

Minutes of Whaddon Parish Council meeting held on 5th September 2011 at 7.30p.m. in the Village Hall, Church Street, Whaddon, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 5RY.

Present: Chair Mrs M Peyton
 Councillors Mr L Ginger, Mrs K French, Mrs J Lewis (from 7.32p.m.),
 Mr P Neale, Mr C Rose
 District Councillors Mr N Cathcart (until 9.34pm), Mr D McCraith
 Parish Clerk Mrs G van Poortvliet
 Parishioners 1 present (from 7.34p.m.)

- 1.0 Apologies for Absence** – received from Cllr N Strudwick. (Cllr Lewis joined the meeting).
- 2.0 Election of Chair of the Parish Council** – Cllr Strudwick had resigned as Chairman of the Parish Council (PC) as he had accepted an overseas teaching assignment. It was resolved that Cllr Peyton be elected as Chair of the PC. Cllr Peyton signed a declaration of acceptance of office as Chair.
- 3.0 Declarations of interest** – Cllr Lewis declared an interest in agenda item 8.0 as Chair of the Village Hall and Recreation Ground Trust (VHRGT).
- 4.0 Approval and Signing of minutes – from Parish Council meeting of 11th July 2011: Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting be signed by the Chair as a true and correct record.
- 5.0 Reports from Clerk and Councillor – on matters arising from previous meetings:** the Clerk and Cllrs provided verbal reports on the status of matters arising from previous PC meetings:
- PAYE/NIC – HMR&C had confirmed that the PC did not currently need to register for PAYE/NIC but may need to should the Clerk’s employment circumstances change.
 - Recreation Ground Railings – the PC had previously accepted a quote of £485 to repair the recreation ground railings but the contractor was no longer able to do this work. Agreed: to approach the alternative contractor (who had quoted £590). Action: Clerk to follow up.
 - VHRGT – funds which had been ring-fenced by the PC for the Village Hall refurbishment and playground expenditure and which had been transferred to the VHRGT had now been similarly ring-fenced by the VHRGT. This had been minuted by the VHRGT.
 - Bridge Street phone box refurbishment – the handyman and a group of volunteers were arranging to repaint the phone box. The handyman hoped to be able to convert the phone box to a library facility using materials already owned – the cost should be minimal.
 - Bus-service to Cambridge – a new, daily return bus-service to Cambridge had started today. Details would appear in the newsletter.
 - Newsletter – it had not been possible to redesign the layout of the newsletter for the September issue which had been printed in the usual A4 format. It was planned to move to an A5 colour format for the Christmas edition. Actions: Cllr French to follow up with local resident re trying to increase advertising revenue.
 - Bridge Street ditch - low water-level – Cllr Cathcart had discussed residents’ concerns with SCDC’s Ecology Officer. The Officer would look into it but was unlikely to take action unless there are rare species or trees present. Dry ditches were a common problem.
 - Broadband speed – Whaddon has the slowest broadband speed in Cambridgeshire County Councils’ (CCC) district but, as it does not have a Council-owned building, it is unlikely to be picked for the pilot study with Virgin Business Media.
 - Dyers Green hedges/trees – it had not been possible to speak with the tenant farmer about the hedge obstructing the highway in Dyers Green, Bridge Street. Other residents’ trees and hedges were also obstructing the highway and interfering with telephone wires. Action: the Clerk to write to all residents of Dyers Green, Bridge Street asking them to cut back hedges and trees as necessary.

- Grass-cutting (verges) – it was proposed to set-up a working party to consider verges grass-cutting and make recommendations for the specification and number of cuts for the 2012/13 grass-cutting season. Action: the Clerk to schedule an agenda item for the October PC meeting. The Clerk to set up a site meeting with CCC Highways to establish who owns what verges (and trees) in Whaddon.

6.0 Reports from District and County Cllrs:

District Cllrs' Report - a verbal report was given.

- Traveller sites: – the proposed site in Kneesworth (off the A1198) had been withdrawn. It was likely that there would be a shortfall in Traveller Sites locally and that more detailed plans and proposals would follow in due course. The 'Call for Sites' was still open and individuals could still offer up sites for consideration locally.
- Sheltered Housing (SH): District Cllr Cathcart was Chairman of a group looking into SH provision. Funding provided by the County Council for SH was likely to be reduced – this was being resisted and ways of maintaining service levels considered.

County Cllr Report: no County Cllr present.

7.0 Public Participation: A member of the public reported a pothole on the corner of Meldreth Road and Church Street. Action: the Clerk to inform CCC Highways.

8.0 Village Hall and Recreation Ground Trust (VHRGT) - update: a verbal update was provided by Cllr J Lewis (Chair of the VHRGT).

- VH usage Questionnaires – these had been sent out to all households and approx. 140 had been completed and returned. The information gathered would be vital to successfully filling out the Big Lottery application.
- Big Lottery Fund (BLF) application – a meeting had been held with some advisors from the BLF about how to make a successful grant application.
- Replacement front window – options for replacing the window had been discussed.
- Car boot sale – this would take place on Saturday 10th September.
- Planning Permission – the planning permission for the VH refurbishment/extension would need to be extended to allow sufficient time for fund-raising.
- Grant application to the PC – this would be submitted for consideration by the PC at the October meeting.

9.0 Planning

9.1 Noting of Planning Committee recommendation re S/1628/11, land adjacent 65-84 Cardiff Place, Whaddon for two 4,000 litre LPG storage tanks and associated concrete base and fencing – approval recommended.

9.2 Noting of SCDC decision re S/1158/11, 53 Bridge Street, Whaddon for two storey front and rear extension – planning permission refused.

10.0 Finance:

10.1 Approval of expenditure on Local Council Risk System (LCRS): the Clerk had trialled a computerised Risk Assessment System and proposed that it be purchased by the PC. Resolved: expenditure of £86.19 (plus VAT) on the LCRS was approved.

10.2 Agreement of financial responsibility for fallen tree on recreation ground: Resolved: that the expenditure be the responsibility of the VHRGT who could apply to the PC for grant assistance if necessary. Actions: the Clerk to invoice the VHRGT for the fallen tree. Cllr Rose to provide the VHRGT with a copy of the Arboricultural Report, from June 2008, on the condition of the trees on the recreation ground.

10.3 Approval of payments: Resolved: that the following payments be approved:
Cheques to be signed today:

Cheque No. 100732, for £162.00, Moore Stephens, audit fee re annual return year ended 31st March 2011.

Cheque No. 100733, for £462.00, M D Landscapes, 7 cuts of recreation ground grass (June and July 2011).

Cheque No. 100734, for £136.00, Mr D Evans, handyman wages 1/6/11 to 31/7/11.

Cheque No. 100735, for £70.00, CPALC, training course (Chairmanship B) for Cllrs Peyton and Strudwick.

Cheque No. 100736, for £102.00, Eastern Tree Surgery, fallen tree on recreation ground (to be recharged to VHRGT – see 10.2 above).

Cheque No. 100737, for £103.43, DMH Solutions Ltd, Local Council Risk System (10.1 above).

10.4 Presentation of draft accounts for qtr to 30th June 2011: the Clerk presented the draft accounts and invited questions.

10.5 Noting of external audit opinion: a clean audit report had been received for the annual return to 31st March 2011. The statutory notices re rights of inspection of the annual return were being displayed on the main notice board.

11.0 Correspondence:

- CCC – letter re new Heavy Commercial Vehicle Strategy.
- CCC – notification re adoption of Minerals and Waste Core Strategy.
- CCC – letter re preparation for winter season (road gritting etc) and offer to train interested local volunteers to treat the footways etc.
- CCC – copy of formal notice re proposal to divert footpath no 9 (Dyers Green) – deadline for objections 7th September.
- SCDC – invitation to District & Parish Council Training Event re Decision Making Process, Mon 12th September.
- CCC – details of suggested changes to site-specific Waste and Minerals Proposals Plan. Deadline for representations 19th September.
- SCDC – invitation to Parish Liaison meeting 28th September 2011. Cllr Peyton to attend.
- Bramhall Construction – copy of September newsletter to be sent to Whaddon residents re Affordable Homes construction site.

12.0 Parish Councillor Request for Leave of absence – PC decision: Resolved that a leave of absence (23rd August 2011 to 24th May 2012) be granted to Cllr N Strudwick whilst he fulfils an overseas teaching assignment. The PC would review this decision should the work-load become too great for the remaining Cllrs. Action: the Clerk to inform Cllr Strudwick of the decision.

13.0 Affordable Homes, Church Street– consideration of proposed revisions to boundary treatments and agreement of PC comments – the amended plans submitted to SCDC by Bedford Pilgrims Housing Association were discussed. Resolved: that the PC request SCDC not to approve the proposed amendment to the boundary treatment and to retain the metal railings/hedge per the original design scheme. Action: the Clerk to inform SCDC of the PC's position.

14.0 Grass cutting Ridgeway Close – agreement of PC response to SCDC Grounds Maintenance Questionnaire – Agreed that the PC ask the working party which will be set up to consider the verges grass cutting (5.0 above) to also consider if the PC should take over responsibility for grass cutting at Ridgeway Close from SCDC. Actions: the Clerk to inform SCDC that the working party would respond in due course and to request information about the number of cuts undertaken per year, the approximate cost and what was involved in the Welfare Gardening Scheme.

15.0 Byway 22 resurfacing works – update and agreement of actions: during July CCC had undertaken substantial resurfacing works on Byway 22 (between Dyers Green and Kneesworth).

Whaddon PC had not been consulted (Byway 22 is technically in Kneesworth Parish). The Chair had since met with the Rights of Way Officer who authorised the work. CCC had decided to resurface the byway because it had been overused in winter and consequently had deep ruts in it and asbestos was on show. More recently a resident of Kneesworth Parish had also altered part of the highway at the bottom of Bridge Street by removing a bramble bush and areas of hedgerow. Some local residents had set up a petition and written letters to CCC to complain. The landowner had spoken and written to the Kneesworth Resident asking that the alterations cease. Resolved: that the PC write to CCC Highways 1) to express their disappointment at not being consulted over works that directly affect Whaddon, 2) to give an opinion that the works done were excessive and had resulted in increased vehicle use of the byway, 3) to complain that CCC had funded this work yet had still not repaired a damaged footway in Meldreth Road despite years of campaigning, 4) to ask that barriers be erected to limit the size of traffic using the byway, 5) to advise that the PC might pursue a Winter Closure Order. Actions: the Clerk/Chair to write to CCC Highways.

16.0 Jubilee Oak Tree – consideration of SCDC’s offer to provide a tree and agreement of appropriate planting site: a Jubilee Oak Tree could be supplied by SCDC but would need to be watered by the PC. The tree would be slow growing but would ultimately grow large. Resolved: that the PC accept SCDC’s offer for a Jubilee Oak and request that it be planted on the verge in Bridge Street opposite Ridgeway Close, next to an apple tree. Action: the Chair to advise SCDC.

17.0 Minor Amendment to standing orders – agreement of minor change to 32b) model standing orders: Resolved: that section 32b) of the model standing orders adopted by Whaddon PC be amended to read “A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the Council’s standing orders, not mandatory by law, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice whereof bears the names of at least two councillors.” Action: the Clerk to amend the standing orders.

18.0 Proposal to empower local councils (re new planning guidance for major developers) – consideration of proposal and agreement of PC support: Resolved: that the PC lend their support to the campaign initiated by Leiston-cum-Sizewell requiring major developers to 1) attend local council meetings to answer questions about planning applications (if the PC wishes) and 2) provide resources to enable local councils to assess their applications. Action: the Clerk to indicate the PC’s support for the campaign. (District Cllr Cathcart left the meeting).

19.0 Village Upkeep and Maintenance – reporting of issues:

- CCC Highways need to be reminded to fill the salt bins in time for the winter season. Action: the Clerk to request CCC Highways to refill the salt bins.
- Meldreth Road footway had not been repaired. Action: the Clerk to remind CCC Highways.

20.0 Items for next meeting

- Election of Vice –Chair of the PC.
- Grass-cutting working party remit.
- PPP3 grant
- VHRGT grant application
- Accounts for qtr to 30th September 2011
- Adoption of complaints procedure

21.0 Date of next meeting – 10th October 2011

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.37 pm