

## Whatton in the Vale Parish Council

### Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday January 14, 2020, at the Jubilee Hall, Whatton in the Vale at 7.15pm

Present : Councillors Gregg Redford (Chairman ) Chris Grocock, Jane Morris, Julia Faulconbridge , Georgia Elms, Steve Ball.

In attendance: Fifteen members of the public.

#### 1 CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

The Chairman informed members that the Parish Clerk had undergone an operation and is therefore unable to attend the meeting. The Chairman requested that members and the public bear with him as he would be minuting the meeting in addition to a Chairing and being involved in the debate.

Members expressed their best wishes to the Clerk and swift recovery.

#### 2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

All members were present. The Borough and County Councillors were at a meeting of Rushcliffe Borough Council.

#### 3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declaration of interests.

#### 4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON DECEMBER 10, 2019 FOR APPROVAL

The Minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and it was noted that the word 'purdue' in item 6 should have read 'purdah' subject to that change being noted in these minutes it was resolved that the minutes for the meeting of the 10th December 2019 be approved. Signing of the minutes was deferred to the next meeting.

#### 5 OPEN SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, LIMITED TO 15 MINUTES

The Chairman suspending Standard Orders to allow members of the public to contribute to the meeting and with the agreement of members extended the period to 45 minutes.

A petition was presented to the Council consisting of 69 signatures. The Petition was headed 'We demand that Whatton parish council abandon plans to install lighting to the Memorial and lighting on the village green'.

The Chairman informed the meeting that no firm proposal had been tabled to install lighting to the memorial. Whilst the issue had been discussed but no proposal had been made. He further said that if and when such a proposal was tabled the Parish Council would be sensitive to the objections raised and would undertake consultation with residents before a decision was made.

Councillor Grocock expressed the point that at no time had the Parish Council considered installing permanent lighting for events on the Green and there appears to have been some confusion in respect of lighting the Christmas Tree and 'event' lighting.

The Chairman explained that the provision of mains power to the Green was intended to provide enhanced facilities for the use of the Green for Community Events and benefit, as has occurred in the past. The use was envisaged as being during the daytime and confirmed Councillor Grocock's comments that the Parish Council has absolutely no plans to either install any permanent lighting or hold night events. In response to a question from a member of the public the Chairman confirmed that any event would be centred solely on the residents of Whatton and should not give raise to any parking issues.

The Chairman added a caveat to the events not being held at night. The dedication of the Memorial was held at 6 pm on a dark November night, the time was based on a national timetable and it was generally agreed that the event would have benefitted from a PA system and temporary lighting. It may be in the future some other event of a similar kind may occur.

Councillor Faulconbridge informed the meeting that it is possible to design 'soft landscaping' in and around the cabinet and memorial. She further informed the meeting that she would be happy to consult with residents as to the form and content of such landscaping. There appeared to be a general acceptance of the proposal. Mention was made of using the Jubilee Hall for events. The Chairman explained that the Parish Council had over the years contributed financial aid to projects and sponsored events to promote the use of the Jubilee Hall. In fact as part

of the VE75 event, the hall has been booked for Saturday 9th May 2020 to enable an event sponsored by the Parish Council to take place. However, there were times when the 'footprint' of the Jubilee Hall was not large enough to accommodate potential events.

It was suggested from the floor that the next Newsletter includes a note to ask residents to 'collect' litter during their walks.

A number of residents raised the issue of the state of the verges and highway within the 'Old' village. The Chairman informed the meetings that the state of our verges and road was under constant review, it is frustrating that we have to work through Nottinghamshire County Council whose priorities do not accord with those of the Parish Council or indeed residents. The Parish Council will continue to pursue the County Council to remedy the situation. The leaves from the London Plain Trees was also raised. The Chairman informed the meeting that a 'second' clean had been performed, but not very successfully. Contact will be made to Streetwise to try and arrange a third visit to remove the leaves.

The Chairman explained that it is necessary to bring the Open Session to an end. Forty-five minutes had been allowed rather than the fifteen minutes allocated. He thanked residents for their attendance and comments and hoped that Parish Council had managed to assuage residents' concerns. He restated that it was always the Parish Council's wish to improve the benefits of the Green available to residents and there was never any plans to install permanent lighting or to hold night events. He further emphasised that the Parish Council will always be sensitive to the views of residents.

The Chairman reinstated Standing Orders.

## 6 CLERK'S REPORT

It was confirmed that plans for the Bus Shelter on Dark Lane had been agreed and the decision on an installation date was awaited from Nottinghamshire County Council.

## 7 REPORT FROM THE BOROUGH AND COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBER

There were no reports from either the County or Borough Councillor.

## 8 CORRESPONDENCE

### 8.1 Local Improvement Scheme.

An e-mail had been received from Jenny Kirkwood of Notts County Council in respect of the Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) which has reopened for applications £1000 to £30,000, the closing date Feb 28 and for capital schemes only. Members did not feel it was possible to identify a project and prepare a bid in the time available. No action to be taken.

### 8.2 Grass Cutting

Correspondence from Gordon Dyne, Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group (RNCSIG), Notts County Council action to change grass cutting work on a trial basis. Members were informed that the Parish Council already takes note, by restricting mowing along Old Grantham Road to allow a wide margin of wildlife.

### 8.3 Lamp-post Poppies

Royal British Legion, explain that lamp post poppies for VE75Day may be in short supply. Members did not comment on whether poppies would be used but in any event there are sufficient in hand.

### 8.4 Correspondence relating to Verges and Highways.

Three letters were received from residents together with replies from Nottinghamshire County Council in respect of the state of highways and verges in the 'Old' village. Members were aware of the continuing work by the Parish Council on trying to resolve this issue. The Chairman undertook to prepare a series of proposals for the next meeting.

### 8.5 Village Green

Five letters were received from residents in relation to issues relating to the Village Green. Members felt that the issues had been fully discussed in the Public section of this meeting. However, the Briefing note prepared by the Chairman and issued to members before the meeting was tabled, reviewed and adopted by the meeting and reproduced herein. The issues raised by the letters have been identified and responded to.

### 8.5.1 The Memorial Stone (1)

#### 8.5.1.1 Issue

The resident asserts that 'Like many villagers I dislike the monument which I regard as an eyesore' My son, who is a veteran of the British Army calls it an 'insult'.

#### 8.5.1.2 Response.

The Parish Council has not received any complaints or adverse comments in respect of the memorial and in fact the dedication of the memorial was extremely well attended, in particular by the Royal British Legion. As members are aware a great deal of thought and debate went into both the selection of the stone and the words used on the memorial.

Members are at a loss to understand in what way the memorial can be considered 'an insult'.

### 8.5.2 Electricity Cabinet (1)

#### 8.5.2.1 Introduction

There are a number of issues relating to the Power Cabinet, the issues are dealt with separately below the number in brackets relate to the number of residents who have raised the issue.

#### 8.5.2.2 Issue – Who sanctioned the electricity box? (1)

The residents raised the question as to who sanctioned the Electricity Box.

#### 8.5.2.3 Response

As members are aware the provision of the mains power supply to the Village Green was the result of a lawful Resolution of the Parish Council. Positioning of the actual cabinet is discussed later in this document.

### 8.5.3 Cost (1)

#### 8.5.3.1 Issue – Money could have been spent elsewhere (1)

The resident asserts that the cost of the power supply could have been spent elsewhere. On grass cuttings collection (on the Green) and re-painting the fence.

#### 8.5.3.2 Response

As members are aware, the installation of the Mains Power supply to the Village Green is a capital (asset) project, the annual revenue cost of the power supply will be in the order of £200 per annum.

The provision of power to the village green does not preclude the Parish Council considering other issues such a grass cutting and the re-painting or replacement of the fencing.

### 8.5.4 Tree Maintenance on the Green (1)

#### 8.5.4.1 Issue – Maintenance of Trees of the Village Green

The resident raises the issue of the maintenance of Trees on the Village Green.

#### 8.5.4.2 Response

As members are aware this issue is in hand and we are awaiting a start date from Streetwise.

### 8.5.5 Memorial Lighting (5)

#### 8.5.5.1 Issue – Lighting of the Memorial (5)

One resident is of the opinion that lighting of the Memorial is not required and will add to the 'light pollution'.

A further resident is of the view that '...this too is unnecessary and not in fitting with its' situation'

A further three residents have a 'strong objection to the installation of ambient lighting for the memorial.'

#### 8.5.5.2 Response

No formal proposal on the issue has been made to the Parish Council, in consequence there are no plans to light the memorial at this time. If and when such a proposal is tabled Members will, no doubt, be sensitive to all views on the issue and the Parish Council undertakes to consult with residents.

### 8.5.6 Christmas Tree (1)

#### 8.5.6.1 Issue - Whether the Christmas Tree is Permanent.

A resident wished information as to whether the Christmas Tree was permanent.

#### 8.5.6.2 Response

As Members are aware the Christmas Tree is temporary and will be removed. However, the Parish Council are currently investigating the possibility of planting a permanent tree on the Village Green to 'act' as a Christmas tree. If and when a suitable tree is identified, Members will be sensitive to residents' comments on its' placement.

## 8.5.7 Additional Lighting on the Village Green (2)

### 8.5.7.1 Issue – Positioning of additional Lights for events.

One resident considered the positioning of lighting for events is unacceptable.

A further resident states 'The proposal to place lighting on the Green for such events is not acceptable as it would be inappropriate'.

Three residents were 'dismayed to provide lighting for 'ad hoc' events.

### 8.5.7.2 Response

There are no plans and no proposal has ever been made to install permanent lights for 'ad-hoc events' on the Village Green. As explained in the Public Session any events were to be for the local Community (residents) and during the day.

## 8.5.8 Placement of the Cabinet (1)

### 8.5.8.1 Issue – The Cabinet should have been placed near the corner of the Village Green (1)

One resident expressed the view that the Box and the Christmas Tree should have been placed near the corner of the Village Green near to the existing electricity source.

### 8.5.8.2 Response

It is presumed that the resident is referring to the Electricity Sub-Station on the junction of Conery Lane and Old Grantham Road or possibly mistaking the Pole facing Orston Lane for a power supply (it is in fact a British Telecom Telecommunications facility).

Members made the following observations:

It is entirely a matter for the Power Distribution Company to decide which circuit will handle the connection.

Individual connections are not made directly into a sub-station.

To install the supply on the corner of Conery Lane and Grantham Road (even if it was possible) would involve closure of part or whole of Conery Lane to allow the power to be 'brought across' and the possible damage to the roots of trees in that area.

WPDs' advice was to use the connection close to Ivy Row as this would be a cheaper solution and would not inconvenience traffic using Conery Lane.

It would have been a cheaper solution to install the Cabinet at the point of connection (i.e. close to Ivy Row). But in deference to the residents of Ivy Row, the Cabinet was located at the furthest position possible from the houses of Ivy Row.

## 8.5.9 Original Purchase and Purpose (4)

### 8.5.9.1 Issue – Contrary to the original vision when purchased (4)

A resident makes the point that '...the recent work on the Village Green is totally in opposition to what was envisaged when I along with others bought it for the village.' The resident goes on to say. 'Our intention was always to provide an area for children to play games and for villagers to enjoy as an open space.'

Three further residents state that 'When the Green came up for sale we, the villagers bought it to enjoy as an attractive green space and one where children could play safely. It was never envisaged it would be used for any other purpose by those of us who contributed for funds for its purchase'.

### 8.5.9.2 Response

The Parish Council and residents must be thankful for those residents who had the foresight and commitment to contribute to the original purchase.

Members had not had the opportunity to review the Minutes from the 1980s to try and understand the background to the original purchase and purpose. The minutes may be reviewed at a later date. However, the facts are that

- the Parish Council did not at the time place any constraints on the use of the Green (other than those imposed by Covenants of the Vendors). Mechanisms were available such as a Deed of Dedication (which was used in the case of the Playing Field in 2006) but were not used.
- the source of the funds are not material (in law) the Absolute Title of the Village Green is vested in the Parish Council.
- Parish Councils cannot be bound by policies of previous Councils unless they are 'brought forward' and adopted by the following Parish Council which has not been the case.
- The Parish Council has a duty to act in the interests of the Parish as a whole and to utilise such assets that it controls for the benefit of all residents. Always sensitive to the views of the neighbours of any land that it controls.
- As was confirmed by residents in the Public session, the Green had been used in the past for 'ad-hoc' events.

#### 8.5.10 Village Green being developed in an insensitive way (1)

##### 8.5.10.1 Issue – Being Developed in an insensitive way.

The resident states 'This lovely area is being developed in an insensitive way'.

##### 8.5.10.2 Response

A previous Parish Council allowed the erection of a Flag Pole, fruit trees have been planted in the North-east corner, a memorial (with an extremely small footprint) placed on the Northern boundary and the most recent Cabinet again on the Northern Boundary as close to the boundary as possible, all as far away from Ivy Row as possible. None of these issues have in any way diminished the 'Open Space'.

#### 8.5.11 Ad-Hoc Events (4)

##### 8.5.11.1 Issue – Ad-hoc Events – ill Conceived.

A resident states 'We are fortunate to have a village hall with excellent facilities for evening events and the idea of 'ad hoc' events taking place of the Green is "ill-conceived"'.  
Three residents state 'It was never envisaged that it would be used for any other purpose [other than Childrens Play] by those of us who contributed the funds for its' purchase.

8.5.11.2 Response

Firstly, the Parish Council is acutely aware of the Jubilee Hall and has over the year contributed financially to a number of projects and has sponsored events at the hall.

Secondly, there has been 'ad hoc' events on the Village Green in the past which at least one of the signatories of the letters has been involved and this was confirmed by residents in the Public session. It should also be remembered that the Parish Council has with others made considerable investment in Children's Play and sport facilities on the playing field.

There are conceivable situations where the footprint of the Jubilee Hall is not appropriate.

### 9 PLAYING FIELD

The Chairman informed the meeting that he understood the Aslockton Parish Council had secured a quote for the installation of a fence between 1, Dark Lane and the Playing Field of £1,700 from a local resident who will not charge for labour (hence the low cost). Aslockton Parish Council should be thanked for securing such a quote. However, he did inform the meeting that the information was received informally and had received a formal notification from Aslockton Parish Council that they are to pursue a quote for a post and rail solution and they wish to discuss the issue with the residents. Members decided to postpone any further discussion until the next meeting.

### 10 PLANNING MATTERS

Rushcliffe Borough Council planning decisions

19/00244 CONARE John Lewin, Mossley House, Grantham Road. Reduce five trees including one large sycamore by up to 50 per cent. Permit.

Councillor Faulconbridge confirmed that the Rushcliffe Borough Tree Officer had not kept her informed as to tree works in the Parish as promised.

In response to a question, the Chairman confirmed that Nottinghamshire County Council were to undertake work on the London Plane Trees on the Old Grantham Road to remove 'dead-wood' overhanging the carriageway.

### 11 FOOTPATHS

Members were informed that the bridge on FP1 was still closed and it was not expected to be reopened until at least April 2020.

### 12 FINANCE

The Accounts and accounts for payment were tabled and reviewed by members. It was resolved that the tabled accounts for payments be approved and the clerk authorised to make payment of said accounts.

### 13 ENVIRONMENT

Members had already fully discussed the situation with the state of the highways and verges in the 'Old' part of the Village. The Chairman undertook to produce a report and proposals for the Council to consider in respect of the issues for the next meeting.

Councillor Faulconbridge confirmed that Steetwise had not contacted her in respect of the work needed on the Hazel Tree on the Green.

14 NEWSLETTER

Members discussed producing articles for the next Newsletter, it was hoped to have drafts for the next meeting. It is proposed that the Newsletter is printed and distributed during March 2020.

15 VILLAGE FETE / VE75DAY

Councillor Elms informed the meeting that she had received additional offers of help. The current thinking was a two-part approach with a 'Picnic on the Green' event and the evening event on the Saturday at the Hall.

16 QUEEN'S WOOD

There was nothing to report in respect of Queens Wood

17 CASUAL VACANCY

No applications had been received.

18 AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING FEBRUARY 25, 2020

The following items were requested to be included on the next meeting's agenda:

- Highways and Verges – Report
- Verge Planting (Bulbs)
- Old Road (Footpath FP17) – Planting of Trees.

Members requested a change to the format of the Agenda viz:

- Items for inclusion on the Agenda should be listed separately under the appropriate Main heading and
- Issues or projects resolved by the Council but not yet been completed or implemented should be included on the agenda under their appropriate heading.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 21:05pm