

ELLISTOWN AND BATTLEFLAT PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Parish Council meeting Held on Wednesday 20th April 2016 at the Primary School, Ellistown, commencing at 7.00pm.

Present: Cllr Hyde, Cllr Merrie, Cllr Morrell, Cllr Norley, Cllr Pollard, Cllr Powell and Cllr Willett-Marshall

In Attendance

Mr P Goodman Clerk to the Council
Mrs C Ridgeway North West Leicestershire District Council
Rev Olwen Woolcock
12 members of the public

1. Apologies for absence

None

2. Declarations of Discloseable Pecuniary Interest

None

3. Signing of cheques

The Clerk explained the cheques that had been signed since 1st April 2016. Unfortunately, due to the Internal Auditor currently having the cheque book and accounts, it was not possible to sign the most recent cheques for outstanding invoices

4. Planning consultations

Ref: 16/00328/VCUM Little Battleflat Farm
Ref: 16/00365/OUT Michael House, South Lane, Bardon Hill
Ref: 16/00393/VCIM Little Battleflat Farm
Ref: 16/00374/FULM Little Battleflat Farm

Cllr Merrie explained that the Little Battleflat Farm consultations were all amendments to the original scheme.

The County Council had explained that the bridge was adequate and that it did not have the money, in any case, to replace it.

The meeting was adjourned for 15 minutes

5. Police report and public participation

The Police were not in attendance. It was reported that PCSO Kyle Hardy had been transferred away from Ellistown.

A resident asked whether the next Parish Council newsletter could remind people again about showing thought and consideration about how they parked. A resident had been subjected to vile abuse.

A resident thanked Cllr Powell for his help in getting the County Council to cut back tree growth which was obstructing a public right of way (footpath N47).

A resident asked the Parish Council about its proposals for erecting a Multi-Use Games Area at Rushby Road. Was the Council aware of some opposition to this? Cllr Merrie reported that, should the Parish Council be donated money for community benefit, the Council had considered and thought viable (at a Parish Council awayday in the Autumn) the possibility of a small MUGA at Rushby Road Play Area to stop balls going into the street. However, the Council had not formally discussed and agreed this and it would be considered at the next Council meeting in May.

A resident asked for clarity on which roads are subject to weight limits - County Council issue (no County representation at the meeting).

A resident asked why no action had been taken about improving access throughout the footpaths and tracks of the village? Cllr Merrie and Cllr Powell AGREED to contact the County Council's disability officer and arrange a walk, with the resident who raised it, throughout Ellistown and come up with a concrete and costed programme for land which it owns.

A resident pointed out that the road between the quarry entrance and Palex (outside the Parish boundary) is dirty and muddy. Cllr Merrie agreed to approach the County Council and see what can be done.

The public involvement ended and the Council meeting resumed

6. Hugglescote Recreation Ground

The Clerk reminded the Council that it is now the sole trustee for Hugglescote Recreation Ground (aka South Street Playing Fields). He informed the Council that it must retain the Ground in perpetuity for the purposes of leisure and recreation. He had been provided with an invoice for the cutting of the grass over the Spring and Summer within the total quote that was submitted to and accepted by the Parish Council for grounds maintenance.

7. Minutes of the meeting held on 17th February 2016

The Chair apologised for the fact that the March meeting had needed to be cancelled due to being inquorate. The minutes of the meeting held on 17th February 2016 were confirmed as a true record with one correction - that the strategy to hold water (p587, minute 5) should say "flood", not "vote". Cllr Merrie had received an answer to the question on future ownership of the community woodland - Mountpark will own it and maintain it. Cllr Willett-Marshall said that discussions regarding the possible formation of a group that Community Transport (MRC) could take for regular supermarket shopping is on-going.

8. Clerk's report

The Clerk emphasised the need for the Parish Council to prioritise certain work - the transfer of the website to a new domain, pensions provision for the new Clerk, receiving the annual "external" inspection of childrens play areas, scrutinising and ensuring action (where necessary) on Brian Mee Associates regular inspection of play areas, budgeting for replacement of childrens play equipment as it wears, consideration of the National Forest within Ellistown and how the environment can be protected and enhanced.

He reported that the Multi-Use Games Area had won a prestigious award and that Cllr Powell and Lauren Fox would visit the House of Lords and represent the Council and its

aspirations on 26th May 2016. This was something that the Council and the community could be proud of.

It was AGREED to ask Wicksteed about a "No Climbing" sign to go on the MUGA and to ask Brian Mee Associates for a price on removing moss from a Childrens Play area.

9. Young People's Council report

In the absence of Lauren Fox, the Clerk explained that the Heartlands Youth Initiative would continue and build upon Lauren's good work and her support for young people by providing a replacement 3 hours a week for the rest of the financial year (as had been budgeted for). He had conveyed our thanks to Lauren and best wishes in her new role. The Young People's Council had asked for two sessions of basketball training and coaching with members of Leicester Riders at the end of May. The Parish Council AGREED that the Leicester Riders be engaged to do this basketball development work. It was also agreed that maximum effort should be made to publicise this fantastic opportunity for local young people, through the school and also through the community cinema club.

10. Financial update

The Chair signed the bank statements dated 29th February and 31st March 2016.

10i) The Council approved payments 125-148.

10ii) The Clerk reported that the Council's accounts reconciled with the bank statement dated 31st March 2016. He asked for questions. There were no questions.

10iii) The Clerk presented a budget report profiling income and expenditure as of 31st March 2016. He asked for questions. There were no questions.

10iv) The Clerk had attended training put on by LRALC at which Grant Thornton, the external auditors, had explained the changes that are coming and the requirements put upon Parish Council to allow open public scrutiny of the Annual Accounts as part of the audit process.

11. Internal auditor's report

The internal auditor currently had all the accounts for 2015-16 and had not yet been able to report back. The Clerk would circulate his report to all councillors as soon as it is available.

12. Appointment of internal auditor for 2016-17

The Council AGREED to appoint Roger Snowdin as its internal auditor for 2016-17

13. Annual governance statement

The Council AGREED that it had carried out its responsibility in ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including the preparation of the accounting statements. The Chair duly signed Section 1 of the Annual return for the year ended 31st March 2016

14. Annual accounting statement

The Council AGREED that the figures fairly presented for income and expenditure were correct, that the balance reconciled with the bank balance at 31st March 2016, and that the Council carried forward a sum of £41,972 into the next financial year. The Chair duly signed Section 2 of the Annual return for the year ended 31st March 2016.

15. Meeting dates and venue for 2016-17

The Council AGREED the proposed dates for meeting in 2016-17, noting the need to meet on 22nd June (not 15th June) so that the Clerk could attend. The Council wished to continue to meet in the school. There would not be a meeting in August.

16. Arrangements for Parish Council website provision

Further to earlier communications, the Clerk had attended a briefing at LRALC regarding arrangements to ensure that all Parish and Town Councils continue to meet their obligations to have a website. He explained that the County Council system (which had been subsidised) finishes at the end of August. The County Council had overseen a competitive tendering process at which suitable companies had needed to bid against an RFP (Request for Proposal) Local Council Website Document. The chosen company, 2 Commune Ltd, had met all the requirements including compatibility with mobile phone and tablet technology and had many new features including a more accessible Planning document site (identifying Parish boundaries) and ticker messaging and slide show features. Those Parish Councils opting in to 2 Commune Ltd would receive support on data transfer and be given training including on the new, community news, feature. There is a One-off set up fee and then an annual charge for support and maintenance.

It was AGREED to purchase the 2 Commune Ltd system, "classic" feature and to request a set up date of 1st July 2016.

17. Report from Allotments Committee 2nd March 2016

Cllr Pollard, as Chair of the Allotments committee, reported on the meeting held on 2nd March 2016. He reported that there are no vacant plots and no problems at the site. EAGS had agreed to cut the hedge in the middle of the site and the container had now been painted. Income from rentals actually exceeds any costs (namely water charges) and the meeting had agreed to freeze rentals at 2015-16 levels. It was reported that some people are entering the site through holes in the hedge.

18. Report on proposed development at St Christophers Church

Rev Olwen Woolcock described the challenge of making the church fit for the future. With a small residual congregation there is a need to work with the Diocese to remodel the church. She described some current community activity - after school club, social activity for older people, school visits - and was encouraged by the connection that had been advanced with young people through the Parish Council's Our Place initiative.

Rev Woolcock said that the Diocese wants the church to be in the community, serving the community in a relevant way. An example had been the formation of the community cinema. The church wants to make the foyer area bigger, replace the servery, have a small kitchen and an indoor toilet. It wants to relocate the war memorial within the main body of the church and make the South door a working entrance.

On the outside - and of particular relevance to the Parish Council - plans to make the car park more accessible would involve having an "in" and an "out" entrance (facilitating hearses at funerals) and requiring the moving of the Parish Council-owned bus shelter. Though this was some time ahead she wanted to make the Parish Council aware and seek its support.

The Chair thanked Rev Woolcock for attending the meeting and offered the PC newsletter or website as a way of helping to explain this to the wider community.

19. Reports from County Councillor and District Councillor

The County Councillor was not in attendance and had not sent a report.

The District Councillor (Cllr Merrie) had been visiting Mountpark regularly and keeping abreast of developments. Cllr Pollard asked Cllr Merrie about children playing on Rushby Road "island" - Cllr Merrie was not aware of this.

20. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting will be the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council on Wednesday 11th May 2016, 7.00pm at Ellistown Primary School.

At this point the public were requested to leave the meeting to allow the Council to deal with a piece of private business

21. Staffing matters

The Clerk reported that there had been three applicants for the post of Clerk/RFO. He proposed that there was no need to short-list and he recommended that the Council proceed to interview on Wednesday 27th April, at Ellistown Primary School, from 7.00pm onwards. Cllrs Morrell, Norley, Pollard and Powell agreed to be the interviewing panel with Cllr Merrie in reserve. Cllr Morrell would facilitate the interviewing and each councillor supply one or two questions which the Clerk would collate. The Clerk suggested that there be a one month overlap between the old and the new.

It was AGREED that the Clerk overlap with the new Clerk for one month and terminate employment as of 23rd June 2016.

The meeting ended at 9.00pm.