

**GEDDINGTON NEWTON AND LITTLE OAKLEY PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2017.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Councillors M Rowley (Chair), C Buckseall, D Hodkinson, S Wenbourne, T Bailey, A Gordon, J Padwick, N Batchelor, P Berry, D Watson, D Rushton.

**APOLOGIES:**

None

**153/17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**154/17 PUBLIC SESSION**

Five members of the public were present.

**a) Police report, crime figures**

The crime figures for December had been previously circulated to councillors. Geddington crime figures are one burglary, 4x shed break-ins, one bicycle stolen. There were no crimes for Newton or Little Oakley.

**b) Questions from the public**

Members of the public wished to have input to agenda item 10b) “Update for the pond in the meadow”. This was therefore discussed within the public session (see Minutes 168/17b).

They also wished ask questions and put their views forward to the discussion on the precept (agenda item 9c). The precept discussion was therefore also partly carried out within the public session (see Minutes 167/17c).

Freedom of Information request – costings for the new Parish Council website.

Pam Hopkins was informed by Cllr Rowley that there had been no costs incurred to date, with the provider giving the web site free of charge. Cllr Rushton said that the web site was up and running, although a lot of additional information still needs to be added. He was informed that the spelling needs to be checked as well.

**c) Reports from County and Borough Councillors**

**i) County Council.**

There was no County Council report.

**ii) Borough Council report.**

At Borough Councillor level, Cllr Rowley reported back on the queries that had been relayed to KBC regarding height of the 20mph road signs. Because the poles are on footpaths, the 20 mph signs cannot be lowered; they have to be at a minimum height. The Borough Council will however put 20 mph markings on the road instead, in the spring.

He added that there had been no meetings since the last Parish Council meeting.

**155/17 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.**

**a) Approval of Parish Council monthly meeting Minutes – held 12.12.16.**

Pending one typo, the Minutes were agreed by all councillors present to be a true record.

**b) Matters arising; progress on agreed actions.**

All action points had been carried out with the exception of the following:-

*Action 6 – 12.12.16.* Cllrs Buckseall, Rushton and Rowley are going to have a short meeting after the monthly Parish Council meeting closes, to determine which sandbags to purchase.

*Action 8 – 12.12.16* The fence by the cycle track had not been checked, but Tim Johns who was present as a member of the public, said that it was in good repair. (Tim Johns was thanked for this information).

## **PLANNING**

### **a) KBC Decision notices**

No decisions had been made since the last Parish Council meeting.

### **b) Planning Applications.**

No planning applications had been received since the last Parish Council meeting. Cllr Watson added that the planning application for 5-6 Newton (at the end of the Dovecote) was due to have the decision made later in January. There was a possibility of s.106 money providing an access road, but this may be dependent on five more houses being built or renovated within Newton. The sheep pens are earmarked for development and are within the Newton boundary.

Councillors were informed that the letter the Borough Council Planning department had circulated (relating to a change in the way planning applications would be sent out) had been rescinded. The proposals will now be going to the Rural Forum for consultation and discussion. Cllr Rowley said that it was pointless sending planning applications out via a web link – they have to ensure that the parish councils can read the maps and other documentation. Cllr Hodkinson as well as Cllr Watson will attend the Rural Forum meeting on 2.2.17.

## **156/17 PARISH PLAN UPDATES.**

Cllr Padwick reiterated the launch of the Parish Plan at an open meeting or drop-in session in late February or early March.

There were no further updates.

## **CORRESPONDENCE - received since the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2016 PC meeting**

157/17 NCC consultations (Children's Centre Service Consultations) 14.12.16

158/17 Ncalc update (from Danny Moody) 16.12.16

159/17 Corby Borough Council Local Plan Part 2 – issues & options consultation  
(Terry Begley) 16.12.16

160/17 Rural Forum Minutes – 1.12.16

161/17 Freedom of Information requests – email from Pam Hopkins 27.12.16.

162/17 *Newsletters.*

Rural Economy Spotlight

Rural Vulnerability Service – Fuel poverty, December 2016

“ “ “ Rural Transport, December 2016

Weekly Email News Digest – 12.12.16, 19.12.16.

There were no comments made relating to any of the above correspondence.

Three more letters had been received after the agenda was advertised.

163/17 – Holocaust Memorial Commemoration on Sunday 22.1.2017 in the Kettering Borough Council Chamber. Cllr Rowley will attend this, Cllr Batchelor will endeavour to.

## **ACTION 1: The clerk to inform KBC of the attendees.**

164/17: KBC Budget consultation meeting – 26.1.17

165/17: Invitation from KBC development Services – Training session for plan making, responding to planning consultations, and planning enforcement (22.3.17).

Cllrs Hodkinson and Bailey would like to attend this.

It would also be useful if an update session could be given to the Parish Council as a whole.

**ACTION 2: The clerk to inform KBC of the attendees, and to ask if an update session could be given to the Parish Council.**

### **166/17: WEBSITE UPDATE**

Cllr Rushton informed the meeting that the website was up and running. The website address is pc.geddington.org.uk, having been set up as a sub-domain. Cllr Rushton acknowledged that there is information to be added, spelling corrections to be made, training to be carried out and general housekeeping for the site to be sorted out, but the website is now up and running and can be added to now on an ongoing basis. The minimum requirement at this stage was to ensure the contact details are in place, and they are.

Cllr Rushton was thanked by the councillors for spending so many hours to get the parish web site up and running and in an easy to use format.

### **167/17 FINANCE**

#### **a) Accounts for payment.**

Community account statement as at 16.12.16	£6,023.33
Business Saver account as at 17.10.16	£10,722.74

#### **a) Accounts received**

None

#### **b) Accounts for payment**

None

#### **b) Quotations for maintenance work received.**

Three quotations for the repair to the bridge in the meadow (dog walking area), and hedge cutting to the hedge bordering the tennis courts and the path by the Village Hall had been sent out. The KBC quotation for the hedge had been given previously.

Cllr Gordon proposed that the quotations for the two jobs submitted by Toseland Building and Maintenance were acceptable and Oli Toseland be asked to carry out the work. Seconded by Cllr Buckseall. Cllr Bailey abstained, all remaining councillors were in favour.

**ACTION 3: The clerk to contact Toseland Building and Maintenance and ask for the work for the two maintenance jobs to be carried out.**

Additional update:-

Quotation for bench replacement on the main road.

KBC had been contacted, but a firm quote had not been sent through yet. KBC thought that the price for a vandal proof bench plus the installation costs would be very similar to those previously ordered.

**ACTION 4: The clerk to bring the quotation to the next meeting, if it has been received by then.**

#### **c) Precept decision for 2017- 2018 – discussion.**

*(Agenda item 167/17c) was discussed within the public session).*

Cllr Watson commenced the discussion by stating that the running costs of the Parish Council were approximately £10,000.00 a year. The Parish Council had a choice of increasing the reserves in a controlled manner this year, or leaving it until next year when that choice may not be available. If precept controls are brought in next year, a referendum would need to be held to raise sufficient money to leverage the work with the Parish Plan. Such a referendum would have to be carried out in a formal and correct manner, and the Borough Council would charge the Parish Council for

holding it. Cllr Berry asked why a referendum would be needed. He was informed that the Government has been threatening to put a cap on precepts for parish councils as happens with borough and county councils. They have now said that this will not happen for this year, but there is a possibility that it will happen eventually, possibly now next year. A referendum would have to be held if a higher amount than the cap was needed. However, the cost of the referendum would be as much as the proposed precept increase.

Cllr Padwick had provided information relating to council tax banding and the resulting precepts, for all the villages and small towns within the Kettering Borough. This had been circulated to all councillors in advance of the meeting. He noted that (taking Desborough and Mawsley out of the figures) only four towns or villages in the Borough have a lower precept than this Parish. He added that the Parish had been very careful with the precept money, which was only right and proper. Cllr Rowley added here that three projects had been put forward for consideration. This does not mean however that the Parish Council is saying that they will definitely go ahead, but they need to be seriously considered as do all the other items within the Parish Plan, put forward by residents. He added that the running balance of the Parish Council will be approximately £14,000.00 at the end of March, so a stay-the-same precept of £9,000.00 will take it to approximately £23,000.00 by May 2017. Projects like the Newton Road proposed work cannot be put out to tender at this stage, as there is not enough money available, but an informal very approximate quote shows that it would be around £35,000.00. Cllr Hodgkinson added that there were a number of projects which were capable of coming through to fruition within a few years. Grand aids may also be forthcoming, but reserves still need to be increased to allow for potential high cost projects. He added that reserves should be held for capital (major projects) as opposed to monies used for cash flow purposes.

Cllr Rowley added that the Parish Council was fortunate with funding for the playground, in that Mick George and Wren were then available for grant applications. These avenues are both closed now. Grants may be available from KBC, but some of the money has to be provided by the organisation themselves.

It was felt that building up the reserves now will allow time to give more leeway for some of the projects to then be seriously considered. Cllr Watson said that the increase that had been suggested would equate to an approximate £5.00 increase for each household for the year. If it is left a further year, the precept may have to double that proposed because of the concerns over a referendum.

It was stated that the bigger projects are quite long winded: it took 4 -5 years to get the path up to the Youth Club constructed, and a further 3 -4 years to get the new playground installed.

It was added that the discussion do not even take into account the possibility of street light costing or social care costs.

A member of the public queried the current level of reserves. A brief explanation was given, with Cllr Watson saying that he was happy to give more detailed explanation after the meeting. Cllr Watson informed him that as the lead councillor for finance, they are prepared under his guidance.

Cllr Batchelor noted that the Parish Council may be questioned if the reserves are double the running costs. He added that the playground running costs have now been taken over by KBC, but there is a need to keep sizable reserves. Cllr Padwick asked that if the precept is raised and it is not spent in the current year, is that allowed, when the reserves would be double the annual outgoings. Cllr Bailey said that it would take three years to raise the funding that was needed.

Cllr Rowley stated again that the precept can be kept at the current level and let the reserves run down, with little action as to the Parish Plan, or to raise the precept to approximately £35,000.00 in one year so that the issues that have been raised can be delivered. The alternative suggested is to increase the precept over a number of years to build up the reserves for the projects that are needed. He reiterated that there is a strong possibility that a cap on precepts may be brought in for next year. It would then be impossible to build reserves up to deliver projects.

It was stated again that the three issues that had been put forward by residents as needing to be carried out were to action the remedial work to the Newton junction, extend the car park and re-lay the path by the Village Hall.

Cllr Bailey asked what was Cllr Padwick's "further investigation" mentioned. Cllr Padwick said he was thinking of establishing the current risk of the junction in liaison with the Police and NCC, and obtain an estimate from NCC as to the cost of the work. It would not preclude "Speed Watch". Cllr Rowley said that the decision needed to be made as to if the Parish Council wished to start fund raising for the projects. He was also going to submit an article on to Facebook to see if any more projects were requested, so that a clear picture could be built up as to which projects may be deliverable from an overall "wishlist", including facilities for 13 -17 year olds.

Cllr Batchelor added that the Parish Plan was a cheap referendum to show what residents of the three villages want, but not a penny would be spent until projects are fully costed out. He felt it was more irresponsible to sit back and do nothing until the funds are needed. Cllr Padwick said that the current precept per household is on average £14.00 per year, so the Parish Council is starting from a very low base.

Cllr Watson drew the discussions to a close, by proposing that the precept be raised to £20,000.00. Seconded by Cllr Hodkinson, approved unanimously by all councillors.

**ACTION 5: The clerk to send the form requesting the precept to KBC.**

## **168/17 ENVIRONMENT AND RECREATION.**

### **a) Public payphone removal – update**

This has been submitted (for both Newton and Little Oakley)

### **b) Update for the pond in the meadow.**

*(Agenda item 168/17b) discussed with the public session).*

One member of the public said she had been contacted by the Police (Rural Crimes Department), and she had given a statement to them. She informed the Parish Council that the only reason there was no resulting legal action was because the newts were not legally registered. She added that everybody did in fact know they were there though. Cllr Rowley stated again that the Parish Council had not given permission for the work that had been carried out. Cllr Batchelor said that the GVFB had cleared a lot of the branches that the Wildlife Trust had said could be removed, and put the remaining wood in pyramid shaped piles as per the recommendation. A meeting will be taking place as to the regeneration of the pond, with all interested parties invited. Cllr Batchelor said that regeneration of the pond would be discussed, as would registering endangered species. He emphasised that the Parish Council own the land, and it was not intended to take the pond back to a paddling pool. Transplanting of plant species would take place, to be put back into the pond and around the edges. Other species can be purchased from a garden centre, but only native species can be planted.

**ACTION 6: The clerk to see if the Village Hall is available on 31<sup>st</sup> January at 7.30pm for the meeting.**

Cllr Batchelor said he would circulate a draft agenda, and was happy to chair the meeting if nobody else came forward.

### **c) Update by Flood Wardens**

#### **- i) meeting regarding purchasing of sandbags**

#### **ii) Flood plan (as per Pathway project) to be considered?**

The Flood Wardens will be having a short meeting after the Parish Council monthly meeting closes, to discuss issues. The flood plan was not discussed.

## **NEWTON**

The lack of broadband provision was raised again – this is scheduled to be upgraded this year, but no information has been received as to when in 2017. Cllr Rowley said that he is in the process of arranging a meeting with Cllr Howes to meet with NCC, to find out what is being planned to speed

the process up. Cllr Watson added that working from home using the internet is impossible at the moment.

Cllr Watson highlighted that the Newton Field Centre is in serious danger of closure. NCC has now ceased all funding for the centre. It is trying to find six businesses to each put £5000.00 a year into the Centre. There is enough money left for 18 months, but a decision as to any closure has to be made six months in advance. Cllr Padwick added that the Parish Council needs to raise awareness of the situation. Cllr Rowley said that the schools are the biggest users but they cannot help with funding. Allan Woodey will be speaking to businesses to try and secure sponsorship.

**ACTION 7: Publicising the issues needs to be added to the village website if possible, the Geddington Parish Council Facebook page and the Parish Council website.**

#### **LITTLE OAKLEY**

No issues were raised.

#### **Items for next month's Agenda / AOB**

Positions for the AGM in May to be discussed. Cllr Batchelor added that there was currently no Neighbourhood Watch representative, and it would also be beneficial for capital projects to have a lead. Cllr Hodgkinson said that the pattern of the Parish Plan material could give some guidance as to what leads are needed: for example, there are a lot of highway issues in the Parish Plan.

Also noted within any other business that the village meeting (Parish meeting) will be held before the Parish Council Annual General meeting. This will be advertised on the website and Facebook.

*There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.04pm.*