

GREAT MOULTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Great Moulton Parish Council Ordinary Meeting

held in the Coronation Hall Carr Lane Great Moulton NR15 2LA

on Thursday 15th February 2024 at 7.00pm

Present: Cllrs C Bailey (Chair), G Timms (Vice-Chair), M Negm, S Morgan & K Bailey
Libby Alexander (Clerk) and Cllr S Ridley (District Councillor)

2 members of the public were in attendance

1. Apologies for absence

None.

2. To record Declarations of Interest from Council Members in any item to be discussed

Cllr Morgan, Item 7 – Sneath Cottage planning application.

Cllr C Bailey and Cllr K Bailey, Item 6.1 – Coronation Hall payment.

3. To agree and sign the Minutes of the Parish Council Meetings on 18 January 2024

The minutes were duly agreed and signed.

4. Matters arising from the Minutes of the Meetings on 18 January 2024

Cllr Timms reported that there were no listings regarding the Townlands Charity due to it now being closed on the Charity Commission website. He would now look at documents relating to his own property for any information and would report back at the next meeting.

5. Public Participation including report from the District Councillor and County Councillor

Residents present raised concerns and objections on the planning application proposed for an annexe at Castine, Frith Way (Planning application 2023/3812). This was based on its size, height, design being out of character with surrounding buildings, location on clay soil which is prone to flooding, closeness to neighbours, noise, precedent that could be set for similar structures being built at other properties and effect on future saleability of properties.

The District Councillor, Cllr Ridley reported that he had formally called in planning application 2023/3812 to the Planning committee in its current amended form for the committee to make a decision.

The Clerk reported that she had received a telephone call from the farmer who farms the land leaving the village in the direction of Wacton enquiring as to who had been carrying out work on the poles in the field. This was thought to be by BT. Resolved for the Clerk to report back to the farmer.

The District Councillor, Cllr Stephen Ridley reported that the Leader of the Council, Cllr John Fuller, had been made a Lord following nomination by the Prime Minister for long service. He also reported that the Council budget for 2024/25 would be announced on 21 February.

The County Councillor, Cllr Catherine Rowett was not present, but had sent a report (see Appendix for full report).

6. Finances

6.1 To approve the attached schedule of payments

The schedule of payments was duly approved and forms part of these minutes.

6.2 To receive an update on the banking mandate of the Council

Cllr C Bailey reported that the amendments to the banking mandate were still being finalised by Barclays, however it had been possible for bank payments to successfully be paid online in January.

6.3 To review the report on CIL Money held

The Clerk presented a report detailing the CIL money held, which had been updated to include details of when CIL money has to be spent.

7. Planning Applications

New –

2023/3812 | Proposed self-contained annexe | Castine Frith Way Great Moulton Norfolk NR15 2AP

Following a discussion Cllr C Bailey recommended refusal of the application based on the lack of information provided, despite amendments to the plans. This was seconded by Cllr Timms and unanimously agreed. The Clerk to submit comments online objecting to the application.

2024/0279 | Variation of condition 2 of 2023/0582 - revised design | Sneath Cottage Black Mill Lane Great Moulton Norfolk NR15 2DZ

Resolved to support the application.

Determined –

2023/3840 | Non material amendment of 2021/1463 - amendments to plots 8-14 | Land North Of High Green Great Moulton Norfolk – Approved

Duly noted.

8. Correspondence received:

AMLink Newsletter – notification that due to publication not resuming after Covid the committee had decided to give 50% of the remaining account balance to Great Moulton

and Aslacton Parish Councils who were the biggest donors to the newsletter. A sum of £951.77 was therefore being donated to the Council.

The Great Grid Upgrade Project Update – noted.

SNDC – Portrait of King Charles - noted.

9. To consider the potential of the Parish Council purchasing/developing an area of land for a village playing field/play area

Following a discussion, resolved for Cllr C Bailey to talk to the builder building the houses at High Green as to whether there was any land available behind the houses that could be developed for a village playing field/play area. Also resolved for Councillors to give thought to where else may be a suitable area for such a development within the Parish.

10. Defibrillator update

The Clerk reported that she had looked into costs for replacing the pads on the defibrillator and that these would be in the region of £65 for an adult set and slightly more for a paediatric set. Resolved for the Clerk to purchase a set of adult and paediatric pads with a budget of up to £200 and liaise with Mr J Davies regarding getting them replaced on the defibrillator.

11. To receive a report from the Coronation Hall

Cllr C Bailey reported that the Quiz held on 3rd February was a great success and raised a lot of money for the hall. Cllr K Bailey reported that the fire safety rules had changed and the fire alarms now had to be tested in the hall every 6 months instead of annually. The fire points also needed to be upgraded.

12. To receive the Wildlife Wardens report

The Wildlife Warden was not in attendance and had not sent a report.

Cllr C Bailey reported that the speed awareness monitor on Frith Way was not working which the Wildlife Warden is responsible for moving and changing the batteries. Resolved for the Clerk to inform Mr Gibson of this.

13. To approve the date of the next ordinary Meeting of Great Moulton Parish Council and accept any items for the agenda

The next meeting date was set for Thursday 21st March 2024 at 19:00.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 20:04.

SIGNED:

DATED:

Appendix

Councillor report, February 2024, from Catherine Rowett

County Council Budget

The Council has received a very disappointing settlement from the government, worse even than their pessimistic expectation, leading to the need to make even more swingeing cuts and putting at risk the very possibility of delivering even a basic level of the services that are expected of a county council. The settlement does not cover the cost of inflation, the increase in the minimum wage, and the extra burdens imposed by a rural and aging population and considerable deprivation caused by long term illness in the wake of covid and by poverty, especially child poverty in many of our most deprived towns.

The problem has been mildly alleviated by additional emergency funding injected by the government after it became apparent that a large number of councils would be unable to deliver their statutory obligations and were likely to go bankrupt. The extra funding is directed for social care, especially children's services (which are especially strained by the increasing child poverty and deprivation in working families who can't cover the cost of food and heat at home) and there is also a boost to the rural services grant which helps councils with the additional costs of servicing a large rural area (such as Norfolk) but again the funding will struggle to cover the extra costs of maintaining drainage systems on roads and storm damage, flooding, coastal erosion and damage to the waterways from pollution from roads, fields and sewage.

The budget will come to council to approve on 20th February. I along with the rest of the Green Group have been preparing some proposed amendments, to try to ensure that the most important things are protected, but there is very little wriggle room when the resources have been cut to the bone under more than ten years of Conservative government austerity and incompetence.

The MIG

The Minimum Income Guarantee is a way of subsidising the cost of care, including residential care, for severely disabled people who need to pay for care out of their allowance. It ensures that however much their care costs, they will have some income left to spend on basic necessities such as clothing, shoes, toiletries, outings and so on. The council is required to ensure that people have a certain level of income left, so even if their care costs more to provide, the council will cover the remaining cost so as to leave the person with a little income left over, and families will not be out of pocket if they have a disabled person living with them.

The Council will be consulting on their proposals to reduce the MIG in Norfolk, which would have a considerable impact on the quality of life and personal dignity of young and working age disabled people given that we are facing considerable inflation in costs for clothing and other necessities. The consultation will open on 19th February.

I, together with my Green colleagues, are preparing our proposals for amendments to the budget for the Council to vote on this month. We are looking to get the Council to vote to continue to fund the MIG at the levels they have been at in recent years, and not to make these cuts at a time of such hardship in many families.

Road Safety Schemes:

My list of requests under the Road Safety Community Fund went in for consideration in November, after much consultation and calculations by Adam Mayo, our highways officer. There were lots of requests, and they really only considered two of mine, one for safer speed limits in various locations around Bressingham and one for a speed limit on the main road at Bunwell. They refused the latter on the grounds that not enough people had been hurt or killed. A clear example of the bonkers criteria that prevent us from making people feel safe to come out and walk, ride bicycles or walk dogs and horses.

I am now working with Adam to try to find other ways of delivering alternative solutions for the problems that didn't get support, or were too low down the list to stand a chance. I've been saving my highways allowance for these projects and hope to find affordable options for at least some of them. Thanks to a letter from the children at Bunwell School I am hoping to get a feasibility study for a crossing point on the Turnpike (a zebra crossing is unlikely but a refuge island to make it safe to cross in two stages may be an option). But this insistence that safety comes last when it comes to deciding what interventions are required is really problematic.

I've tried twice now to get a motion to Council for setting up a working group to investigate how we might change the criteria to make it easier to get a safer speed limit in places where village communities want it. I'd like us to be the council that leads the way on promoting safer rural roads, to inspire other councils to do the same. Ten times as many people die on rural roads as on motorways. Cyclists are almost three times more likely to be killed on a rural road than on an urban one.

We ran out of time at Council in December and January, so I'll have another go at bringing the motion in March. I really want it debated and not just voted down without discussion, because I can't believe the other councillors don't also have parishes clamouring for something better.

Buses and active travel

I'm looking to arrange a discussion with officers and parish councils about a few situations where we don't have a useful timetable, even though there is a scheduled bus. Another thing we are building into our budget amendment is finding funding to restore on-demand bus provision, such as the Borderhoppa, in the rural places without sufficient transport. We need to make village life a joy, even for those who can't access a car, and those who are trying to get around in more planet-friendly ways.

The Council has now extended free bus travel for those who hold a concessionary pass on grounds of disability, so that it covers travel before 9.30 a.m.: this allows those with disabilities to get to work and training opportunities for free, if there's a bus that works for that. But it's not much use if there is no bus that runs at that time!

Roads and railways

Work is now starting on the long awaited Long Stratton bypass. It will take traffic out of the centre of the town, which is good, but not off the roads altogether. In fact, new fast roads always tend to increase traffic overall. We need to be looking at other solutions, and I'm keen to get a head of steam up behind the Railfuture project of reopening one of the stations (closed by Beeching) on the London line between Norwich and Diss. The one between Forncett and Long Stratton seems the most likely, to serve a large number of people both in Long Stratton and the villages nearby. Purchasing the land, as an investment towards making this possible, is one of the proposals for capital investment in our Green group's County Council budget amendments. We'd use the new transport and investment money levelling up money that comes with the county devolution deal for this.

How do sixth formers get to school or college?

The County Council is undertaking its annual review of its Post-16 Transport Policy Statement. There's a consultation about the Post-16 Travel Scheme (subsidised travel for eligible students aged 16-18 and 16-25 year olds with Special Education Needs and Disabilities, to get to a school sixth form, sixth form college or further education learning establishment). The council spent £3.8m on this in 2022-23, providing travel assistance to 1,320 students across Norfolk. To reflect forecasted inflation, the parental contribution for the Post-16 Travel Scheme may need to rise. They're consulting on two options for increasing parental

contributions: a 3% option, based on current inflation levels and a 6% option based on the council's inflationary forecast for 2024-25. The 6% figure more likely represents the true rise in costs in the coming year.

Contact me

You can contact me on Catherine.rowett.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk for Council-related business, and I look forward to helping with a range of issues that people have already brought to my attention. I'm always delighted to attend award ceremonies, events, centenaries, lectures, exhibitions, conferences, debates, litter picking parties, campaign events and protests, so don't hesitate to add me to your mailing lists! I also have a facebook page which includes updates on what I am working on, posts about events and opportunities relevant to residents, and a place where you can comment and leave your views on things I want to ask you about. The link is here.

News and campaigns this month:

Health -Pharmacy First

The government has introduced a new scheme to enable simple illnesses to be dealt with at the chemist's instead of at the doctor's. Unfortunately it coincides with record numbers of local chemists closing down, so it seems unlikely that it will help with anything. There seems to be no plan to save the local chemists.

The end of disposable vapes

The government is outlawing disposable vapes. This is good news not just for the sake of preventing the epidemic of vaping among children but also for the environment.

Dentistry

The lack of access to NHS dentistry has been much in the news recently. It's one of the main scandals of our time. The government has now produced what it calls a "dental recovery plan" but it's fairly disappointing since it fails to address the root cause of the problem, which is the dental contract. The county is grasping at a glimmer of hope, angling for an undergraduate dental school at UEA, which would help to get dentists to choose to set up practices in Norfolk. But the plan is mostly just sticking plaster, like everything in this country at the moment.

Catherine Rowett

9th February 2024