

KINGS CLIFFE PARISH COUNCIL

The monthly meeting of the Parish Council was held on Thursday 13th March 2014 at 7.30.pm. in the Community Centre, Kingsmead.

13/188: Present : Chairman A. Howard, Councillors M. Day, L. Crane, C. Williams, R. Meadows, N. Ford, R. Brown, G. Kingston, C. Leuchars, G. Caddick, J. Atkinson, County Councillor H. Smith, parishioners Ian Hetherington, Peter Wallis, Michelle Rickard and Martin Fern

13/189 : Apologies for Absence : District Councillor Glithero

13/190: Declarations of Interest : Councillor Caddick (Local Schools). The Chairman declared and non fiduciary interest in the Elliott's Yard Application

13/191 : Minutes of the meeting held on 13th February 2014 : Approved

Proposed : Councillor Caddick

Seconded : Councillor Leuchars

13/192 : Clerks Report

Repairs to a light in Daleswood Rise : one repaired, now there are two faulty. After getting rather extremely cross with Midlands Housing Trust, they wrote yesterday that they had accepted my recommendation that they ask E-on to repair these lights at their expense, and they should be repaired within the next week.

Sue Scott, ENC Enforcement Officer informs that there have been complaints regarding the cart shed at 31 West Street not conforming to the approved plans. Regarding Building Control for the Sovereign Grange site, she also confirmed that a notice of commencement of development was received on 22.07.2010. The notice advised that building regulations would be undertaken by NHBC. When an approved inspector is appointed ENC's building inspectors are not allowed to enter the site, or look into any allegations of irregularities.

ENC Environment has been asked to repair Eagle Lane as the surface is very dangerous for the elderly and children. If it is not their responsibility I requested they pass it on to the relevant department, either within ENC or at NCC.

Chairman Andrew Howard has been asked to open the Kings Cliffe Post Office at 11am on Tuesday 25 March 2014 and cut the ribbon as Chairman of the Parish Council and also to invite other Parish Council members. A photographer will be present. The PO press office will forward a press release.

Complaint received re cattle in the allotments doing damage; I have contacted the owner and suggested to the complainant, on the advice of Danny Moody from NCALC that he sends a request for compensation to the farmer in question.

Michelle Rickard a Property has very kindly offered legal help with the ownership issues of Willow Lane and other land related problems to the PC.

Kings Cliffe Heritage is pleased to announce that they will open their centre in Bridge Street on Wednesday 16th April. Can I ask if we can donate the Town Criers' bell, which is currently in my house to them for their permanent exhibition? This was agreed.

13/193 : Matters Arising

Councillor Ford has kindly volunteered to tidy the Recycling Area at Kingsmead if, despite several reminders, this is not done by ENC.

13/194 : Accounts Payable : agreed

Clerks Salary (current month)	£ 312.00
A. E. Blunt : Grass cutting etc., burial grounds : January	£ 320.00
HMRC : Clerks PAYE for month	£ 3.00
E-on : Lighting maintenance charge to March	£ 372.10
E-on : Lighting repair 60 West St : new photocell	£ 66.36
Anglian Water : Charge for cemetery ¼ Nov – Feb	£ 15.70
Mrs. J. Howard Dixon : contra payment for the Pitchell	£ 20.00

Proposed : Councillor Ford Seconded : Councillor Brown

13/195 : Financial Position : noted

Bank balances:- Current £ 5,530.49; Deposit £ 3,139.54; Bequest account: £ 5,685.73

Councillor Brown queried the amount in the current account after comparing it to last month and the agreed outgoings; the Clerk explained there had been receipts from allotment rents, interments, grave purchases and memorials. He felt these should be recorded on the agenda. However, the Chairman said we did not want to get in the position whereby we were in effect doing monthly accounts as this would involve more time and we have no issues with the auditors.

13/196 : Planning

Applications

Vice Chairman Cllr Day took the chair for the next item

Elliot's Yard, Park Street : Construction of two light industrial units : 14/00072/FUL: No objection

Chairman Cllr Howard Resumed the Chairman's role

11 Forest Approach : Proposed conservatory to rear : 14/00398/FUL: No objection

13/197 Reorganisation of Local Schools

Since the last meeting, as agreed, a leaflet from the PC concerning the schools consultation had been included with the Parish Gazette; the Chairman thanked Councillor Robert Meadows for printing this and organising the distribution

The Chairman welcomed residents who had expressed their wish to speak on this subject. He hoped that many residents had attended the meetings on the future of schooling in the village. No one had proposed or defended continuing with the 3 – tier system. He feels it is important for the PC to compile a respond on this consultation

He invited Ian Hetherington – who had indicated his wish to speak for David Hellard, who was indisposed to take the floor. He addressed the PC as follows:-

I am speaking as a member of the community with no particular expertise and no vested interest, except a passionate belief in the future health and development of this village.

The battle to preserve 3- tier system for our kids was fought and won back in the 80s - I actively supported that fight.

We are now in different times and I don't believe we can continue to deliver the education we would all wish to provide the children of Kings Cliffe within a three tier system. The new goal must be to retain and develop first class local primary schooling for the children of KC, and local

area, feeding into an excellent 11-18 school in Oundle. This is essential if Kings Cliffe is to retain its “Hub” status.

Others will no doubt speak about the options available in order to attain this goal. If we do nothing we are in danger of losing not one, but two schools. There are others who have a very different agenda that would deny KC local access the primary schooling we must not let that happen.

We need the Parish Council to provide leadership to the whole community on this issue and make its position clear to the County Council – not stand-by and watch.

The Chairman thanked him and County Councillor Smith took the floor.

She explained updates; the consultation on the 2 – tier and 3 – stage system is on-going, the consultation on the proposed closure of the school is now complete . The next stage will involve a Cabinet meeting at NCC, who will consider all the arguments and make a decision on this matter.

Councillor Smith agreed to keep us all informed and also suggested that if a decision is made to go ahead with new school that a Working Group be formed and it would be good to have a member of the Parish Council on this.

We then moved to the next speaker, Martin Fern, he introduced himself as a School Governor and Trustee of the Charity which owns the Endowed School building. He explained that the 3 – tier system was difficult as most of the country is now 2 – tier; it affects the recruitment of teachers as almost everything is now designed for the 2 – tier system. Assessments regarding the SAT tests are difficult as they do not fit in with the current 3 tier structure.

There have been some negative Press comments from Thrapston, who still favour the 3 – tier system.

Will the Parish Council please give their support to the 2 – tier system and encourage everyone to do the same, not just current parents, but everyone for the future of the village, as the school is the heart of the village?

The Chairman replied that the PC is encouraging everyone to support the 2 – tier system, as no one at either of the consultation meetings spoke up in favour of retaining the current 3 - tier system. The Chairman thanked Martin and Ian.

Councillor Heather Smith said 21st March is the closing date of the consultation. King John’s School, Thrapston is opposing the proposals.

The Chairman thanked Heather Smith for this. He felt he would like to add the comment that we should not be too attached to the existing Endowed School, for sentimental reasons; it began over 100 years ago and was actually a house which developed in to a school.

If we are to move to a 2-tier system and retain primary education in the village then we will need to have a new school, which the proposal provides for. The existing school site does not have the capacity for an additional two years and its location will cause problems in the centre of the village. A new Primary School is an opportunity to move forward, it is once in a lifetime.

Councillor Leuchars said that new parents were uneasy about the disruption, but on the whole most are happy with the proposals.

Councillor Atkinson suggest 3 – tier is now out of step, to keep it for two more years would make it more difficult for the children left behind to integrate.

A lengthy discussion followed; questions asked about further housing development on the old Middle School site, which would be unwelcome; the idea of a new surgery on the site; the

possibility of accommodation for the elderly and the connection with KCA and a new school, which would be invaluable to both parties.

When asked how much the enterprise would cost Councillor Smith said four to five million pounds; half the site will be sold to help to fund this. It must be borne in mind that NCC is a public body, but also that everything is in the early stages.

Councillor Brown said there did not seem to be any offers from current surgeries; the Chairman replied that it would be up to the Clinical Commissioning Group, not individual practices.

The views of the Charity had been circulated to all Councillors.

It was agreed that the Chairman would draft a response to the consultation based on the comments that have been made and he would circulate to all councillors and would that all councillors would respond to the draft so he knows what the majority view is.

The Chairman asked if everyone was content with this approach and everyone agreed .

13/198 Sovereign Grange

A site visit by District Councillor Glithero and Vice-Chairman Day had proved there was no obvious provision to make an entry for the agreed footpath into Willow Lane; the only marking is a line of lighter coloured material in the tarmac.

Councillor Glithero had agreed to once again take this up with the Enforcement Officer at ENC; subsequently, this has been passed on to Sharn Matthews, Executive Director for ENC, who is in discussion with their Legal team. The Clerk spoke with a resident adjacent to the footpath who declared she knew nothing about it. A trail of e-mails from the Clerk regarding this began on 8th August 2011.

The Chairman asked Councillor Smith to chase up the matter of the chicanes and road markings at the entrance to the site; although approved, this has been on-going for years now; again, e-mails urgently requesting this work to be done began on 31st August 2011. She will chase this up with the relevant departments.

It is again noted that the Park (play area) has not yet been transferred to the PC and we have received no correspondence concerning the outstanding matters

13/199 Willow Lane

Michelle Rickard, a resident of Oak Lane and a Land Solicitor, has very kindly offered to look in depth at the issues regarding the ownership of Willow Lane. Looking into the Land Registry, she has discovered that it is not registered, although owners of adjacent land could be sitting on old deeds.

It is possible to produce a statement from local people, who are prepared to declare that this lane has been used by all for 20 years, to prove its' validity. There is no official right of way to this lane. She is happy to deal with this to prove 'prescriptive right of way'. We cannot put a footpath in as we do not own it.

Councillor Smith still understands that the side which is adjacent to the old Middle School belongs to NCC.

The Chairman asked Michelle to be good enough to provide the necessary documentation for the prescriptive rights, as there are many willing to sign this; we would like ownership as far as the boundary to KCA and the Village Field. She said, once this is approved, we should get ownership, although this process could take up to a year; she will come back to us on this as soon as possible.

13/200 Village Field

The Parish Council intend to apply for a grant from the Community Fund to enable us to securely fence the area and create a hard stand in the entrance. We are awaiting quotations for fencing and hedging and the Chairman, Councillors Day, Brown and Atkinson will have a meeting with Sue Davies to discuss the wording of the request for a grant. There was a lengthy discussion on what fencing would be best, but this can be finalised once quotes are received.

Vice-Chairman Day also suggested that it might be a good idea to plough and reseed the whole area for the long term. As this is a long term project, it must be cultivated properly. The field is very wet in some areas and could benefit from being drained. It was also suggested that, in the meantime, we might ask KCA to cut the grass for us when it becomes necessary.

KC Flyers Cycle Club have asked if it would be possible to have a cycle track in this field, however we have no official request for this

13/201 Kings Cliffe Meadow off Wood Lane

An entrance in Wood Lane, with a kissing gate and a further gate from Sovereign Grange land have been constructed into the Meadow. ENC were questioned on the fact that barbed wire has been used; their reply was that limited numbers of cattle or sheep may be allowed to graze this area. In the fullness of time, they hope to erect a signpost to the area and to establish rights of way

13/202 Memorial Hall : Vacancy for a PC Trustee

There is a vacancy for a Parish Council nominated trustee for the Memorial Hall. It does not have to be a Councillor. The Chairman asked for volunteers, Michelle Rickard from Oak Lane has agreed to do this and the VH Committee will be formally notified. The PC have also been asked to send a letter of reference to support a grant application for damp-proofing etc., to Underground; no logical explanation was given for this request which seemed to be unnecessary so far as the Council is concerned. Councillor Meadows will investigate this.

13/203 Parish Plan : Update

A draft plan will be available before the next meeting for all councillors to see and the Chairman will be invited to endorse this.

13/204 Horsewater renovation

This has been completed and many compliments have been passed on to the PC. When their invoice is received, a thank you letter will be sent to The Conservation Volunteers which is a registered charity.

13/205 Gazette entry for April 2014 : discussed and agreed

13/206 Burial Board

Nothing to report

13/207 Police : Monthly Crime Statistics : noted

13/208 Other Correspondence Received : all discussed or circulated

13/209 Any Other Business

Councillor Kingston is concerned that there is no longer an active Neighbourhood Watch in the village. This has been tried in the past, several times, and very little interest has been shown. Any new volunteers, please contact the Clerk.

Councillor Day feels we should let Persimmon Homes know that we do not want a hedge around the Park; what we do need is sensible fencing with access for the Public; presently there is no proper access. Councillor Ford said that KC Club had been told there will be feather board fencing

along the length of the boundary with the Park. The Club committee do want this to happen. We agreed to write to Persimmons on this matter.

A report has been received regarding vermin in an unoccupied Spire home in Wood Road. Councillor Day is dealing with this.

Councillor Atkinson raised a concern for the owner of the Mill House regarding the overflow from drains in Hall Yard, that then run down to the river by the path next to the Old Mill. The Chairman said this is an historic problem, which, in the past, the issue is who owns the lane, and suspects that it is another 'Green Lane' – it is not an adopted highway.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.45pm. The next meeting will be the Annual Public meeting in the Village Hall at 7.30pm. on Thursday 10th April 2014; everyone is welcome.

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