'Grow Wild' — a National Lottery Funded RHS/Kew Gardens project for 20 packets of wild flower seeds which they are giving away to community projects. These are to be used in the Community Orchard and — assuming a surplus — elsewhere, although the PC /Community Council may wish to obtain some of their own."

14/139 UK Power Networks: DC reported on the mini powercuts that had affected the village recently and read extracts from correspondence he had received. MP had also contacted UK Power Networks and reported his experience with a linesman on site having no idea where the lines are. UK Power Networks had offered to attend tonight's meeting, but adverse weather conditions had ruled that out. They may attend in November.

14/140 Parish Council Elections: Clerk reported that elections will be held on Thursday 7 May 2015. If uncontested the charge to the parish council will be around £150, if contested it rises to around £500. Administration is in the hands of the District Council.

14/141 External Meetings & Training: (a) ZM will attend the SCDC World of Planning workshop on 6 November. (b) SALC Northern Area Meeting on 8 December 2014 this time does not clash with a parish council meeting. (c) Clerk updated members on the last Sizewell C Community Forum; EDF had adopted a patronizing attitude and appeared to be ignoring the views of those present. There is no meeting until later this year and a date is awaited. Clerk will report again. (d) Clerk will attend a workshop on filming and recording of council meetings hosted by Local Council Public Advisory Service.

14/142 Correspondence: (a) Clerk reported that consultation on the implementation of the proposed Community Infrastructure Levy was now taking place. This replaces largely S106 payments and permits a wider application of these funds by parish councils when received. (b) MP referred to illegal hare coursing in the area and asked for vigilance; do not interfere, but inform the police. DC also emphasized the seriousness of this issue.

14/143 Matters for future agenda: Other than matters already referred to in these minutes the following matters were suggested: (a) ZM raised a suggestion she had received as to posting of Standing Orders and Code of Conduct on the website. Clerk will include this on the November agenda. (b) Clerk referred to the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 in force since 6 August which permits filming and recording of council meetings as well as amending some aspects of the Local Government Act 1972. This will be on the November agenda. (c) Mrs. Mewton has raised some suggestions regarding procedures within this parish council, as under:

1. **Democratic accountability.** If this Parish Council exists to serve its parishioners, then the views of the public should be respected and taken fully into account in any decisions made by the parish council. The public interest should be served in future.
2. **Transparency of PC members' consultations with parishioners and other members of the public** – ie in future data be provided at PC meetings of the balance of public opinions expressed, which may be used by councillors in consideration of any proposal on the table:
 1. how many letters of objection or support received, with details of names
 2. how many conversations declaring objection or support, with details of names
3. **The details of votes taken by councillors should be accurately recorded:** in the minutes and in any communications with SCDC. (eg in relation to Hill Farm solar pv a record of 'by majority vote not to object' should have been expanded to reveal how councillors voted as follows: 3 for, 3 abstained, there were councillors 3 absent, there are 3 unfilled vacancies)
4. **Transparency in PC business:** All Parish Council Standing Orders (as referred to by the clerk) should be published on the Parish Council pages on the Cookpole News Website.

5. **Notification of all planning applications should be publicised on the day applications arrive with the Parish Clerk** via the Cookpole News Website and the four village noticeboards – giving more time for public comments.
6. **Access to planning application paper copies**, which are circulated to councillors in Cookley and Walpole, should be made available in a public place at least 10 working days before the close of the consultation period.
7. **Requirement of a special parish meeting**, if requested, to discuss particular parish issues – such as the largest ever application in terms of site area: DC/14/2150/ful
8. **More receptive Parish Council response** to public suggestions for change.
9. **The Definitive Map for each parish should be scanned and published** on the Cookpole News Website – for reference when considering detailed locations of planning applications, and public access to public rights of way, footpaths etc.

Clerk will include these items on the November agenda which will of necessity be curtailed to allow time to deal with these matters.

14/144 Next Meeting: Tuesday 18 November 2014.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm

Chairman

Date