

GEDDINGTON NEWTON AND LITTLE OAKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10TH MARCH 2014

Members present: Councillor M Rowley (Chairman)
Councillors A Gordon, K Harden, D Hodkinson, P Hopkins, I Kelman,
T Locock and D Watson

Apologies: Councillor J Padwick

Also present: Mr C Sparrow, Boughton Estates

Four members of the public were present at the meeting.

POLICE REPORT

141/14

Reported crime figures for the month of February were as follows:

Geddington 1 burglary (other)

There were no reported crimes for Newton or Little Oakley

PUBLIC MEETING

142/14

Mr Sparrow noted at the last meeting there was discussion concerning the possibility of charging rent for the use of the Recreation Ground. He reminded the Parish Council that the site was gifted as a facility to the village, as was the ground between the main road and the A43 for exercise and walking dogs.

Councillor Rowley confirmed that this was part of a proposal that will be discussed later in the meeting.

Mr Sparrow also reminded the Parish Council that an events update is due to take place at Boughton House on 18th March, to which the Parish Council is invited. It was mentioned last month, but the Parish Council had not received a formal invitation.

Mr Sparrow will be attending a briefing meeting tomorrow to discuss future plans to convert various barns in the area for residential use. It is envisaged that the Parish Council will be kept up to date with developments.

A member of the public enquired whether there had been any update on the flooding which had occurred on the main road. Councillor Rowley was of the opinion that the County Council's workmen were waiting for a mini-digger to complete another job. It was agreed that a letter should be sent to Mr Ian Boyes of the County Council to determine what progress has been made. Councillor Watson felt that it may be prudent to obtain updates of similar outstanding items prior to the Parish Council meetings, so that these may be reported at the meeting.

PLANNING

Applications

No applications were received.

Councillor Gordon enquired whether any of the Parish Council members would like to accompany him to the CPRE Spring Roadshow. Councillor Hodkinson confirmed that he had also registered his interest in attending with the Parish Clerk. It was agreed that both Councillors Gordon and Hodkinson would therefore attend.

County Council Order for Prohibition of Driving, Wood Street (Clay Dick), Geddington 143/14

Three members of the public stated that they were in support of the proposal to move the barrier to make access to Clay Dick more difficult for vehicles. Although the barrier would not prevent motorbikes from entering the area, it would certainly not allow them to run on to Clay Dick at speed, thereby causing safety hazards to pedestrians in the area. There were also concerns that motor cyclists bypass the 20 mph speed limit if they take the Brigstock route and therefore additional speed signs need to be installed on the gates to Clay Dick.

The villagers present informed the Parish Council that they had undertaken a straw poll of residents in the area who all appear to be in support of the proposal on the grounds that it prevents people from entering the area illegally. Local residents assumed that the plans would go ahead and were not aware that the Parish Council was not happy with the proposal. It is approaching the summer season when people tend to abuse the area by depositing rubbish there, as well as holding illegal gatherings. It was reported that individuals had also been known to be shooting in the area, although the Estate are aware of this and are being vigilant in the area.

Councillor Hopkins enquired of Mr Sparrow what Boughton Estates' plans were for the area. Mr Sparrow stated that the Estate was happy with the plans for the road to be blocked off for the reasons stated above. The buildings are likely to be cleared from the area at some stage, but at present no plans have been put forward for future use.

Councillor Rowley stated that the proposal to move the barrier to Clay Dick had been discussed by the Parish Council and the County Council had looked into it, at which point the Parish Council decided that they would not take the matter further. However the County Council have made the decision that the plans would go ahead.

Councillor Hopkins felt that the Parish Council should determine who would be responsible for the piece of land at the entrance to Clay Dick. County Councillor Harker had apparently spoken to the Estate about the hedgerows at the entrance and there was some discussion that the area could become a wild flower meadow. Councillor Hopkins was concerned about potential fly tipping in the area. Councillor Hodgkinson was under the impression that the land between the hedges would be retained by County Highways until such time as it is declared no longer specifically a highway and then maintenance of it would be terminated.

It was agreed that a note should be sent to County Councillor Harker asking him to confirm what will happen to the track, who owns it and who is responsible for maintaining it and whether these rights will be relinquished in the near future. The Parish Council would also like to know whether it will be maintained as a wild flower meadow.

Review of Parish Council Agenda and meetings 144/14

Since re-joining the Parish Council last May, Councillor Hopkins had observed that there are items on the Agenda which have to be there so that they can be discussed. However he felt that there are other items that are out of the Parish Council's jurisdiction e.g. the Youth Club, Neighbourhood Watch, Village Hall, which need not be on the Agenda. Councillor Hopkins also argued that Newton & Little Oakley could be 'absorbed' under other headings. He also felt that 'Matters Arising' would be a welcome addition to the list.

Councillor Rowley explained for the benefit of the new Parish Councillors, that the reason the Parish Council has those items on the Agenda is so that information can be passed back to the Parish Council, when no decisions are needed to be made. Councillor Rowley agreed that the Youth Club could now be removed from the Agenda since there is no longer Parish Council representation on the Youth Club Committee.

Councillor Rowley wished to clarify that it was the Parish Clerk who was ultimately responsible for what is put on the Agenda, but that any rejected items would need to be entered into a book with reasons for their objection

Items can only be rejected on legal grounds. Other than that, Agenda items must be with the Parish Clerk by 7pm on the Tuesday prior to the meeting so that it allowed sufficient time for the Agenda to be posted.

Councillor Hopkins also questioned the need for a Parish Council meeting every month. He felt that any planning items could be discussed at a Special Meeting.

Councillor Watson's thoughts were that 'Matters Arising' would be a sensible addition to the Agenda, but that reducing the number of Parish Council meetings with the intention to hold separate meetings to discuss planning issues would not be a practical solution since it is very difficult to arrange meetings where everyone can attend.

The Parish Council was recently in receipt of an email from NCALC outlining the rules for Borough Councillor and County Councillor attendance at Parish Council meetings. Councillor Hopkins pointed out that they do not have to have their own items on the Agenda and could purely submit written reports to the Parish Council each month.

Councillor Watson was of the opinion that if the Parish Council stuck entirely to the rules laid down then this had a detrimental effect by reducing flexibility.

Councillor Hodkinson sympathised with the suggested changes which had been discussed so far. However he felt that it was important that anything which involved decision making should be clear on the Agenda. He felt that including items for the Borough Councillor and County Councillor would be useful to allow them to be able to report what is going on and what is coming up in the near future and should be encouraged. Councillor Hodkinson suggested that at the end of the Agenda a list of 'Matters Arising' should be included, to prevent them being discussed more than once.

Councillor Locock commented that both the Borough and County Councillors write regular reports for The Newsletter and that this could be rolled out to the Parish Council so that they could ask the relevant Councillors to attend to explain things in detail, should it be deemed necessary. Although it is appropriate for Parish Councillors to familiarise themselves with planning applications prior to meetings, the applications cannot be allowed to submit their responses by email since they must be discussed in the public domain.

Councillor Gordon suggested that it would be a good idea for both the Borough Councillor and the County Councillor to be members of the Parish Council, but this is not a very practical solution.

Councillor Watson pointed out that the Parish Council cannot make decisions on planning applications if they are not on the Agenda and that any that have missed the deadline have to be discussed at a Special Meeting. He argued that if the Parish Council only discussed items on the Agenda which were intended to have decisions made on them, then the Parish Council would not be very well informed of other things that are going on in the village and there would be a lack of variety in the discussions.

Councillor Kelman felt that planning decisions should be discussed by all Parish Councillors and not just a Planning Committee. He learns a lot from general discussion and feels that the Agenda should stay as it is. Councillor Hodkinson advised that there are very strict rules about planning and that a proper Planning Committee can discuss planning applications, open to the public, with the Parish Clerk in attendance to minute proceedings.

Councillor Hopkins suggested that all of the key items (those in bold) on the current Agenda should remain, that the Youth Club should be removed from the Agenda and that Neighbourhood Watch, Village Hall, Rural Forum could remain. Councillor Hopkins agreed to distribute draft Agenda changes to all Parish Councillors prior to the next meeting so that it can be looked at further next month. This will be added to the Agenda.

Councillor Harden commented that he could not see anything wrong with the Agenda as it stands.

The Parish Clerk requested that the practice of copying her in to every single email from one Parish Councillor to another should be avoided since this can lead to the more important emails being overlooked.

Use of Facebook by the Parish Council

145/14

Councillor Locock commented that there may be only four people who subscribe to Facebook on the Parish Council, but that the issues that are raised on the site should be brought to the Parish Council's attention through email. He raised concerns that it was not the Parish Clerk who posted items on the Parish Council's Facebook page, but the Chairman and he felt that it was inappropriate for him to be doing this. If the Parish Clerk did not wish her name to be used, then a pseudonym could be used, such as 'Parish Clerk'.

Councillor Rowley pointed out that the Facebook page was set up in 2011 as a means to try to improve communication with villagers. A twitter account had been created, but this was not successful. At that time, it was agreed that Councillor Rowley would set the Facebook page up and then Councillors Padwick and Buckseall could also be administrators with the intention that any issues would be brought back to the Parish Council. As a result of this, Councillor Padwick had dealt with dog fouling issues, but in general terms there is usually very little to report.

Councillor Hopkins was of the opinion that the Parish Council should stop using Facebook, arguing that members of the public could write to the Parish Council with any concerns or could approach Councillors directly.

On the contrary, Councillor Locock did not feel that the use of Facebook should be avoided but that it should be administered appropriately. Councillor Watson agreed with the fact that Facebook was a valuable platform through which to communicate with the public, but questioned why the Parish Councillors were getting so concerned about who posts information on it when all issues are reported back to the Parish Council anyway.

Councillor Gordon proposed and Councillor Harden seconded that the current practice of using Facebook should remain as it is. Voting was as follows: 4 for, 3 against (including Councillors Locock and Hopkins). Councillor Hodgkinson abstained. Proposal carried.

Councillor Locock proposed and it was agreed that the Clerk should check with the Borough Council on the appropriate use of social media by Parish Councils.

Parish Enhancement Gangs – work identified

146/14

It was pointed out that the various pot holes have not been reported to Street Doctor but have been reported to County Councillor Harker, who is under the impression that they will be attended to when the new road is completed. The worst potholes are in West Street. It was agreed that the Parish Enhancement Gangs should be asked to attend to:

1. The potholes in West Street
2. The guttering on the bus shelters on the main road need to be cleaned out and repaired.

GEDDINGTON NEWTON AND LITTLE OAKLEY PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10TH MARCH 2014
PART 2

Members present: Councillor M Rowley (Chairman)
Councillors A Gordon, K Harden, D Hodgkinson, P Hopkins, I Kelman, T
Locock and D Watson

Apologies: Councillor J Padwick

MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 10th February 2014 were read confirmed and signed.

KETTERING BOROUGH COUNCIL ISSUES

No report.

NORTHANTS COUNTY COUNCIL ISSUES

147/14

Mr Ian Boyes of the County Council informed the Parish Council that the County Council were willing to improve the signage at the ford to prevent access during flooding by installing movable signs. It was agreed that a response should be sent stating that the Parish Council agreed to this in principle, but that they would like to know who would be responsible for putting the signs out.

Councillor Rowley reported that Sarah Pask, the current Flood Warden, is only interested in opening and locking the berm gates and not in undertaking any other role.

YOUTH CLUB

No report.

VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT AND PLAN

148/14

Councillor Padwick suggested that he sent out questionnaires in April following advice from Northants ACRE and then holds a consultation event in the Village Hall at a weekend in May. The Parish Council would like to obtain further details from Councillor Padwick when he is present at the Parish Council meeting before agreeing to this line of action because of the potential cost implications. Councillor Watson did have reservations about it being put on hold until then, because Councillor Padwick has undertaken a lot of work on this project. However it was felt best that all Parish Councillors are updated by Councillor Padwick before proceeding further.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

149/14

Councillor Harden has called a Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators meeting for 7.30 pm on 3rd April. All Parish Councillors are invited. PCSO Lawson has informed Councillor Harden that there have been a number of catalytic converter and number plate thefts and has advised car owners to fit non-reversible screws to their number plates.

NEWTON AND LITTLE OAKLEY

No report.

ENVIRONMENT AND RECREATION

150/14

Following the information that the current Flood Warden does not want to take on additional tasks, other than closing and opening the berm gates, Councillor Hopkins raised concerns that the berm is

open when it is not flooded. The Parish Council was informed that the play group like to use the area in the summer and it is also used by dog walkers. It was agreed that the role of Flood Warden should be discussed further at the next meeting.

The Parish Council were in receipt of an email from Mr Ian Boyes of the County Council requesting that villagers do not park on the grass verge at the corner of Skeffington Close and Grange Road. There followed discussion that it was difficult for residents to park in the area, given the number of vehicles which park to visit the nursery and the size of allocated parking outside of properties. It was agreed that parking was an issue throughout Geddington. Councillor Hopkins did point out that there are some empty garages available in The Woodlands. Councillor Watson reminded the Parish Council that they had suggested grass-creting several years ago but this was dismissed because of the cost.

VILLAGE HALL

151/14

Councillor Gordon reported that the new sports facility sub-committee has held a further meeting but has not yet reported back to the Village Hall Management Committee. Councillor Watson attended that meeting. It was very much a preliminary meeting. There have been some suggestions on the plans, but no planning application has been submitted. They have banked a £50,000 grant and set up a bank account. No further grants have been applied for to date. Another meeting is due to take place in six weeks' time. Councillor Watson suggested that there was no room for an over-run of the project and has advised them that they stick to the budget. He will keep the Parish Council informed.

ROAD SAFETY

152/14

Councillor Harden is the Parish Council's Street Warden. He is due to undergo training on 20th March.

LIGHTING AND FOOTPATHS

153/14

Councillor Hodkinson has reported the street lights which are out of action in the village. He has also obtained a map of the street lights in the villages and has a rough idea of which street lights are dealt with by whom and how.

He has not been able to resolve where Street Doctor fits into this. Jim McNally at the Borough Council appears to arrange repairs. There are no County Council lights in the Parish, according to his discussions.

Councillor Watson felt that there may be future cost implications for maintenance of street lights, but he did agree that the current system does appear to work well at the moment.

Councillor Hodkinson is still trying to resolve the issue of the 'missing' street light near to the Vicarage on West Street.

RURAL FORUM

No report.

CORRESPONDENCE

154/14

As part of the ongoing construction of the A43 Corby Link Road it will be necessary to close the unclassified road between Mill Hill, Great Oakley and Newton Road, followed by a closure to part of Newton Road (from the A6003) two weeks later. The unclassified road will be closed from Friday 14th March until 28th March. This will be followed by closure of the Newton Road from 28th March to 12th April. It was agreed that this letter should be scanned and sent to all Councillors.

It was agreed that it should be clarified through County Councillor Harker whether this is 'Mill Hill' or 'Mill Farm'.

155/14

Newton Field Centre asked for a donation toward their Winter Building Appeal 2014. This will be distributed to all Parish Councillors.

156/14

There has been no response to the Village of the Year competition from local organisations.

Suggested Agenda Items for the next meeting

In addition to the items suggested in the Minutes (above), Councillor Hopkins suggested that the following should be added to the April Agenda:

'Friends of the Church Garage Sale Policing and Traffic problems'

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.55 pm.

GEDDINGTON NEWTON AND LITTLE OAKLEY PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10TH MARCH 2014
FINANCE

Members present: Councillor M Rowley (Chairman)
Councillors A Gordon, K Harden, D Hodgkinson, P Hopkins, I Kelman,
T Locock and D Watson

Apologies: Councillor J Padwick

ACCOUNTS

157/14

Community Account Statement as at 17.2.14	£6,754.63
Business Premium Account Statement as at 17.2.14	£10,710.26

Accounts received

Geddington Volunteer Fire Brigade	Stonepit Land rent	£150.00
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Accounts for payment

Sharon Baker	Secretarial services (1575)	£ 35.00
	Expenses	42.30
	¼ Clerk's salary	503.38
	Plus 1% back pay (Dec)	4.99
Post Office Ltd	PAYE income tax (inc underpaid £43.12)(1576)	170.21
Zurich Municipal	Insurance premium tax (1577)	25.94

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

Valuation of Play Equipment for Insurance Purposes

Zurich Municipal enquired whether the Parish Council would like to cover the cost of installation and groundwork in relation to the play equipment in the Recreation Field. It was agreed that a copy of the invoice should be sent to all Parish Councillors for them to make an informed decision on this at the next meeting.

Assets, Income and Expenditure

Councillor Rowley declared an interest as Trustee of both organisations who use Stonepit Land and took no part in the discussion.

Councillor Locock's full proposal was as follows: *That this Parish Council concerned with the overall burden of local taxation agrees to thoroughly review Council assets, income and expenditure in advance of the April 2014 Parish Council meeting. In this respect the Finance Committee is instructed to*

- *Bring forward a complete list of assets with options as to how these might be exploited to increase Council income.*
- *Critically review both income and expenditure and report to the Council the main and regular items, again with options for savings.*
- *A full report to be published to Parish Councillors by 31st March 2014 with a full debate. Conclusions and decision to be taken at the April 2014 Council meeting.*

Councillor Watson stressed that this was purely proposals which could be brought back to the Parish Council next month. However he questioned whether there would be sufficient time to perform all of this by the stated date. For this reason, Councillor Hodkinson suggested that the time frame could be extended over say, 2-3 months.

Councillors Locock and Rowley have drawn up a list of 'assets': areas which need to be researched or reviewed in terms of the proposals put before the Parish Council. Councillor Hodkinson felt that the main concern was what is defined as an asset and that it would be helpful to have some sort of structure from which to work. Councillor Locock has drawn up a preliminary list of assets, which would be a good starting point and Councillor Watson reminded the Parish Council that his full report of the budget at the November meeting covered the key assets. Councillor Hopkins was aware that the budget has been set for the next twelve months, but by May we may need to have an idea of how the Parish Council are going to move forward. It was agreed that the Parish Clerk would circulate a spreadsheet of all the Parish Council's income and expenditure over the last year.

Councillor Locock proposed and Councillor Kelman seconded that Councillors Watson, Locock, Rowley, Hodkinson and Hopkins meet over the course of the next month to draft proposals. Councillors Rowley and Watson stated they would be unable to find time over the next month and it was therefore agreed that Councillor Locock consider a way forward and involve Councillors Hodkinson and Hopkins in initial work. It was also agreed that the wording of the original proposal should be changed to state 'A *preliminary* report to be published to Parish Councillors by 31st March' All in favour.