

LITTLE MELTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
at the VILLAGE HALL, MILL ROAD, LITTLE MELTON
TUESDAY 30 NOVEMBER 2010

PRESENT

John Heaser (Chair), Stewart Cable (Vice-Chair), Tony Berry, Wilf Chamberlain, Graham Tomlin and Joan Wheatley.

District Councillor, Garry Wheatley, was also present from approximately 8.10 pm.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Duncan Frazer (working away from the area) and District Councillor Christopher Kemp, who was ill and awaiting surgery.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair asked if any member(s) wished to declare an interest in any item/items on the agenda. No declarations were forthcoming.

MINUTES

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 19 October 2010 were, on a proposal by Graham Tomlin which was seconded by Tony Berry, accepted as a true record of the business conducted. A copy of the minutes was therefore signed accordingly by the Chair for retention in the Parish Council records.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No matters for discussion were raised under this item.

PLANNING

PARISH COUNCIL COMMENT/RECOMMENDATION SOUGHT

The Clerk requested the Parish Council to consider its views on the recently received application from Mr D Wilson (4 Church Street, Bawburgh) proposing extension and alteration of existing office accommodation and demolition of existing single storey buildings at 129 School Lane (No 2010/1947). The Clerk confirmed that he had formally consulted the immediate two neighbours to the west but had not received any response.

The Chair said he had consulted Jacqui Jackson, Planning Officer at South Norfolk Council, as to whether any change of use was proposed, and been informed no, and that the original hours of use would still apply, and been informed that they would, and therefore the permitted hours would continue to be 07.30 to 18.30, Monday to Friday.

Concluding the Parish Council agreed (having been assured that there was no change of use) that the Clerk should respond to SNC, that it had no views or comments other than as agreed in respect of the hours of work stated above.

CONFIRMATION OF PARISH COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION

The Clerk confirmed the Parish Council recommendation in respect of Mr K Swann's proposed Temporary (one year) Change of Use from shop to residential for Crossways Stores (2010/1840) – this was “no views or comments”.

RESULTS

1. Mr & Mrs J Webb's proposed new access bridge over ditch with associated works and, also proposed erection of garden shed at 3 Manor Farm Barns, School Lane (2010/1624).

This application had been approved (between 14/11 and 20/11/10) with six conditions. The letter of 20 November, from Adrian & Sheila Cook of 2 Manor Farm Barns, to the Parish Council, was drawn to the attention of the meeting. This letter contended that the original application was for “occasional essential garden deliveries of logs” and stated that Mr & Mrs Cook were not in favour of the applicants having a main driveway to the rear of their property – and had consequently queried this matter with SNC. The Chair added that he understood the new access was for infrequent use and the (existing) service road was for emergency use only and that he had clarified these issues with SNC Planning Officer (Jacqui Jackson) and also consequently spoken to Mr & Mrs Cook. SNC had intended that permission should be for occasional use only and are considering whether to retrospectively amend the permission.

2. Mrs Jill Margaillan's proposed re-roofs of main barn and main barn rear lean-to section

plus re-build existing lean-to section at rear of main barn (2010/1740).

This application had been approved (between 14/11 and 20/11/10) with four conditions.

3. Mr & Mrs Lovick's proposed (large) extension to the rear of Carraig Eden, Burnthouse Lane (2010/1645).

This application had been approved (between 7/11 and 13/11/10) with two conditions.

Greater Norwich Development Partnership

The Clerk drew attention to recent press reports (EEN and EDP in mid November) which said plans have been unveiled for up to 2,000 new houses to be built not far from the N & N U H – on just over 120 acres of agricultural land at Newfound Farm in Cringleford, which belongs to the John Innes Foundation. In addition to the new homes the land is earmarked for a new primary school, shops, play area and sports facilities.

It was noted that Cringleford Parish Council is vigorously opposed to a figure of 2,000 new houses, which could mean 5,000 new residents. Apparently Norwich based Building Partnerships is working with the JIF and Barratt Homes to secure planning permission for the development.

In addition more than 500 new houses could be built in Wymondham without any work to improve the Thickthorn junction on the A11, according to a Norwich based engineering firm. However the Joint Core Strategy currently claims that no more than 500 new homes can be built before significant improvements need to be undertaken to the junction – the cost of which could be between £30m and £45m!

It was further noted that a representative from the Highways Agency had said that the Thickthorn is a key junction, and not just for Wymondham.

The Chair concluded by reporting that he had, on behalf of the Parish Council, responded to the GNDP with Little Melton's views and comments, particularly highlighting serious traffic implications, and that receipt of this communication had been acknowledged.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED FOR NORTH OF HETHERSETT

It was noted that there was, at this time, nothing further to report.

LDF SITES SUGGESTED FOR DEVELOPMENT IN LITTLE MELTON

The Parish Council was unaware of any further information or progress concerning the sites for Little Melton.

PARISH AMENITIES

FOOTBALL PITCH HIRINGS

The four bookings for the month of November were noted, as were the problems (subsequently resolved) for the three Sunday matches envisaged to take place in December. With the recent difficulties in respect of the proposed simultaneous use of the football pitch and the Village Hall in mind the Clerk was requested to email Hethersett Athletic FC and ask that (a) the Parish Council and Jean Chamberlain are notified, a minimum of eight weeks in advance, of fixtures and (b) that cars etc should be parked at the southern end of the car park as much as possible and, if necessary, only on the western side of that part of Mill Road running parallel to the playing field, in order to minimise parking conflicts.

PLAY EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE/ANNUAL SAFETY INSPECTION 2010

The recent receipt of the 2010 Annual Inspection report – from Digley Associates – on the young children's play area/play equipment was confirmed by the Clerk, who emphasized that all the items/matters requiring attention were classified as being in the "LOW" category. It was reported that remedial works to three pieces of the equipment which were deemed to be requiring most urgent attention (replace log on Log Bridge/secure one of other logs/ensure that the swing seat bolts engage loc nut correctly) had been the subject of emails of 20/10 and 29/10 to John Reader of NGF Play. The swing bolts had been tightened and a price for the replacement/securing of the logs had just been received – amounting to £305.00 gross to replace both defective logs. This price was thought to be excessive, and as it was known that a similar piece of equipment – having 4 hanging tyres, rather than the existing wooden logs – could be purchased for approximately £450.00 it was (on a proposal by Stewart Cable, seconded by Wilf Chamberlain, and agreed) to pursue enquiries on this possibility. Hence the Clerk would now seek a quotation, from NGF Play, for the purchase and erection of the alternative item of equipment with 4 hanging tyres.

With regard to the 2011 Annual Inspection the Parish Council opted to again request Digley

Associates Ltd to carry out this service and consequently instructed the Clerk to contact D.A.L. accordingly.

PRE-SCHOOL NURSERY SITE EXTENSION

The Clerk reported that there was nothing further to report and, with this in mind, it was agreed to remove this item from future agendas.

PROPOSED NEW ALLOTMENT PROVISION

Although there was nothing more to report – in terms of tangible progress – it was noted that Chris Bond of Bidwells had taken over, from Gert Smed, acting for the Lombe Estate.

LITTLE MELTON PAROCHIAL CHARITY

(a) With regard to the anticipated resignation of Norman Duffield (as one of the two Parish Council trustees) it was confirmed that the Parish Council did not have a replacement in mind but that the Charity did have a parishioner willing to take over from Norman, and therefore it was anticipated that – subject to the Parish Council agreeing to this nomination – this person would be appointed accordingly.

(b) It was confirmed that the re-appointment of Chris Doggett, or a replacement for him, as the other Parish Council nominee, would be required by 31 July 2011, and therefore the Parish Council would need – prior to this date – to formally confirm (or appoint a new trustee) effective for the 4 years from 1 August 2011 to 31 July 2015.

NEW NOTICEBOARD AND BENCH SEAT

The Clerk reported that other than the letter dated 21 October, from the Parish Council, to Mr. Leslie Crowe of Hethersett accepting his costing of £400.00 for the construction of a new notice board, with laminated glass, there was nothing further to report. Construction was not anticipated until after Christmas.

With regard to siting of the adjacent proposed bench seat John Heaser said he had heard nothing further from Penny Watkin.

VILLAGE SIGN

Bearing in mind Barry Foster's rough estimate of £350.00 for repainting/restoring the village sign – and that his work would not occur until at least Spring 2011 – it was agreed that in the meantime the Clerk would ask Bernard Ambrose if he would be willing to undertake this work.

NEW DOG WASTE BIN

Discussion took place as to where it would be best for this to be sited and, after discussion, it was unanimously agreed that the location should be near the 30 mph speed restriction sign on Great Melton Road. Therefore erection would take place in due course and the Clerk would then instruct SNC to commence the emptying service.

ASSETS REGISTER – ANNUAL REVIEW

Consideration and the undertaking of this was deferred to the following Parish Council meeting.

RISK ASSESSMENT – ANNUAL REVIEW

Consideration and the undertaking of this was deferred to the following Parish Council meeting.

HIGHWAYS

PROPOSED CYCLE PATH LINK LITTLE MELTON TO HETHERSETT

The Chair reported that he was unaware of any further progress.

TRAVELLERS CAMP UPDATE

The Chair reported that the camp was due to be vacated earlier in the day and it was understood that this had occurred, including the removal of the horses from an adjacent field.

HIGHWAY RANGERS

The Clerk reported that – following the email of 22 October from Luke Denney of Norfolk County Council on behalf of the recently introduced County Council Highway and Community Rangers – he had sent, on 9 November, a list of highway matters/defects requiring attention but to date was unaware of remedial action being undertaken.

Also noted was the email of 2 November from NCC advising the Parish Council that Matt Worden is the new Area Manager for the South Area, based at Ketteringham Depot, and managing the new Area Team of Engineers, Technicians and Inspectors, reporting to Nick Tupper, the Highway Maintenance manager.

The contact for Little Melton for most highway issues will be Gary Overland, Highway Engineer.

Concluding Garry Wheatley suggested that it might be a good idea to ask Gary Overland to meet representatives of the Parish Council to walk the village.

NCC SUGGESTED DELEGATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES (STREET SCENE/PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY).

The Clerk drew attention to the letter (with attachments) of 19 November from Graham Plant, NCC Cabinet member for Travel & Transport, asking if the Parish Council wanted to take on some highway and Public Rights of Way duties. It was noted that NCC hope to put any new arrangements in place in early 2011 and that no extra funding was to be made available to parish councils to undertake these additional duties!

After discussion the Parish Council unanimously agreed it did not feel that it should be taking on additional duties in a time when economic restraint was severe and there would be no additional funding to provide such services!

The Parish Council also declined to take part in a pilot scheme, over the winter period, with regard to the gritting of footways.

NCC SPECIFICALLY PROPOSING CHANGES TO PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY SERVICE

This proposal was related to the previous item on the agenda but as the Parish Council had received a separate communication on this particular part of the service currently provided by NCC it was noted that the PC was being asked if there was any scope for parish councils and community groups to contribute more to the management of public rights of way.

Again the Parish Council was not of the opinion that these responsibilities should be taken on, especially in view of no further funding being made available.

BUS STOP IMPROVEMENTS – SCHOOL LANE

The Clerk reported that there was nothing further to report and therefore the work was expected to go ahead in the near future,

TO GRIT OR NOT TO GRIT

The Clerk drew attention to the email of 25 November from Came & Company (Parish Council's insurers) regarding the clearance of snow and/or ice and the implications on parish councils' insurance, and an advice guide.

One option was for the PC to undertake the clearing of snow and/or ice from public spaces (including the carrying out of risk assessments and training etc).

It was noted that use of common sense was recommended but that if a parish council only provides grit bins and does not organize volunteers it cannot escape all liability if things go wrong.

If the snow and/or ice is on parish council owned land (which is not a highway) the parish council has a duty to take reasonable care.

CLERK'S CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk referred to his schedule of correspondence of 24 November, forwarded to all parish councillors, and the further correspondence received since then.

In particular attention was drawn to the Konnectbus new (reduced) local bus service w.e.f. 28 November, 2010, on Service No 9. The Clerk confirmed that he had passed copies of the recently received new timetables to John McDonald at the local shop.

DISTRICT, COUNTY AND REGIONAL DOCUMENTS

Other than the Chair's response of 10 September in respect of local references to veto excessive council tax increases no documents were reported.

It was also mentioned that following the recent resignation of County Councillor Daniel Cox there would be a by-election in January.

FINANCIAL

BILLS/RECEIPTS

On a proposal by Tony Berry, seconded by Wilf Chamberlain, the undermentioned invoices were authorized for payment:-

Glasdon U.K. Ltd. – new Dog Waste Bin (No 101067)	£207.39
Mr R Sinclair – 50% refund of B/B 25/10-24/11 and 24/11-25/12/10 (101068)	£ 18.98
Heaser Business Consulting – refund new computer mouse (101069)	£ 23.71
The Village Florist – printing 425 copies LMPC Newsletter October edition (101070)	£ 21.25
CGM Norwich – VPF maintenance October 2010 (101071)	£195.64
Digley Associates Ltd. – Annual Inspection 2010 VPF play equipment (101072)	£ 47.00

Hethersett Parish Council – hire litter pick equipment September 2010 (101073) £ 10.00
In addition one receipt – amounting to £141.50, from HAFC, for the hire of the VPF football pitch for eight matches (2 adult and 6 youth) during October 2010 was reported.

MONITORING REPORT

It was confirmed by John Heaser that the monitoring of the Parish Council’s finances continued to be satisfactorily undertaken and that all transactions were in order.

INTERNAL VERIFICATION

The Clerk reported that he, and Duncan Frazer, had been unable to undertake the I.V. for the period mid June to mid September 2010 and therefore the outcome of this action would be reported to the next Parish Council meeting.

NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL BUDGET CONSULTATION

The Clerk referred to the email, received from Norfolk County Council, on 25 October headed Budget Consultation (NCC) and Norfolk’s Big Conversation comprising 17 pages.

In short this is NCC seeking to move a number of responsibilities to parish councils without any budget provision!

The Parish Council declined to respond, with its views, on these proposals.

In addition the Clerk drew attention to the letter from Chris Walton, Head of Democratic Services at Norfolk County Council, sent via email on 25 October, summarising the process the proposals for changes in the core role of the County Authority and the way it works, and the broad financial strategy intended for adoption for the coming years.

It was noted that the period for consultation feedback will close on 10 January 2011, but the Parish Council declined to respond with any comments.

PRECEPT 2011/2012 BID DETERMINATION

The Chair began by referring to (a) the email of 26 October from NALCs (forwarded to all parish councillors), (b) his email of 27 October to all members of the Parish Council and (c) his email of 29 November to all parish councillors setting out a possible precept bid – to SNC – for the financial year 2011/2012. This showed small overall increase of approx. 2.9% from the precept for 2010/2011.

Discussion then ensued in the light of the financial constraints now being sought by the Government, i.e. the necessity not to increase the precept from the previous year. Taking this requirement into account the Parish Council concluded – upon a proposal by Stewart Cable, which was seconded by Joan Wheatley, and unanimously agreed - that the bid for 2011/2012 should be as the previous year, i.e. £19,567. To achieve this slightly reduced figure it had been agreed that Village Hall maintenance would only be £1,000, the churchyard maintenance annual grant would remain at £1,300 and the Parish Council would no longer take out annual membership of the Norfolk Rural Community Council.

DATES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS 2011

The dates for Parish Council meetings for the year 2011 were agreed, as circulated to all parish councillors, with the first meeting being on Tuesday 11 January 2011 and the final one for the year to be held on Tuesday 29 November 2011.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 9.20 pm.

Chairperson.....

Date.....