

MEETING OF WEASENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday 15th August 2023 AT 7PM

WEASENHAM COMMUNITY BUILDING

Councillors Present: Mr M. Romanovsky, Mr T. McClenaghan and Mr C. Donachie.

Also in attendance: Mrs K. Pickard (Clerk) and twenty three members of the public.

Matters Raised Under Time Allocated to the Public

A member of the public enquired about the allocation of duties when the clerk leaves her role and who will be the RFO and who will carry out the administration? Cllr. Romanovsky highlighted agenda item 15 Staff Matters and that there would be a closed session at the end of this PCM to sort out this issue with the results of those discussions made public in due course.

There was an enquiry about the speed sign in the village and why wasn't it switched on? The Clerk and Cllr's explained that the sign is working and that it records speeds up to 40 mph but at higher speeds does not react as research indicates that flashing-up higher speeds could encourage even more reckless driving from a small minority of motorists. Data is collected from the speed sign periodically and can be passed to the police for analysis. Cllr's will ensure this happens periodically.

A further enquiry highlighted the need for brambles and other foliage to be cut back from the pathways. The Clerk asked for exact locations so they could be reported to NCC via their website/portal. In addition, the Parish Council are trying to launch a community led volunteer scheme (Weasenhams Ground-Force Team) to address some issues that can be easily maintained locally.

Another question was asked, this time relating to a number of vehicles that appear to be parked on the pathway and grass verge on Massingham Road with a concern that some of them are leaking oil and may not be taxed or insured. Another concern was whether they were on private land, the Public Highway or on parish land. Cllr's will look into this matter to establish if the vehicles are on private land and if not take all necessary steps to find a resolution.

A final question was asked relating to a strip of land in St. Peter Drive that appears to be overgrown. Cllr. Donachie explained that it is in fact a wild flower garden which will be mowed back at the end of the summer (September). It was also stated the land is privately owned and not controlled by Parish Council.

The Meeting Went into Session

1. To accept apologies for absence

None received.

2. To receive declarations of Interest

None received

3. Minutes from the Parish Council Meeting of 20th June 2023 to be Accepted, Initialled and Signed

Councillor McClenaghan proposed that the minutes were a true and accurate record of the meeting, seconded by Councillor Donachie and carried.

4. Matters Arising from Minutes of 20th June 2023 (For Exchange of Information Only)

Councillor Romanovsky referred to the previous minutes regarding repairs to the Village Pump, this issue is still being investigated.

5. Finance

a) Accounts to approve for payment.

This also details the payments made in July when there was no meeting.

The Clerk confirmed that there were three additional invoices. Clerk's holiday pay accrued for £261.63, Zurich Insurance for the Parish Council Insurance for £753.56, NALC for annual membership for £212.23 and Viking for printer ink for £153.30

Councillor McClenaghan proposed that all payments are made, seconded by Councillor Donachie and carried.

Payee – July 2023	Detail	Payment type	Total Amount Payable	Of Which VAT Reclaimable
Staff payroll	July 2023	BACS	£520.20	
Clerk expenses	Mileage (2 journeys)	BACS	£26.00	
S2	Monthly subscription	DD	£60.30	£9.88
E-On	Electricity	DD	£44.03	£2.54
Shoreline	July cut	BACS	£690.00	
Force Fresh	Hoover	BACS	£95.94	£15.99
Force Fresh	Wet floor sign	BACS	£6.38	£1.06
		Total	£1442.85	£29.47

Payee – August 2023	Detail	Payment type	Total Amount Payable	Of Which VAT Reclaimable
Staff payroll	August 2023	BACS	£367.20	
Clerk expenses	Mileage (1 journey)	BACS	£13.05	
S2	Monthly subscription	DD	£59.28	£9.88
E-On	Electricity	DD	£95.21	£4.54
Shoreline	August cuts	BACS	£690.00	
NPT&S	Annual membership	BACS	£167.76	
Parish Online	Membership	BACS	£43.20	
NALC	Membership	BACS	£212.23	
Clerk (accrued holiday pay)	Annual leave accrued	BACS	£261.63	
Zurich Insurance	Insurance	BACS	£753.56	
Viking	Printer Ink	BACS	£153.30	
	TOTAL		£2816.42	£14.42

b) Income to be reported.

Payee- March	Detail	Payment Method	Total Amount Received
Solar Farm	Funding	BACS	£11,901.86
Hire Fees	Hirer	BACS	£50.00
		Total	£11,951.86

- c. **To receive the supplementary report from the Internal Auditor following queries from a Parishioner and agree any actions necessary - Councillors will also provide their feedback in the form of a Parish Council response to the Internal Auditor report, also for publication on the website alongside the Internal Auditor report.**

Councillor Romanovsky read out parts of the supplementary report that had been undertaken following a number of queries from a parishioner. This full report will be available on the website.

Councillor Donachie proposed that the supplementary report is accepted seconded by Councillor McClenaghan and carried

- d. **To Agree the explanation for the 'No' responses on the Annual Governance Statement**

The Clerk read out the explanation to each of the 'No' raised on the Annual Governance Statement. This will be available on the Parish Council Website.

Councillor Romanovsky proposed that the explanations are accepted seconded by Councillor McClenaghan and carried

- e. **To consider correspondence for a donation to the Great Massingham Community Car Scheme**

Councillor Romanovsky proposed that the donation of £200 is made to the Great Massingham Community Car scheme as detailed in the budget seconded by Councillor Donachie and carried

6. Land and Planning

- a. **To consider responses to Breckland District Council for any planning applications**

- b. 3PL/2023/0689/F - The Fox and Hounds Public House - Change of Use from Public House (A4) to Residential Dwelling (C3)

Councillor Romanovsky proposed that the Council respond with no objections seconded by Councillor Donachie and carried

- c. **To Receive Report on Planning Decisions by Breckland District Council**

3PL/2023/0613/F - Manor Farm Fakenham Road - Installation and operation of a 97kW ground mounted solar PV array with the boundary of Manor Farm business centre.

Application approved

7. To discuss parish assets

- a. To receive inspection reports for the parish assets

Councillor Donachie had provided his asset report ahead of the meeting for consideration.

A working party may be formed to clear foliage where it obstructs paths/walkways.

The noticeboards are in good order

The defibrillator has been checked

- b. To receive an update on the repair to the village pump

Councillor Romanovsky reported that this is still ongoing as it has been discovered the damage is more considerable than originally believed. Information now passed from Clerk to the Chairman in the past few days.

8. To receive an update on the Community Building

- a. To receive an update on the footpath following public consultation and agree any actions necessary

Following a number of public consultations the Councillors considered the outcome.

The public consultation process allowed Councillors to gauge the amount of public support for this as a community led project which would inevitably need to use volunteers as the main workforce. It was soon apparent that some local business owners and tradesmen were in full support of the project and have offered their time, expertise and crucially to be part of a community workforce.

The public consultation has been an enormously useful process to help the Parish Council crystallize its decision in this matter. It is believed there is an overwhelming support for Option B2: Concrete path following the route alongside the fence line.

8(a) continued...

Motion 1

Councillor McClenaghan proposed that the £28,000 route planned by the Interim Council (Route A) is overturned therefore rejected; seconded by Councillor Donachie and carried.

Motion 2

Councillor Donachie proposed that Option B2, this being the option selected through public consultation is adopted as the new specification and route to the Community Building; seconded by Councillor McClenaghan and carried.

Motion 3

Councillor McClenaghan proposed that the application for the public works loan that the Interim Council began last year should be cancelled as it will not be needed for the construction of Option B2; seconded by Councillor Donachie and carried.

Motion 4

Councillor Donachie proposed that the electrical work for the bollard lighting is put out to tender as quickly as possible and to obtain at least 3 quotes; seconded by Councillor McClenaghan and carried.

Motion 5: Power to Spend

Councillor Donachie proposed that new formalised quotes are obtained for all of the 'materials required' to complete the project and that the council are granted the power to spend up to £11,000 if required to purchase these materials to complete the path upgrade project; seconded by Councillor McClenaghan and carried.

b. To receive a quote for an inspection of the fire door in the Community building

The Clerk reported that this has been requested from the company carrying out the Fire Extinguisher checks

9. **Party in the Park:** Cllr. McClenaghan read out a statement to give updates about any initial outline arrangements of this event, to explain the rationale for the event, to address any potential concerns and to respond to a complaint.

a. To agree the event 'Party in the Park' following interest gauged

Councillor Romanovsky proposed that the 'Party in the Park' event is agreed seconded by Councillor Donachie and carried

- b. To discuss arrangements for the Party in the Park and agree any actions necessary

There will be a meeting of the volunteer working party on Wednesday 16th August to discuss arrangements for the event.

- c. To agree funding for the Party in the Park

Councillor Romanovsky proposed that the Council receive £250 from the Solar Farm funding for the event; seconded by Councillor Donachie and carried

10. Highways

- a) **To Receive Reports of Highways Faults / Matters for Attention:** All faults reported back in May 2023 have been attended to with the exception of one (BT inspection Cover/damaged path; Lamberts Close), Pot holes have been fixed, smashed drain cover on the green has been replaced, blocked drains on School Road pumped out. Request to all residents to report any defects seen to councillors/parish council. Sign on Dodma Road was unburied from a hedge but requires either relocation or an alternative design (Highways Dept/MKM have been notified). Black & White heritage signs are in poor condition but community renovation/restoration has been rejected on the advice of Norfolk County Cllr. Mark Kiddle-Morris. The Weasenham Village sign on A1065 (end nearest Swaffham) has rusted and is in a state of partial collapse. This needs to be reported to Highways as soon as possible.

- b) **To receive an update on the drainage work at the Village Green:** Updates provided to feedback comments and decisions from a meeting with two representatives of Highways Dept. who visited the village and discussed their options to resolve drainage issues. Two options were offered to the village (explained in the meeting) one of which involved applying for a parish partnership bid before 8th December 2023.
- c) **To discuss the pond restoration:** The pond restoration project was set up by a resident not by the PC. A new timetable will be distributed soon calling on volunteer support to help with restoration now that the bird breeding season is finished.

11. Correspondence (For Exchange of Information Only)

The Clerk thanked Weasenham Parish Council and Weasenham residents for her time at the Council. This is the last meeting for the Clerk in post.
The Clerk was presented with flowers

Meeting to Be Suspended for Further Time Allocated to the Public

A member of the public asked where the £11,000 was coming from to pay for the revised plan for the path to the Community Building considering the PWL was being cancelled. The Chairman explained that Councillors have looked at other areas of the budget where money is allocated but will not need to be spent (i.e. PWL £4000 repayment no longer required; other examples cited) and that money could be reallocated from this year's budget to meet the projected £11,000 cost of the new path proposal. In addition, the Solar Fund money can be allocated to any community based project at the discretion of the Parish Council. This year it brought in about £1500 more than predicted at the time of setting the budget. The Parish Council is confident that the money to cover the £11,000 is available within this year's budget.

Another member of the public asked why the Highways engineer had not considered routing any proposed new drainage works directly into the existing pond intake ditch rather than asking for the community to dig out a new 15 metre ditch offset onto the green and parallel to the properties on Massingham Road facing onto The Green/The Pond. Cllr. Donachie explained how the offer from Highways was limited to teeing off from the existing pipework a minimal distance to a receiving ditch and that our requests to pipe into the existing ditch was rejected on the grounds that polluted water (containing hydrocarbons) cannot be allowed to drain directly into the pond. Strong debate followed on this issue. Residents of the properties nearest to the suggested 'receiving ditch' joined in and gave robust opposition to the idea stating they did not want an open ditch outside their properties. The Parish Council appreciates that the options put forward by Highways would cause significant impact and upset and would NOT be moving forward to propose/second those options. Other residents offered their opinion including, reducing the size of the pond to make it smaller but deeper to retain water more effectively. It was suggested that perhaps a consultation process to involve members of the parish would be the best way forward.

A member of the public (a district councillor and a former chairman) offered a detailed account of how the Parish Council and Community could react to the recent 'Change of Use' planning application for the Fox & Hounds Pub from licenced premises to a residential dwelling. His account included useful advice on the conditions required for appeal to the District Council's Chairman's Panel and the potential registration of the pub as a Community Interest Building under the Localism Act. A member of the public asked if the Parish Council was aware of a planning application for a three bedroom house on the car park at the Fox & Hounds public house and it was confirmed that yes, we are aware.

The Internal Auditor for financial year 2022/23 asked to speak and introduced herself to the public. The internal auditor thanked Councillors for the "very robust way in the way they have dealt with this situation".

12. Any Item to be Reported for the Next Agenda

Village Pump
Co-option
Parish Partnership Bid
Parish Council newsletter
Appointment of Clerk

13. To Confirm the Date & Time of the next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on 17th October at 7pm

14. To receive a proposal to close the meeting to the press and the public for item 15, for the reason that the content of discussion relates to staff matters (permitted under Section 1 para 2 of the public bodies (Admission to Meeting Act 1960).

Councillor Donachie proposed that the meeting is closed; seconded by Councillor McClenaghan and carried

15. Staff matters and Co-Option

Councillors had received three applications for co-option, it was agreed that two out of three were eligible for consideration. The Councillors will meet informally with the applicants with a view to co-opting at the October meeting,

The Chairman and Council formally accepted the Clerks resignation with effect from Thursday 17th August 2023. The advert has been published however the closing date is Friday 18th August therefore the Council require an RFO in post on a locum basis. One applicant has come forward for the locum role.

Councillor Romanovsky proposed that this applicant is appointed as temporary locum with effect from Thursday 17th August seconded by Councillor McClenaghan and carried.

The meeting closed at 8.08pm

_____ (Chairman) _____ Date