

## **KINGS CLIFFE PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Annual Public meeting of Kings Cliffe Parish Council held at the Memorial Hall on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2009.

**08/176 Present :** Chairman A. Howard, Councillors M Day, L. Crane, B. Wyles, C Williams, J. Dixon, P. Lang Norris, B. Howard, M. Wharton, G. Kingston : Parishioners Mr. A. Peacey, Mr. W. Court and Mrs. G. Caddick.

**08/178 Apologies :** County Councillor H. Smith, Councillors K. Howard, and Canon L. Caddick.

**08/179 Minutes of the Public Meeting held on 10th April 2008 : Approved**

Proposed : Councillor M. Day

Seconded : Councillor B. Wyles

**08/180 Any Matters Arising :** Will be dealt with throughout the Open Forum

**08/181 Chairman's Annual Report**

Chairman Andrew Howard welcomed everyone to the meeting, but expressed his regrets that only three parishioners were attending. He thanked the clerk and all councillors for their hard work throughout the year.

Although a year had passed, many of the agenda items were much the same as last year; although there had actually been a great deal of progress throughout the 12 months.

Highways : The improvements to the A47 junction with the new traffic bollards and the signs through the woods to the landfill site and Howards depot appear to have greatly reduced the number of accidents on this stretch of road; but work continues with the County Council and Augean as regards road cleaning; they are very aware of public concerns and incidents are logged. County Councillor H. Smith has been heavily involved in the negotiations.

In 2008 there were successes in the approval of the KC1 site and the children's play area, sadly the euphoria was short-lived due to the world economic situation. Regarding a play area for children, recalling the Pathfinder Project, although the Parish Council was sceptical as to the benefits of this, and no Parish Plan was forthcoming, the funds allocated, namely £5000, have now been offered for a village project. We requested a play area, after liaising with KCASP, within the new Sports project; further funds of circa £10,000 will be needed, but it is hoped local associations will form a group to raise this money. This is not what had initially been envisaged but it is hoped with motivation, this can be achieved. Anyone offering their services should contact the Chairman, or Councillor G. Kingston.

We have bought the land for the cemetery extension, Burial Board Chairman M. Day is obtaining estimates for stock fencing and rabbit proofing the area. Landscaping and hedge planting will hopefully take place in the Autumn.

The Sports Project is moving forward well; the My Space area being well used. The football pitches are nearing completion and almost ready for seeding. The plans for the showers etc., are presently being drawn up.

There has been an issue the adder fencing between Kingsmead and the Sports Project. It has been erected as a planning conditions enforced by The Wildlife Trust to keep the snakes in but the Willow Walk pocket parks has suffered as a result; ENC are providing gates at the entrance to the path to Willow Lane and the pathway will be rerouted via the path through the Bottle Banks area. We are hoping to resolve this problem in the near future.

We would like to thank Chris Jackson for organising the Big Tidy Up; this has greatly improved the appearance of the village.

Roads : the area at the cross will be briefly closed for essential surface repairs during the next few weeks.

A meeting was held with the new Highways Area Manager, Richard Woodhouse in March. All the outstanding issues were discussed, including a proposed crossing at the Wood Road/West Street

junction to facilitate safe crossing for residents going to the shops in West Street. White lining throughout the village is to be renewed; we have been asking for this for four years. The tree roots in Station Road/Park Close have again been reported to Spire Homes for their urgent attention. An extension to the footpath at the Bridge Street end of the village is also being discussed, as there is an area with no footpath whatsoever. Many other key points were inspected and discussed.

Emergency planning : During the heavy snowfall in February, it became very obvious that the Parish has to make its' own contingency plans to ensure a return to normality during such emergencies. Operation Gold Command was put into operation by NCC which meant that only major roads would be cleared or gritted. This applied to both towns and villages. This proved the support expected was not there. At a recent meeting, it was made clear this will happen again given similar circumstances. Mr. T. Peacey provided an emergency planning presentation. The Clerk has the completed Parish Emergency Plan, which was issued some years ago; but this does not allow for checking on elderly members of the community or helping in general. It is felt that a plan must be developed to ensure that everyone looks after themselves and their neighbours in such an emergency. Any suggestions from the public will be welcome, and hopefully form a group of active members of the community. We would again thanks Mr. Guy Adams for voluntarily clearing the main street in the village of snow.

The Chairman then opened the meeting for questions:-

Mr. W. Court : When the white lining is carried out, can we ask for the speed humps on Wood Road to be clearly marked again?

Chairman : We will follow this up with the County Council.

Mrs. Caddick : How is the purchase of the additional land for the cemetery being funded? And where has the money come from for the Sports Project.

Chairman : We have obtained an interest free 10 year loan from ENC for the cemetery land and have budgeted for some years for repaying it without raising the Parish precept. If the precept is raised, Council Tax rises accordingly. The Sports Project has been funded independently of the Parish Council.

Mrs. Caddick replied that she had worked out that it costs her 44p a week to live in King's Cliffe and considers it exceptionally good value!

Mr. T. Peacey : Emergencies, it is not if, but when will it happen. There are not enough fire engines and they take too long to be of use during an emergency.

Chairman : The issue is how we make people responsible for themselves. We need young volunteers. There is a limit to how much the village can do. This is a community issue; it is hoped people will read this and get together and raise some ideas.

Mr. W. Court : Eagle Lane is in need of urgent resurfacing and the pipe which drains the water from Church Walk at the Eagle Lane junction is blocked. The litter bin outside the Village Shopper is invariably full to overflowing; could we please have another bin.

Chairman : Asked the Clerk to report this to the Highways manager as a matter of urgency and ask ENC if we may have a second bin outside the shop.

The question was then raised regarding the absence of our District Councillor and the fact that we have received no apologies and he does not attend any Parish Council meetings.

Chairman : This is noted and we will contact Councillor Roger Glithero to see if he can be persuaded to attend some of our meetings.

In closing the Open Forum, the Chairman thanked County Councillor Heather Smith in her absence for all her help throughout the year. A copy of her report was given to all those present (see below)

### **08/182 County Councillor H. Smith's Annual Report**

The year leading to March 2009 has been a turbulent one for the council with complete changes in the senior management team following the appointment of Katherine Kerswell as the new chief executive. There has been a noticeable change in attitude with improving public perception of the way the Council provides its services being the top priority.

I believe huge strides have been made towards achieving improved performance in all areas but the work is not yet completed and the County Council has to cope within a difficult financial climate.

The appointment of MGWSP as the County's partner for Highway maintenance has been a big factor in achieving an improved service. The contractor is working closely with county staff to ensure that there is a joined up approach to solving many of the county highways problems. There is still a huge backlog of work to be done but financial constraints do not allow for everything to be done that needs doing. Works have to be prioritised. Local area working was introduced and MGWSP has appointed an area manager covering East Northants and Corby and NCC has appointed an Officer to cover the same area. They are physically located together to try to ensure good communication links. This seems to be working well so far.

The winter just past was the worst weather wise for many years placing huge strains on the highways service. The County had everything under control and prior to Christmas the gritting of roads was working well. Problems arose when national stocks virtually ran out and our orders for salt were not being fulfilled. This was outside the Counties control and additionally the Highways agency requisitioned salt reserves to ensure the national motorway network and major routes like the A14 were kept open. This meant local roads became treacherous including school bus routes.

Although we may not have such a serious winter again for a few years we are trying to ensure that the school bus routes are gritted in future.

The aftermath of the prolonged cold period has been the damage to the road surface where water seeped in, froze, expanded and broke up the surface. Our contractor is working to repair the damage as quickly as possible.

Rights of Way staff moved over to MGWSP control last year too and although I had reservations about whether this was the right thing to do I am now satisfied that there have been benefits from this move. I have been discussing with the rights of way manager what can be done to protect byways from continual destruction by 4 wheel drive vehicles. Restoration of these routes has been a continual costly process for the County Council.

Moving onto education in this area – the primary schools apart from Nassington still has vacancies and an extension is planned for Nassington school. The current pressures on school places are being covered by a temporary mobile placed on site last summer. The middle school in Kings Cliffe is short of space due to an increase in school numbers and requests for places from outside the catchment area are likely to be refused in future. The number of pupils per classroom will be restricted to alleviate pressure on space within the classes.

The County is experiencing pressure on budgets caused by an increase in children being placed in care (following the baby P case) and we constantly seek new foster parents. If anyone knows of anyone who might be willing to take on this important role do ask them to contact me.

The other pressure the County finances are facing is the increasing elderly population needing social care. We are putting additional money into this budget to try to ease the strain.

We continue to look for efficiencies to try to keep Council tax increases as low as possible but the recent ACAS pay award for Council employees meant a sudden pressure on the budget for an additional £800,000 to meet the additional pay award. Co-operation between the District Council and the County to achieve efficiency improvements has to be a key way forward.

It is our intention to try to keep local tax as low as possible whilst maintaining services. We will never be able to provide everything everyone wants but if re-elected I will continue to strive for a fair share of available funds to be put into improving the quality of life in this area.

Chairman A. Howard thanked the parishioners who had attended and opened the monthly meeting

### **MONTHLY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**08/183 Declarations of Interest :** None

**08/184 Minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2009 (no March 2009 meeting):** Approved

Proposed : Councillor C. Williams

Seconded : Councillor L. Crane

## **08/185 Matters Arising**

Deer warning signs on the Wansford Road : The Clerk has asked Highways for a sign to be erected within the Parish Boundary

Rubbish at the Bottle Banks : This was reported and has been cleared.

## **08/186 Clerks Report**

The Title Deed for the new cemetery land has been received from Chattertons; it was actually transferred to Parish Council ownership in September 2008.

Barbara Ding, Executive Director and Monitoring Officer at ENC is retiring at the end of May. Our regrets have been sent to her; she has been a very useful contact for all things legal and formal and will be greatly missed.

The Parish Council web-site is now well under way, following a warning from the ICO that it should be up and running. Russell Brown is being incredibly helpful; but Councillors should be reminded that, by law, their names and contact addresses and telephone numbers will to be available on the site; also all accounts and relevant records. You will be informed when it is finished and ready for use by the public.

Charles Atkinson at the Mill, has asked for action on the fact that Hall Yard has no drains, and all surface water runs toward the river and causes problems to his access. The letter was forwarded to Richard Woodhouse, Highways Manager, who replied that this will be inspected and included in the 2010/11 programme. Richard Woodhouse also asked for a list of local farmers who may be willing to help with snow clearance in the event of further heavy snow. This has been provided. We have also requested that all grit boxes are refilled and a large pothole outside the Endowed School needs attention.

A complaint has been received regarding the fencing of an allotment plot. This has been inspected this; it is a tidy construction and does not appear to be breaking any of the tenancy rules.

The bollards on Wood Road, demolished during a car theft have been efficiently repaired/replaced.

The ENC tree preservation officer and a gentleman seconded to ENC were taken to inspect the Beech Tree; they are hoping to source some way of repairing the fire damage, although the tree was pronounced to be very healthy for its' age.

PCSO Paul Webster has informed us that Police officers will be holding a surgery at the Village Hall on the third Sunday of every month during the afternoon tears between 2-4pm.

Following a complaint regarding dead tree branches overhanging Church Walk, a letter has been sent to the owner asking him to trim the offending beech tree.

NCALC issued an invitation for the Chairmans' name to be entered into a ballot to attend a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace; The Chairman withdrew his name as he had been before. Vice-Chairman M. Day's name was entered with 38 others. He was lucky enough to be one of the two invited.

## **08/189 Report from PCSO Paul Webster**

PCSO Paul Webster reported that the crime figures in the village were pleasingly down, only one crime reported in March and two in February. He thanked the village for their help in the Big Tidy Up which showed a great community spirit; also the communal turf laying at the Sports field. There has been very little anti-social behaviour as there are things for young people to do in the community. The event at the Ex-Servicemen's to fit tamper proof screws to number plates on cars was very successful, 25 vehicles were fitted and the packs are available from the Police.

He warned that 'knockers', or peddlers are being a nuisance in the area; they should have licences, if anyone is concerned, please call the help desk on 08453 700700 with any concerns.

Paul told the meeting he enjoys working in the village; everyone, including the youngsters are very helpful and he feels the community really work together.

The three officers assigned to the area are PCSO's Paul Webster, Mohammed (Taz) Wasim, and WPC Jane Mannings.

Councillor B. Howard commented that this was a step in the right direction.

The Chairman thanked Paul for his help and for attending the meeting.

**08/188 Accounts Payable :** The following accounts were approved for payment:-

March

Curators Salary (current month)	£ 150.00
Clerks Salary (current month)	£ 200.00
ABBA : Annual Subscription	£ 90.00
E-ON : Lighting repairs & maintenance (two invoices)	£ 406.90
Richard Brown : Pollarding of cemetery trees	£ 660.00
Chattertons : underpayment for cemetery land	£ 12.85
ENC : Cemetery rates for year	£ 300.63
Anglian Water : Cemetery water charge	£ 3.38

April

Curators Salary (current month)	£ 150.00
Clerks Salary (current month)	£ 200.00
Smith Hetherington : Grass cutting	£ 132.00
Allianz Insurance : Annual renewal	£ 439.09
NCALC : Annual subscription	£ 224.57

Proposed : Councillor M. Wharton

Seconded : Councillor J. Dixon

**08/189 Planning**

**Applications :**

8 Wood Road : Single storey rear sun lounge : EN/09/00448/FUL : No objection

**Granted by ENC**

100 Wood Road : Conversion of garage etc., : EN/08/00045/LBC : noted

Several Councillors complained about the total incongruity of the large garage in the garden of 72 Park Street; the Parish Council objected to this application, but it was passed by ENC. A letter will be sent to the Planning Department re-iterating objections to this structure.

**08/190 Highways Issues : Report of meeting in March**

A meeting and village inspection was held on 20<sup>th</sup> March; The Chairman, County Councillor Heather Smith and Richard Woodhouse, Area Highways manager. The following areas are earmarked for attentions:-

- Station Road and Kingsmead : appropriate signs and white lining urgently needed
- Station Road : Tree roots growing through pavements, both within Park Close and along Station Road. A resident has recently had a nasty fall in this area; this will be treated by the Parish Council as extremely urgent. Spire Homes are responsible in this area, and District Councillor Glithero will be asked to intervene.
- Coleman's Lane : Warning signs at both ends of this lane, to Wood Road and Park Street are requested, as children use these travelling to and from both the Endowed and Middle Schools.
- West Street : the wide verge outside 71 – 73 West Street will be properly surfaced to allow off-road parking.
- Bridge Street : the footpath outside The Walnuts has deteriorated and will be repaired to continue the footpath to Apethorpe.
- The damaged area at the Park Street T-junction to the Cross will be repaired. This will necessitate the road being closed for a brief period. Notices have been posted.
- Morehay Lane : This is adopted to the boundary of Summer Place and will be surfaced accordingly to avoid flooding from Bridge Street

The question of a 20 mph speed limit at the Endowed School was again discussed at length. Too many cars park to collect children, but parking further away increases the risk of accidents. It was also

pointed out that in Park Street and West Street it is virtually impossible to drive faster than 20 mph; this is a national issue and difficult to address.

### **08/191 Willow Walk : Report of meeting in March**

A meeting was held at Kingsmead to discuss the Willow Walk and the adder fencing which has effectively made this walk unusable. Present : Chairman A. Howard, Vice-Chairman M. Day, Richard Hankins, ENC Property Manager, the Clerk, Alan Bradshaw from the Wildlife Trust, Ruth Rolls from NCC Pocket Parks and Jackie, a lady from Fineshade.

The Chairman said this was a very difficult meeting. The adder fencing, a condition of the planning permission for the Sports Project, is restricting access to the Willow Walk and a contentious issue. ENC should have erected a gate to allow access, but Mr. Bradshaw was not happy about this arrangement. The lease between the PC and ENC allows access to the land leased, which is not longer accessible. The PC feels it is not logical to block public access. It is hoped this matter can be resolved amicably. ENC has undertaken to put a "gate" in, which was a condition of the Planning Application anyway and the Pathway is to be rerouted around the industrial units to the old station platform.

### **08/192 KCASP**

Putting aside the problems above, the Sports Project is moving forward well; the My Space area being well used. The football pitches are nearing completion and almost ready for seeding. The plans for the showers etc. are presently being drawn up.

**08/193 Gazette entry :** Discussed and agreed

### **08/194 Burial Board**

Burial Board Chairman M. Day reported on a recent meeting. Various matters were discussed; the Eastern wall of the church yard is causing concern but is being monitored by Mr. Barratt. The cemetery gates are to be refurbished by the curator. Quotations for fencing of the new cemetery area are pending, when this is completed quicks will be planted in the Autumn. It is felt that the new fencing should include rabbit fencing, as this is a big problem on the existing land. The area is ferreted regularly.

A memorial for Mr. Wooding was approved.

### **08/195 Neighbourhood Watch**

Co-ordinator P. Lang Norris agreed that all the above had been dealt with in the PCSO's report.

**08/196 Other Correspondence Received :** Discussed or circulated.

### **08/197 Any Other Business**

Councillor M. Day reports that fencing between Wood Lane and Fineshade Close is in bad condition. Spire Homes will be informed.

Councillor G. Kingston in reference to the Emergency planning item above, suggested that organisations of younger members of the community i.e. the Football Club and Fathers of King's Cliffe might be willing to volunteer their help. Letters will be sent to them.

Councillor M. Wharton complained that old cars in a garden in Park Street were an eyesore. The Chairman replied that it is difficult to take action against what residents do on their own land and this is a very subjective view. District Councillor R. Glithero will be asked for his advice.

Councillors B. Howard and M. Wharton both felt that the NCC Gold Command order was ridiculous and that people need to be able to get to work regardless of adverse weather conditions.

The Chairman replied that this applied to town as well as country areas.

A Councillor reported that a gentleman from ENC does periodically litter pick in the village; this is a step in the right direction.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.30.p.m. The next meeting will be the AGM on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2009.