

GEDDINGTON NEWTON AND LITTLE OAKLEY PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13TH JANUARY 2014

Members present: Councillor M Rowley (Chairman)
Councillors T Bailey, C Buckseall, A Gordon, P Hopkins,
I Kelman, T Locock and D Watson

Apologies: Councillors K Harden and J Padwick
Borough Councillor J Bullock

Also present: PCSOs Laura Mitchell and Paul Miller, Northants Police
Mrs Sarah Pask, Parish Flood Warden

Two other members of the public were present at the meeting.

POLICE REPORT

110/14

DECEMBER 2013: Geddington: 2 burglary (other) (includes attempted break in at The Star public house and theft from the till of the Country Garden tearooms)
2 thefts from motor vehicles
1 theft of motor vehicle (attempted)
Little Oakley: 7 thefts from motor vehicles (fuel from the roadworks site – ongoing vigilance)
Newton: 1 theft/handling (heating oil)

PUBLIC MEETING

111/14

A member of the public complained that drivers are still parking inconsiderately so that emergency vehicles find it difficult to gain access. The Police reminded the public that the number to dial to report such issues is 101.

The same member of the public also raised the issue of standing water near to the speed camera on the A43. It was confirmed that County Councillor Harker has been informed of this with a request to resolve the problem, but no response has been received to date.

PLANNING

Applications

KET/2013/0787 Outline planning permission – 1 x dwelling, 39 Stamford Road, Geddington – R Morgan

This property is outside the village envelope but within the garden area of 39 Stamford Road. The Parish Council were in agreement with this application, without prejudice for any similar applications which may follow, but did raise concerns that there should be sufficient turning space for access and egress. All in favour.

KET/2013/0620 Single storey front extension and alterations to first floor front windows, Hillside, 4 Grange Road, Geddington – Mr & Mrs Hulett

The Parish Council supported this application since it would greatly improve the appearance of the property. All in favour.

Approvals

KET/2013/0735 Single storey side extension, 25 The Woodlands, Geddington, Mr and Mrs Knight

CONCERNS REGARDING THE CONTENT OF THE AGENDA

112/14

Councillor Locock expressed concerns that he had made two submissions before the deadline for the Agenda but that they had not appeared on the Agenda. He requested an undertaking from the Chairman that in future any discussion items suggested for the Agenda will appear on the document, unless it should fall outside the Parish Council's jurisdiction.

Councillor Rowley confirmed that there was one missing item and that this will be on the Agenda for discussion next month. By the time Councillor Locock had pointed this out, the deadline for posting the notice had passed. (There has to be three clear working days before the meeting, making the practical deadline the Tuesday evening the week before a meeting).

With regard to the other item, Councillor Rowley's point was that the wording of the submission was that it was a resolution to be discussed and voted on. He had requested the wording to be amended so that it was simplified and at no time did he state that the item could not be put on the Agenda. Councillor Locock reiterated that he would still like an undertaking that any items to be included on the Agenda should appear on the Agenda unless they are resolutions and, having taken advice, this is what indeed should happen, other than simplification of the wording to aid understanding.

There was no further discussion on this subject, save that Councillor Locock requested that his concerns be minuted.

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Also present: Mrs Sarah Pask, Parish Flood Warden

MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 9th December 2013 were read and signed with the amendment in 96/14 as follows: The vacant position on the Finance Subcommittee will be filled by Councillor Rowley in his capacity as Chairman.

KETTERING BOROUGH COUNCIL ISSUES

No report.

NORTHANTS COUNTY COUNCIL ISSUES

No report.

YOUTH CLUB

112/14

Councillor Rowley was under the impression that the Youth Club Committee had a meeting scheduled for next week, although Councillor Buckseall had not been informed of this.

With regard to whether the Parish Council should register Stonepit Land with HMRC, in view of

the fact that a previous Parish Council meeting had been minuted wrongly and at one point referred to registration with the Charities Commission and that this discrepancy had not been noticed on approval of the minutes, in accordance with Section 11.1 of the Standing Orders, if 75% of the Parish Council would like to correct the resolution, then this can be done. All Parish Councillors agreed to this change of proposal and signed accordingly. Councillor Rowley agreed to complete the document for HMRC.

VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT AND PLAN

113/14

No further report but it was stated that Councillor Padwick is still working on this document.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

No report.

NEWTON AND LITTLE OAKLEY

114/14

Councillor Bailey raised concerns about the state of the roads in Little Oakley, stating that there had been some confusion over who should ensure that the road is clean. It was agreed that the Parish Council should write to Borough Councillor Bullock requesting that Little Oakley roads are swept properly.

Councillor Watson reported that Newton Road is also deteriorating rapidly and is now very dangerous. He has written to County Councillor Harker who has asked the County Council team to have a look at it. It would appear however, that there has been some disagreement as to who is responsible for repairing the road – the Contractors (who should not have used that section of road in the first place) or the County Council. It was agreed that a letter should be sent to County Councillor Harker asking for an undertaking that the Newton Road and the road from Newton to Little Oakley will be reinstated after the Contractors have left the site and that the County Council have full responsibility to ensure that this happens.

The hedgerows on farm land by the Newton village entrance continue to be an issue and the tenant farmer does not seem to have addressed the problem, even though a letter has been sent out. It was agreed that a further letter should be sent to Chris Sparrow of Boughton Estates asking for his help in the matter.

Councillor Harden had previously enquired whether anything could be done about the trees in Newton Road. Councillor Barber had previously made enquiries, but the response had been that nothing can be done to them.

Councillor Watson reiterated that there is no need for so many lights to be on in Newton village. He will speak to Street Doctor to request that they be switched off.

ENVIRONMENT AND RECREATION

115/14

Mrs Sarah Pask, Flood Warden, was welcomed to the Parish Council meeting. Councillor Hopkins raised concerns that despite her Job Description stating that she should report back to the Parish Council on a regular basis, this had not actually happened. She informed the Parish Council that the original remit was to open and close the berm gates as needed in the event of an imminent flood. She has been doing this for over 3-4 years. At first she checked each time with Councillor Rowley, but it was then agreed that she should be allowed to operate under her own initiative and this is what has happened since. It would appear that there has been a miscommunication between Sarah and Councillor Rowley because he gave her his only copy of the Job Description, which was flagged 'Draft' and she thought that it was a document which was awaiting approval and OK'd that fact but Councillor Rowley thought that she had OK'd the draft.

Councillor Hopkins therefore suggested that Sarah should read through the document again and report back to the Parish Council with her comments. Councillor Locock suggested that this should be referred to the Environment and Recreation Subcommittee who should report back to the Parish Council next meeting. Councillors Rowley and Kelman agreed to discuss this with Sarah.

Councillor Hopkins also raised concerns that there had been some time when the ford should have been closed and it should be made clear who is responsible for making this decision. Councillor Rowley stated that the only times that the ford was closed was due to ice. Councillor Hopkins asked for reassurance that the Parish Council are not responsible for the ford and that they are only responsible for closing the berm. Councillor Locock suggested that if there is a Job Description for someone to play a role then it implies that the Parish Council has some responsibility. Councillor Locock was concerned that if the Parish Council had not notified the County Council and therefore the road is not closed and there is an incident, is there any way that the Parish Council could be held liable.

The meeting was opened to the Public for a member of the public to pass comment.

A member of the public enquired whether it would be a sensible idea to put a notice up by the ford saying 'Think!' Councillor Rowley did state that at one time there was discussion of putting a notice to say that if the water is brown, then the ford should not be used.

Another member of the public stated that the gully is blocked in 'The Sart' (wooded area near to the Little Oakley junction on the Corby road). Unfortunately it does seem to gather dead badgers. Once it is cleaned out, the problem goes away. She suggested that an eye should be kept on this area.

The meeting was again closed to the Public and the Full Council meeting resumed.

VILLAGE HALL

116/14

Councillor Gordon informed the Parish Council that the Village Hall Management Committee meet on the last Monday of the month. The Committee which was set up to oversee the new sports facility project has been trying to open up a bank account to deposit the £50,000 cheque. The Parish Council suggested that they should try Barclays Bank. There has not been a further meeting to progress this and the report to the Parish Council is still being worked on.

The Village Hall Management Committee will be having a meeting with the Bowls Club regarding the alleged incident on Bowls Club ground.

ROAD SAFETY

117/14

It was reported that all the 7.5 tonne signs have been taken down in the village and at present, there is nothing to stop heavy vehicles travelling through the village. It was reported that this is because the County Council are in the process of preparing new signs to incorporate all the other measures that have been agreed. All these signs will go on to one post, which is why the posts are so high.

LIGHTING AND FOOTPATHS

118/14

Councillor Rowley reminded the Parish Councillors that it is their responsibility to report any lights which are out.

RURAL FORUM

No report.

CORRESPONDENCE

119/14

The Parish Council was informed by the Borough Council that a budget consultation meeting is due to take place on 23rd January at 7.00 pm in Council Chambers, Bowling Green Road, Kettering.

120/14

MGWSP (Northamptonshire Highways) confirmed that they propose to relocate the locked barrier in Wood Street (Clay Dick). The Parish Council had previously written to the County Council stating that they did not think that this was necessary. It was agreed that this communication should be re-sent.

121/14

A letter was received from Ian White of Democratic Services, Kettering Borough Council, informing the Parish Council that since no request for an election had been received, the Parish Council were now free to co-opt to fill the vacancies on the Parish Council.

122/14

Holocaust Memorial Commemoration ceremony will take place this year on 26th January at 3.00 pm in Council Chambers, Kettering Borough Council. All Parish Councillors are invited.

123/14

The Parish Council were in receipt of the Review of the Northamptonshire County Council's Local List for Validation of County Council Development Planning Applications (Minerals & Waste). All Parish Councillors were emailed the documents and were invited to comment as appropriate.

Suggested Agenda Items for the next meeting

Save for the items already raised in the Minutes, no further items were raised at this time.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.20pm

GEDDINGTON NEWTON AND LITTLE OAKLEY PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES OF THE FINANCE MEETING HELD ON 13TH JANUARY 2014

Members present: Councillor M Rowley (Chairman)
Councillors T Bailey, C Buckseall, A Gordon, P Hopkins,
I Kelman, T Locock and D Watson

Apologies: Councillors K Harden and J Padwick

ACCOUNTS

124/14

Community Account Statement as at 17.12.13		£489.89
Business Premium Account Statement as at 17.12.13	£15	,710.26

Accounts received

No accounts were received

Accounts for payment

Sharon	BakerSecretarial services (1570)	£35.00
Zurich Municipal	Annual insurance premium (1571)	£484.82

Councillor Kelman proposed and Councillor Bailey seconded that the above payments should be made. All in favour.

There was discussion concerning renewal of the annual insurance premium. The only specific asset identified was 22 tables in the Village Hall. It was agreed that there was no logical reason in insuring these assets specifically and it was proposed by Councillor Hopkins and seconded by Councillor Gordon that they should be requested to be removed from the insurance documentation. It was also agreed that Councillor Rowley would provide the Parish Clerk with a list and valuation of the playground equipment so that Zurich could be furnished with this information. It was also agreed that the Parish Council should inform Zurich of the alleged incident on Bowls Club ground

for which the Parish Council take no responsibility. After discussion it was also agreed that bus shelters are not the responsibility of the Parish Council. The only bus shelter that had been the responsibility of the Parish Council was the one at Little Oakley which has been demolished.

The Parish Council had been provided with two quotes from Zurich: one for a 1 year agreement at £523.98 per annum and the second a 3 year long term agreement at £484.82. It was agreed that the Parish Council should opt for the second, long term agreement.

Review of Finance Standing Orders

Councillor Watson was of the opinion that the model Standing Orders were general and way over the top for Parish Councils of the size of Geddington. The Standing Orders should however be reviewed at the AGM. Discussion of the budget in November is purely for clarification, but it is more important that decisions are made by the January meeting. Ideas for the budget must be put forward by November. Councillor Watson felt that there had been a lot of discussion about Standing Orders with some reservations about what has been happening to date and there is a suggestion that things have not been done properly. The Parish Council only need to have an idea of what they need to precept by November. Councillor Watson produces a budget with the intention that there should be a discussion in December. He was unhappy because that is not what the Standing Orders say. Councillor Watson confirms that there are four main items of expenditure: secretarial expenses (which are set according to national guidelines), the hire of the lounge (which has previously been discussed), accounting fees (which are Government rates according to how much income the Parish Council has received over the course of that financial year – which was higher when the Parish Council had a grant for the new playground equipment), insurance cover, plus other minor items of expenditure. The only other main item is the rent of the playing field. The rent of the playing field works out at 3p per week per household on the precept. The whole precept is about £11.00 per house on average. Any savings will have less impact on smaller properties. If the Parish Council were to drive expenditure right down this would save £5.00 per annum on larger properties.

The Parish Council have discussed increasing the rent of the Stonepit Land in the past, but Councillor Watson questioned whether there was any evidence that it would be cost effective to hire valuers to come up with a suggested rent, which ultimately might drive local organisations out of the property, which would then have a huge negative impact on the facilities offered to the village. Typically the Geddington Volunteer Fire Brigade do an enormous amount for the village; they contribute to keeping the village clean and tidy without charge, which is something the Parish Council used to pay someone else to do. If the income from Stonepit Land was trebled this may save another 2p per week per household. In comparison Mawsley Parish Council charge £100 per year. Their precept is £60,000.

The Parish Council have driven down expenditure immensely over the last few years, including withdrawing donations to charitable organisations, which has not always been understood. Councillor Watson was of the opinion that the Parish Council have done enough to ensure that their income/expenditure is managed well and that nothing more needs to be done.

Discussion re approaching Boughton Estates in accordance with clause 3.8.3 of the playing field lease to gain agreement to charge rent for use by organisations of the field

There followed a very long discussion regarding the possibility of charging organisations to use the Recreation Field. Councillor Watson was of the opinion that the Parish Council's time might be better spent considering the needs of the village. He was very worried that the Parish Council might end up precepting below the costs they might incur if they are not careful and that the Parish Council might not be able to react to demand as they have in the past. What the Parish Council are trying to do is to balance the books so that there is a sensible level of reserves.

Councillor Locock apologised to Councillor Watson if he felt that the proposals (above) reflected in any way on what he has done to date and accepts his viewpoint fully and was grateful to hear that

he is supportive of the principle that the Parish Council should look at what they have, what they need and what they spend. He stressed that many of the Parish Council's assets were derived a long time ago in different circumstances. He did, however, consider that there are organisations which do benefit from facilities more than others. Councillor Watson felt that it was difficult to decide who does benefit because there is a wider implication for the use of facilities. There were concerns by many of the Parish Councillors as to whether it would be prudent to pursue the possibility of charging rent or whether to leave things in status quo since there are many considerations to this. Councillor Locock was happy to move on provided that the Parish Council should look annually at the assets they have, in advance of any discussions on precepting. Councillor Hopkins did recommend that all Parish Councillors familiarise themselves with documents in the Parish Council's dropbox.

Councillor Locock proposed that the proposal lies on the table, but that the Parish Council have a full review in advance of next year's precept/budget meeting. Councillor Hopkins stated that he was happy that the Parish Councillors were willing to listen to the points of view of new Parish Councillors.

Councillor Rowley reminded all Parish Councillors that they are all on the Finance Committee, but that there is a sub-committee whose purpose is to discuss any major issues and report back to the Parish Council. Councillors Locock, Rowley and Watson agreed to delve deeper into the assets which the Parish Council has.

Councillor Bailey left the meeting at 9.00 pm.