

STOKE FERRY PARISH COUNCIL
DRAFT Minutes Subject to the Approval at the next Meeting
Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council
Wednesday 2 August 2017 at 7.00 pm
Stoke Ferry Village Hall

Attendance:

Cllr Sue Lintern	SL	Chairperson
Cllr Trudi Mann	TM	
Cllr Shirley Cordner	SC	
Cllr Janet Taylor	JT	
Cllr Daphne Clements	DC	
Cllr Mandy Leaman	ML	
Jean Markwell	JM	Retiring Parish Clerk and Financial Responsible Person
Helen Richardson	HR	Parish Clerk and Financial Responsible Person

Also in attendance:

Cllr Colin Sampson CS Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk

Members of the Public: 15

Following on from page referencing

32/17 Apologies and Welcome

There had been no apologies received for absence from the Parish Council. The Chair welcomed the new Stoke Ferry Parish Clerk Helen Richardson to the meeting.

33/17 To discuss and agree co-option of new Councillor

The Chair advised that a letter of application for co-option to Stoke Ferry Parish Council had been received from Jim Neal and circulated to all Councillors.

Prop. JT, 2nd DC, All in favour.

Jim Neal received and signed a copy of a declaration in agreeance to become Parish Councillor of Stoke Ferry, and joined the meeting with immediate effect.

RESOLVED: That Jim McNeall (JN) is approved to be Stoke Ferry Parish Councillor with immediate effect.

The meeting was adjourned at this point for the purpose of an open meeting.

Open Meeting for Discussion with Representatives from British Sugar and BCKLWN Principle Environmental Health Officer

PRESENT: Colm McKay, Agriculture Director of British Sugar (CM)
Ruth Day, Head of Communications of British Sugar (RD)
Mark Whitmore, Environmental Health Officer of BCKLWN (MW)

CM thanked the Parish Council for his invite to the meeting and advised that he was on the Board for British Sugar and responsible for the Riverside glass house operation at the factory. He shared that he had been keen to attend in acknowledgement of complaints and concerns that had been

communicated, and British Sugar were taking them very seriously as they wished to be good neighbours to the surrounding communities.

CM gave the following summary of events to date:

- They had noticed that for a number of weeks in June 2017 there had been a lot of social media activity regarding strange smells in the area and a number of people saying that it was the glass house operation at British Sugar where they were growing a particular variety of cannabis plant for pharmaceutical purposes.
- They had received the first formal complaint on 23 June 2017, then 1 or 2 more, and then largely initially driven by social media.
- A site visit had taken place with Stoke Ferry Parish Council and Elizabeth Truss MP for South West Norfolk, and British Sugar had been keen to review the site at close proximity to see if the smell was the same as had been experienced further away. JT shared that she thought the smell within the green house was unlike what was in her home, but it was more like damp compost, and the drying room had an unpleasant smell though very clean.
- British Sugar wanted to identify the root cause of the smells, and they had contacted Mark at Environmental Health to discuss an action. There was also reports of people feeling ill due to the smells.
- When complaints were coming in British Sugar representatives began to visit resident's homes and when they arrived they found that the smell was gone, and on all occasions those people had been invited to the site to see if the smell was replicated. A lot of people who complained and were contacted back did not have the time to take part, and those that did once at the site advised that it was not the same smell as at home and not obnoxious, so this proved (was inconclusive as the site location)
- Odour mapping also is being looked at, including wind direction, to see if there are any patterns present. As well as assessing conditions when the vents were closed and then opened in one go to see if there was a concentration of odour released, but they couldn't replicate what people had experienced at home once again.
- British Sugar was working with experts in the field, to see what the likelihood of the smell travelling a distance was as part of their investigations.
- There is currently a full and through investigation; but it is very difficult at this time to find a connection between the site and what people are smelling at home.
- There had been people questioning if there was a connection to pesticides and also food waste operations, and even weeds in the hedgerow, but at this time it is proving difficult to pinpoint what was the root cause.

CM further advised that British Sugar would be continuing to work on the possible causes of the smell and would not be complacent until it was solved. CM stated that if in the end the British Sugar Operations were causing the smell then they would do all in their power to put it right and by any means necessary. CM asked that if any people had experiences then British Sugar would be pleased to hear from them and anyone would be welcome to visit the site.

MW introduced himself and advised that he had been onsite with British Sugar to look at the entire process. He advised that there had been 37 complaints in total, and even distances as far as Fenland areas. He shared that there was no doubt there was a smell and particularly as an Officer of the Borough Council did live within the area, they too were able to affirm it, but there was still work to do in order to pinpoint the reason and source. MW shared that for the environmental regulatory framework requirements it was necessary for the Borough Council to know what the odour is and to instruct on what needs to be done in order to resolve. MW further shared the following:

- That people who had complained had been written to and had received logs to complete and return details of when a smell was present in their home. It was important that people described the odour rather than saying it smelt like cannabis
- Information from the logs would be combined with British Sugar information to create a bigger picture, and then work will take place to look closer at the growing cycle.

- There had not been any further complaints since 17 July 2017, and colleagues in Fenland confirmed it was the same for them there too.
- In addition, during an evening visit with British Sugar, they had been proactive at targeted releases, and one had been carried out mid-July which proved to be inconclusive in the area after colleagues attended downwind from the release.

The Chair advised that she had received copies of the forms, and MW advised that it was important if people had copies of the logs that they contacted him so that a log was directly linked to the BCKLWN investigation as it was important to know who was involved.

Following a query about size of the plants, CM advised that most plants were small when they arrived and grow to over a metre until harvest. He shared that he had spoken to someone who had told him they had experienced the smell the previous June/July 2016 when driving through Wereham but that was when the tomato crop that was being grown and the Cannabis only arrived in February 2017.

A Parish Councillor shared with the representatives that they thought contact details of British Sugar should be more widely available as people weren't aware.

TM shared that she had completed some of her own research online as follows:

- June had been a hot day and the smell had been strong;
- A strong smell of cannabis was present after grass cutting;
- The plant she believed gave off 'Turpin' which attracts insects and goes into the atmosphere. The plant's pollen could spread up to 4 miles, potentially going onto nearby land, and could be disturbed when cut or harvested. CM advised in response that he doubted this was a possibility.
- It was felt that there could be a mushroom effect from the centre of the area it had come from to a larger area travelling through the atmosphere. MW advised that when the vents in the green house were closed the strong smell was not there.

CM shared that British Sugar was employing an external independent consultant and their results could be trusted due to the standing within their field they would not want to skew results for their reputation. MW added that the Borough Council would expect a company under investigation to employ an independent consultant at this point, and if it was not satisfied with any report provided it would request a further independent report. CM confirmed that any report they commission will be shared with the Borough Council.

CM advised following a query that British Sugar was not the only grower of the product and there was a site in Yorkshire whose Manager Nigel Bartell would be happy to discuss, they were similar in size, near a village and had received no complaints. TM shared that after research a company in Kent for GW Pharmaceutical since 1998 had produced 2m plants, and on the side of their factory they had a vent system of pipes and queried what CM's views were. CM advised that he would be happy to check with the company based in Kent to see what their operation building consists of. CM confirmed that he would contact the Manager in the operation in Yorkshire to see if he would be happy discussing their experiences of production with the Stoke Ferry Parish Council.

In answer to a query MW advised that the focus of the Borough Council was at the British Sugar site and they were not looking at other potential sources. Following a comment MW advised that he would be happy to cross check data and information with the Glazewing waste company nearby. He added that he had been in touch with NFC regarding potential of pesticide usage to see if a new one on the market perhaps had the odour, but he was advised that there wasn't anything new that farmers were using. MW advised that the resources of the Borough Council in their investigations will be increased up until the next harvest as it approaches, but he added that it may be necessary to research over a number of harvests for a definitive result.

In answer to a Councillor's query in relation to media reports that British Sugar was planning to triple its production at the Wissington site, CM advised that there were no plans to expand, and the unit was full to capacity.

In answer to a query that if it was possible that the odour was landing in the fields surrounding and then released when cut, MW advised that odour was a broad term but it was something that was in the air. A Parishioner commented that the odour mostly appeared (lingered) within the home but when going outside it didn't appear to be present.

RD of British Sugar shared that it was appreciated that not all had the contact details, but the best course of action was to contact the Borough Council's environmental team on 01553 616200.

Cllr Colin Sampson shared that as local councillor he had received the biggest response to the issue since the incinerator, mainly from Stoke Ferry, and even as far away as Upwell and Feltwell on a non-windy day.

CM shared that the Cannabis plant variety that was being grown had no psycho active attribute, and was being used to make medicine for children with extreme forms of epilepsy and therefore there was no need to be concerned about any side effects.

The Chair thanked the representatives from British Sugar and the Borough Council for their attendance to the meeting, and shared that the Parish Council would be in touch.

JT agreed to share details of how to arrange a visit to the factory for anyone who wished to and arrange with British Sugar.

The meeting reconvened at this point at 7.55 pm and the representatives of British Sugar, Borough Council and the Lynn News departing the meeting.

The Chair shared that it was important for all with concerns to register with the Borough Council and keep a log for as long as necessary so that it can help towards to the research being carried out to find the source of the odour.

34/17 Consider Declarations of Interest on Agenda Items and Dispensation Requests

There were none.

35/17 Minutes of the Meeting dated 5 July 2017

The minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 5 July 2017 were approved.
Prop. JT, 2nd DC, five agreed, two abstained due to absence.

36/17 Matters Arising from the Minutes

- Cllr Colin Sampson (CS) advised that the land to the back of the bungalows at Buckenham Drive was not Freebridge owned land but the Borough Council. He agreed to request that the grass was cut particularly as it was encouraging the act of fly tipping. CS shared that he would report back to the Borough Council that the Stoke Ferry Parish Council were not satisfied that it had planned to leave the area as scrub land.
- 2agriculture – it was reported that there was no change in noise disturbance from movement of vehicles
- Footpath FP5 was reported by JM and would be worked on by NCC Highways imminently.
- JM reported that Bridge Road should now be cleared.
- The Clerk agreed to contact the Local Community Policing team and ask them to come to a future meeting to discuss the setting up of a Neighbourhood watch team.

- Resolved:**
- 1) That CS ask the Borough Council to cut the area of land to the rear of bungalows at Buckenham Drive.
 - 2) That the Clerk invite the Community Police team to a meeting to discuss setting up a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.

37/17 Public Rights of Way (Footpaths/Bridleways)

There were no issues to discuss.

38/17 Update on the Website

The Chair advised that she had asked the administrator of the website to update the Councillors details and will advise them to include SC and JN. The Chair advised SC and JN would need to set up their own email address just for Parish Council work as best practice to keep separate any personal email, and include a disclaimer at the bottom. The Chair asked them to circulate to all Councillors and the Clerk as soon as set up.

- Resolved:** That SC and JN set up Council only email address and circulate to the Parish Councillors and Clerk.

39/17 Cemetery Maintenance

The Chair advised that the fencing spoils had been replaced by the Handyman and he had purchased panels from Stoke Ferry Timber.

JT advised that she had got one of three quotes returned for rabbit fencing which was £1150, and they had advised that it would need to go a long way into the cemetery due to an overgrown hedge in order to mitigate the presence of rabbits within the cemetery who were causing damage to fresh flowers laid. After discussion it was agreed that the Parish Council did not wish to purchase the fencing as too expensive to try and keep the rabbits out, and TM agreed to research other humane ways that the Parish Council could resolve the issue.

- Resolved:** That TM investigate methods of reducing the presence of rabbits within the cemetery and report back at the following meeting.

DC advised that she had been approached by someone who visited the area of the cemetery not grass cut by the Parish Council to ask for permission to lay artificial grass on a grave. The Parish Council agreed after discussion that they could not grant permission until further details were known such as how it would be fixed down. DC and JT agreed to advise of any information resulting from their attendance to a cemetery course they were due to attend.

- Resolved:** That DC and JT to feedback on the use of artificial grass in the cemetery. DC to feedback to person who made request.

40/17 Handyman Job List

The Chair advised that a list was being worked through by the Handyman and he did around two hours of litter picking a month and was available for any other areas of improvement parishioners felt were required on request to the Parish Council. Councillors requested that he be asked to pull up weeds that had been sprayed on the war memorial. It was agreed that the hedge around the cemetery needed cutting but to inform the Handyman only to do this later in the year around autumn when birds had officially fledged.

- Resolved:**
- 1) That the Clerk advise the Handyman to cut the cemetery hedge once birds have fledged late autumn.
 - 2) That the Clerk advise the Handyman to spray weed killer on footpaths.

3) That the Clerk advise the Handyman to pull up weeds sprayed around war memorial.

41/17 Mid-Summer Fayre June 2018

It was agreed that the Fayre would be held on 24 June 2018. The band would be booked next month, and DC would discuss with Bradley. All Councillors agreed to research freebies for the event. The Playing Field Committee members present in the meeting confirmed that the booking was accepted.

42/17 Asset List of Parish Owned Street Furniture, Street Lights and Bins

JT advised that there were dog waste bins to be added to the asset map and some streetlights at Indigo Road that were not on the list. DC agreed to get in touch with Westcotec to recheck their street light lists.

Resolved: 1) That the asset list is updated with all dog waste bins
2) That DC contact Westcotec regarding Streetlights Map for Indigo Road.

43/17 Rangers Items for Notification

JM advised that the NCC Highways Rangers visit would be due again soon to the village. The Clerk agreed to provide them with the previous list when they make contact and in addition pavements would need cleaning.

The Parish Council discussed a footpath at Indigo Road that can't currently be used due to the home owners hedge overgrowing into the highway. The Clerk agreed to discuss with Andy Wallace, Area Manager of NCC Highways regarding safety of the hedge before agreed further action. The Chair agreed to seek a quote for the land owner from the Handyman.

Resolved: 1) That the Clerk contact Andy Wallace for advise regarding overgrown hedge onto the Highway.
2) That the Chair seek a quote from the Handyman to present to the land owner.

44/17 Approval of Payments

That the following payments presented are approved:

Payment of Bills			Nett	VAT	Total
Eon	DD	July - Street Lights	55.59	2.78	58.37
Glazewing	DD	Bin Emptying	15.58	3.12	18.70
Mr Sparkle		Village Maintenance	184.00	0.00	184.00
Mr A Stannard		Handyman	64.00	0.00	64.00
Stoke Ferry Timber		Fencing Cemetery	71.25	14.25	85.50
Village Hall		Hire of Village Hall	30.00	0.00	30.00
Total			£420.42	£20.15	£440.57

Prop. MT, 2nd SC, all in favour.

45/17 Letter from Calvert, Brain and Fraulo regarding Street Lights on New Development

The Chair advised that the Clerk had received a letter in regard to the street lighting scheme for the new development (29 dwellings) with Minor Demolition of Former Opening in Boundary wall for Access to plot 24 to include parking and access to existing village hall at land between Bramcote House and Village

Hall, Lynn Road, Stoke Ferry: Planning Reference 16/00403/FM. The correspondence from them advised that:

- 'NCC Highways Department have confirmed that under the Section 38 application there is not a requirement for highway lighting'
- 'Planning Condition 34 associated with the above Approval refers to the provision of highways lighting. As a result of the fact that the NCC do not require any highway lighting we have approached the Planning Department at the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk with a view to omitting this planning condition. They have advised that they cannot remove this condition until such time as we have consulted with the Parish Council regarding this matter'.
- '...if highways lighting is not required then the Parish Council could request footway lighting, which is different from highways lighting as it only illuminates the footpath. ... such lighting would only be provided to the adoptable road and would not be provided to the private road to the village hall car park nor the car park itself'.
- 'There would be an ongoing maintenance liability if such lighting was to be provided and we believe that such costs would need to be paid for by the Parish Council'.

JM summarised that the letter asked the Parish Council to confirm if footway lighting was required. Following a query JM advised that the development would pay for the installation of the footway lighting, but the Parish Council would pay as part of the funds from rates for the lighting from the new properties ongoing.

It was agreed that the Village Hall would need to liaise direct in regard to the car park lighting.

JM advised the Parish Council that it could advise the developers that as it was making a saving on not providing highway lighting provision, that it would want to see a commuted sum provided to the Parish Council.

CS shared that the number of streetlights for footways would be determined by light splays. The Parish Council agreed that it would wish to review a plan of the street lights for approval.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Clerk contact Calvert Brain and Fraulo and advise that the Parish would wish to see the installation of streetlighting but would expect a commuted sum for the saving that had been made by the developer from highway streetlighting.
- 2) That the Clerk request a plan of the street lights for approval by the Parish Council.

46/17 Correspondence

Letter from BCKLWN Planning Team: Greatmans Way Appeal

The Chair advised that the Clerk had received a letter from the Borough Council planning team in regard to an appeal which had been made to the Secretary of State in relation to the site of land at Greatmans Way, Stoke Ferry for the proposed development of erection of 6 Timber holiday lodges.

The Chair shared that refusal had been given on the grounds of wastage, environmental and size, there were revised plans on the appeals site and anyone could add comments in writing by 4th September to the Planning Inspectorate. She added that the Borough Council had upheld the Parish Council's opinions and that residents in the locality were sending further correspondence jointly to the inspectorate. The Chair reminded the Parish Council that original concerns had been in relation to highways and traffic passing along a narrow road and parking. She added that an environmental study concluded that there would be no effect on a water vole and otter population and that flooding was not an issue.

The Parish Council noted that in the correspondence it advised that any comments previously made in connection with the original application for planning permission would be sent to the Planning Inspectorate. The Parish Council agreed that it had no comments in addition to previous ones made.

Letter Received regarding use of land near village hall

JT agreed to circulate a letter to the Parish Councillors from a developer in regard to use of land. The Parish Council agreed that they would only grant any permissions once applications were formally received in all cases.

47/17 Urgent Items Agreed by the Chairman

The Chairman advised that there would be a hazardous waste amnesty held by the Borough Council in September and information would be placed in the village pump and post office.

48/17 Public Participation - Information or Suggestions for Next Meeting

- There was Ivy over wall between the Chip Shop and Offices.
- Dog Bin on Wretton Road – JT advised it had been installed. ML advised that a dog waste bin had not been possible on Oxborough Road or Bridge Street as there were no public spaces to install.
- Parishioners reported that there had been bonfires every day near Greatmans Way but the location of where it was coming from was unclear. The Chair agreed to investigate and the parishioners were advised to log the instances with the Borough Council.
- Field next to the Playing Field needed cutting.
- Flies – CS advised that there was process that the Borough Council were following in regard to influx of flies in the local area, and once a problem like this starts up doesn't take long to spread and take hold. Important for all to log any concerns with the Borough Council.

Resolved: 1) That Ivy between chip shop and offices be investigated.
2) That the Chair investigate bonfires at Greatmans Way.

The Parish Council wished to acknowledge the work that Jean Markwell had provided to the Parish Council over the past few years and presented her with a gift of thanks wishing her well.

49/17 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday 6 September 2017 at 7.00 pm.

Meeting closed at 9.22 pm