

# **NORTH RUNCTON PARISH COUNCIL**

## Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2014

### **Present:** -

Cllr. J Leamon (Chair, Bor. Cllr.), Cllr, R Morrish (Vice-Chair), Cllr D Eakins, Cllr. F Leamon, Cllr. A Towler, Cllr. B Houchen, Cllr. R Markham, Cllr. P Yates, Cllr. J Fuller and Bor. Cllr. Mr. P Foster.

### **1. Apologies for absence.**

There were no apologies for absence.

### **2. Declaration of interest / dispensations in items on the Agenda.**

Cllr J Leamon declared her personal interests with reference to her position as Member of the Borough Council Planning Committee and Member of the East of Ouse, Polver and Nar Internal Drainage Board with reference to items 17 and 14 respectively.

### **3. County and Borough Councillors Matters, PCSOs Report**

There were no PCSOs present. Cllr J Leamon reported, in her capacity as Borough Councillor, that Eric Pickles had delayed making a decision on the Incinerator planning application and the new deadline for a decision to be made is unknown. Cllr J Leamon confirmed that the Borough Council is pursuing alternative rubbish disposal options in the meantime; although a site for where such a new plant would be based in the Borough is unknown. The next SNAP meeting will be held on 15<sup>th</sup> January and a further meeting has been booked to be held at the Village Meeting Place in North Runcton on 19<sup>th</sup> March. There will be two sessions on the day to try to accommodate everyone. These will be between 12.15pm and 1.15pm and 7.00pm and 9.00pm.

### **4. Public Participation – All Members of the Public Welcome – 15 mins Session**

There were no comments from the parishioners in attendance.

### **5. To Approve the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2013**

Cllr Markham proposed that the minutes be accepted as a true record of the previous meeting with the amendment to the last sentence in item 8, as follows. The wording 'than that which the Easement was valued at' should be substituted for 'than the sum provisionally advised for the easement'. Cllr Towler seconded this and all agreed.

### **6. To Report Only on any Matters Arising from the Minutes**

It was noted that Cllr Morrish had visited the sign makers preparing the new signs for the gates at the two commons. He confirmed that he was satisfied with the final wording agreed and that the quality of the sign would stand up to the elements, but that it was impossible to prevent all potential vandalism. The Clerk confirmed that a 7% discount had been provided because the Council is buying 12 signs.

The Clerk reported that a new Editor has come forward to take over editing the Parish Magazine, following previous advise that production had ceased, and that quarterly editions would now be published.

### **7. Risk management – the Council will consider two quotations for the risk management of its assets.**

The Clerk provided two quotations for the cost of an external contractor to prepare risk assessments for all of the Council's assets and to provide quarterly inspections of the assets, providing a report on any issues that needs to be resolved. The Council discussed the requirement for a formal risk management system to be put in place. It was acknowledged that Councillors have informally been checking assets and reporting if any maintenance is required, however, it was agreed that a formal system should be put in place to ensure that evidence of such checks and care of the Councils assets is kept. This is advisable in order to abide by the requirements of the Insurance Company that the Council takes 'reasonable precautions' to prevent any accident, injury or liability in relation to its assets. Of the two quotations received, the Council wished to consult further with TVN Worksafe Ltd,

who had quoted £300 + VAT for this work which was considerably less than the alternative quotation. It was noted that the Director of this business is the Clerk's Father. In a bid to reduce the cost of this service to the Council, it agreed that it should request a revised quotation and ask the contractor to undertake the initial risk assessments necessary, produce inspection sheets which Councillors could use to undertake their own checks and to carry out only one other inspection in the year rather than three. Councillors will inspect the assets a minimum of twice a year, so that they are monitored at least quarterly between the Council and the contractor. A formal decision on this issue will be made at the next meeting following receipt of an updated quotation.

- 8. War Memorial – the Council will consider a request from the War Memorial Committee for funding.**  
The Council noted a letter from the War Memorial Committee which requested that the Council increases its precept requirement by £1,000 in order to donate this towards the repair costs of the War Memorial. Cllr Markham, on behalf of the War Memorial Committee, reported that at the time of the meeting, £1,762 had been received in donations from members of the Parish and that more donations were known to be forthcoming shortly. It was noted that the Committee aims to raise £4,000 in total to undertake all of the work necessary. The Clerk reported that if the Council increased its precept by £1,000, Band D tax payers would see an increase in their Council tax bills of £3.34 per year. Cllr J Leamon commented that raising the precept to provide money for the project could be seen as a 'double whammy' to Parishioners who have already made a donation to the cause. There was general agreement not to consider raising the precept to make a donation towards the repairs of the War Memorial, however, it was agreed to make a decision on what, if any, donation the Parish Council could make towards the project, using its existing reserves, at the next meeting once it is clearer how much money has actually been raised.
- 9. Village Sign maintenance – the Council will consider whether the village sign requires maintenance.**  
It was noted that the village sign needs some maintenance and is showing the signs of weathering. It was noted that the post needs rubbing down and treating and that some of the lettering has faded. Cllr Markham and Cllr Towler volunteered to deal with the maintenance necessary on the post. It was agreed to contact the original manufacturer of the sign to obtain a quote for either washing down or repainting the lettering.
- 10. Precept 2014/15 – the Council will set its budget and agree its precept requirements for the 2014/15 financial year.**  
The Council considered the draft budget for the 2014/15 financial year. Cllr J Leamon noted that the income of £33.10 from UK Power Networks is only paid every five years so would not be received in the financial year 2014/15. There was some discussion over the potential costs of elections as the Council acknowledged that District Councils no longer cover these costs. It was noted that a bi-election in another Parish had cost the Parish Council approximately £1,200 and that election costs in a full election year could be approximately £1,600. It was agreed that money should be allocated and set aside for this possible cost each year whilst recognising the relatively small income that the Council receives and its other expenditure commitments. Cllr J Leamon advised that a full electrical inspection is required at the Village Meeting Place every five years and would be due soon, although it was noted that this cost, estimated at approximately £150, could be covered through the usual income and expenditure associated with the Village Meeting Place, which is considered separately to the Parish Council's financial activities. It was noted that West Winch Parish Council had allowed £1,500 in their budget to cover the cost of printing the Neighbourhood Plan. Since North Runcton is smaller than West Winch, it was agreed that a budget of £500 should cover the majority of the printing costs for North Runcton. Following further debate on the matter, Cllr Morrish proposed that the Council request a precept of £5721 for the 2014/15 financial year. This is £148 more than the precept received in the 2013/14 financial year, however, the tax base (the amount of households contributing towards the precept within their Council tax bills) has increased which means that the Council can request this precept without the parishioners of North Runcton having to contribute any more than in the 2013/14 financial year. Cllr Eakins seconded this. There were 8 votes for and 1 abstention.

**11. Parish Council Records – the Council will discuss the location and storage of all the Council’s records.**

It was noted that much of the Council’s important documents can be stored safely at the Norfolk Records Office in Norwich. This was considered a better option than the documents being stored in the Village Meeting Place which could then leave them at risk of damage through damp etc. It would also mean that there will be less paperwork necessary for the Clerk to store. It was agreed that all Councillors who were available will meet, at a date to be agreed, at the Village Meeting Place to go through all of the Council’s existing paperwork to identify those documents that could be safely stored in the Norfolk Records Office.

**12. Standing Orders – the Council will consider the current standing orders and whether these can be updated using the new template provided by Norfolk ALC.**

It was noted that Norfolk ALC has provided a new, updated, template for Parish Council standing orders, which are used to govern how Parish Councils operate their meetings etc. It was generally agreed that North Runcton Parish Council would benefit from a new set of standing orders. It was agreed that Cllr J Leamon, Cllr Morrish and Cllr Towler will work with the Clerk to use the template to create a set of standing orders for North Runcton Parish Council to adopt. Once prepared, these will be discussed and approved by the full Council.

**13. Correspondence received – see attached schedule.**

The Clerk advised that information regarding the gritting routes had been received and also information regarding the training available for Clerks and Councillors on 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> March. Cllr Towler and Cllr F Leamon indicated that they would possibly like to attend.

**14. Neighbourhood Plan – the Council will hear a progress report.**

Cllr Morrish reported that a meeting had been rescheduled with the Planning Aid Officer for 15<sup>th</sup> January. By the end of January, a meeting with Hopkins Homes and the Borough Council will be arranged with the Neighbourhood Plan Committee to discuss how a master plan covering both North Runcton and West Winch Parishes will develop.

**15. Village Meeting Place – report and discussion on any further repair/maintenance works required.**

It was noted that the work authorised at the December meeting to the outside of the Village Meeting Place has taken place, although one part could not be undertaken due to comments from the owner of a neighbouring property. The builder undertaking the work reported that some more re-pointing work would be advisable and this would be at a cost of £110. Since the previous cost had been reduced because some of the work could not be undertaken, Cllr Markham proposed that the quotation for this extra work be accepted. Cllr Fuller seconded this and all agreed.

**16. Highways – the Council will discuss any Highways issues.**

It was noted that New Road requires some resurfacing works and that the grips and drains along the side of the road are blocked with fallen leaves. Standing orders were suspended to allow Mr John Fuller to advise the Council of an ongoing drainage issue which is affecting the Kings Lynn Caravan Site and the A47. It was noted that the relevant Authorities are aware of this. Standing Orders were reinstated.

It was noted that the road markings on New Road at the junction with the A47 are very faded and need to be repainted. It was suggested that the Council should ask whether more cats eyes could be installed at the junction to make visibility easier at night. It was reported that tyres and oil drums which had been dredged from a dyke on the Grazing Common off Common Lane have been left by the side of the road. It was agreed to ask the clean-up team to collect them.

## 17. Planning

a) Applications to consider

Outline Application: development of up to 1,110 residential units (Class C3); primary school (Class D1); local centre (Class A1, B1, D1, D2); public open space, landscaping and highway access onto A47 and A10 at Land West of Constitution Hill, Constitution Hill, North Runcton PE33 0QP

The Council's response to this application follows:

We submit the following preliminary comments on the outline planning application submitted on behalf of Hopkins Homes Ltd. As you may know, both the Parish Councils of North Runcton and West Winch have been in liaison with Hopkins, via their design team consultants, and we have previously submitted comments directly to them on their 'parameter plans' in March 2013. Many of the following comments were made at that time, as, in our view, many of our previous concerns have not yet been addressed.

This development site is of course part of the broader BCKLWN vision from 'SE King's Lynn' (SEKL) for which there is, as yet, no agreed master-plan. We note that part of this application includes an *Emerging Wider Masterplan*, which illustrates possible further development within North Runcton and West Winch and includes what we believe are essential 'compensatory works' (see more below) to 'balance' development at Constitution Hill. Such works would, in our opinion, certainly include a new north-south 'relief road' and substantial areas of new public open space (including natural habitat creation). The 'opportunities and constraints' for this wider masterplan are still not fully defined – and neither are the nature, process, programme and funding for this major infrastructure. We therefore feel that the present application is premature and should be withdrawn.

We have the following comments on more specific aspects of the development.

### **Roads and Access**

In general we continue to have major concerns about the impacts to the A10, A47 and Hardwick roundabout from development at this site and on future development on land to the south. These are already very busy roads (A10 - 18,000/day, A47 – 14,000/day), with a significant amount of large freight and existing congestion issues (the A10 frequently has morning tailbacks to the Tottenhill roundabout). The development will cause adverse impacts to these routes from the earliest stages of construction, and in time can be expected to generate thousands of additional vehicle movement every day. Although we feel that large roundabouts would be the only acceptable junction type on the A10 and A47 – we would be concerned that this level of additional traffic would trigger the need for signalised junctions (as at Hardwick) and this would lead to unacceptable levels of congestion on both the A10 and A47, and indeed at Hardwick, especially at key periods of use.

Relief Road: Through community consultation we have conducted in the last 3-4 years it seems that the majority of residents in West Winch and North Runcton feel that a new road parallel to the A10 is an essential component of the extensive development proposed (which recent BCKLWN documents have stated will ultimately constitute 3000 or more new dwellings). Although such a road will in itself cause considerable adverse environmental impacts, especially for those living closest to the route, most residents agree it could assist in distributing traffic more evenly on the local road network. There is still no agreed route, design, programme, funding arrangement or organisation assigned to deliver this important infrastructure. In our view this remains a significant stumbling block for any development at Constitution Hill and within the whole SEKL area and we are unwilling to support any application for large scale development here until there is clarity on this issue.

Non-vehicular access: Whereas we recognise this is an outline application, we feel for successful sustainable development here and throughout the SEKL area, an excellent new network of dual-use paths<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In this regard we do not consider that occasional wide sections of pavement, as presently exist alongside the A10, as an acceptable quality of dual-use path. If we are going to significantly reduce local car usage we must ensure fully connected, safe, functional cycle routes and in and between key centres.

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is an essential part of the plan. In this application there is insufficient detail on this provision within and certainly beyond the development. A dedicated cycle route into King's Lynn and associated local employment areas is, in our view, a foundation stone for successful development here and should again be part of an agreed wider masterplan for the area.

Rat Running: We note some reference to preventing rat running *within* the proposed development, but no consideration of existing roads outside it. New Road, Rectory Lane and Chequers Lane in North Runcton already suffer from rat running between the A47 and A10, and the new roundabouts and additional traffic is likely to greatly exacerbate this issue. We feel that traffic calming measures within North Runcton will be required before any development commences at Constitution Hill.

### **Drainage**

We note that the IDB bodies have objected to this application as they feel there is insufficient information provided to allow full assessment of the proposals. We highlight the fact that much of the development site has historic flooding issues and that it regularly stands as boggy grassland even in summer. In addition, please note that through the neighbourhood planning process North Runcton and West Winch Parish Councils have commissioned an independent drainage strategy report for the entire area of both parishes that we hope will help inform future sustainable development. Until this report is received (early 2014) we feel unable to assess the present drainage proposals.

### **Landscape and green infrastructure**

It is a fact that the site supports a large area (25 hectares?) of self-naturalised grassland and scrub woodland that has considerable ecological interest. The vast proportion of this will be lost to the development – and the impacts to the small areas proposed for retention are likely to be significantly adverse over time. We are extremely doubtful that ecological impacts can be made 'neutral' within the study site, and we feel there is little or no consideration of the impact of probably 3000 new residents on areas beyond the application site. If we accept that changes are inevitable, it is our view that alternative habitat provision must be provided elsewhere in the SEKL area. (We note the NCC comments on this application that have referred to the difference between 'compensation' and 'mitigation').

It is our view that such provision could be partly provided in multifunctional corridors (where, for example, drainage and non-vehicular access could also be provided), but that some larger areas of new 'nature reserve' will also be required to offset impacts from the Constitution Hill site. Such areas will benefit *existing* residents (including wildlife) and provide for the substantial numbers of *new* residents. The communities at West Winch and North Runcton are already statistically poor in public open space and recreational provision, and in spite of the general rural setting there are limited public access routes. Even the common land here has specific grazing rights and is largely unavailable for public recreation.

Again, in our view, there is a need to clarify and agree an area-wide masterplan and a workable delivery process for green infrastructure and POS – before individual development plans come forward. Specific issues we have with the present plan include:

- The limited amount of Public Open Space in general within the scheme.
- No allotment gardens (although we accept these could be provided off-site).
- School playing fields in a relatively low lying, wet and shaded area (although they could have an all-weather surface).
- General scale of green space proposed. (e.g. We scale all tree canopies at around 5m diameter in the plans provided – although 'medium' size trees generally have a canopy of 10m, and a 'large' tree may have a canopy spread of 20m +. Effectively this means that there is presently no space for any large trees (eg oak/beech) in the entire scheme).
- We have seen no suggestions on how green space will be sustainably managed for the long term (especially funding).
- Insufficient detail on opportunities for multi-purpose green space (Suds/Non-vehicular access/ Amenity/Recreation etc)

### Community facilities.

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Although this development will be within North Runcton parish and close to parts of West Winch, in all likelihood this community will in most respects be quite distinct (certainly until further development occurs in areas to the south). In order to build a strong community from the outset we feel community infrastructure must be put in place from the time the first dwellings are occupied – even if they are at first only temporary buildings. Again, we feel community facilities and their delivery need to be agreed in a masterplan. If facilities are to be provided elsewhere (a new surgery has been mooted in West Winch), then this needs to be clear so that access planning and other arrangements can inform site specific planning applications.

- There is presently little detail on delivery of community infrastructure and phasing plans appear to indicate it will come later – which we feel is unacceptable.
- West Winch and Middleton schools have limited capacity for new pupils in current buildings and taking children to these schools would not fit with sustainability goals or ‘community building’. A new school delivered early (perhaps in phases) would, in our opinion, ‘anchor’ the new community.
- Proximity of the school adjacent the main new road is not ideal.
- With current changes to education delivery we will require assurances about how the school will be delivered.
- We have some concerns about the location of the ‘local centre’. Both the school and the local centre seem to be towards the outer edge of the development – should they not be more central to facilitate easy pedestrian and cycle access?

Use of land for stationing of 4 camping pods at Kings Lynn Caravan and Camping Park, Parkside House, New Road, North Runcton.

The Council had no comments on or objections to this application.

Proposed construction of one dwelling at East Anglia House, 1 West Winch Road, West Winch

The Council’s response to this application follows:

Although the Council recognises that this scheme proposes to use an access to the A10 which was apparently deemed acceptable to the Highways Authority in 1999, it feels that road conditions have altered in the intervening time and that access to this proposed development will now be potentially dangerous for the future residents and other road users.

In this respect the Council does not see any difference between the current application for one house and the previous application (13/01323/O) for two dwellings, and feels it must maintain its objection.

The recent application for 1100 dwellings on land to the east (13/01615/OM), if given consent, will undoubtedly intensify traffic levels on the A10. Whether the proposed roundabout access for that site (proposed approximately 600m to the south) or likely alterations to the Hardwick Roundabout (not yet confirmed) would provide any traffic calming benefits on the A10 is not yet possible to determine. However, in the Council’s view, the overall outlook is for greatly increased traffic levels which will make future access to the A10 for existing and future residents extremely problematic.

b) Decisions received from BCKLWN / NCC

**APPROVAL GRANTED**

Removal of condition 4 relating to the variation of parking and turning facilities and the removal of the restrictive hours of use at Jacaranda, 65 New Road, North Runcton

Noted.

c) Any applications considered between meetings.

N/A

**18. Finance**

Mrs K Senter	Clerk's salary	BACS	£	215.13
HMRC	PAYE	BACS	£	53.80
West Winch Par.Cncl	Copies of Neighbourhood Plan documents	101000	£	22.70
Anglian Water	Water services – VNP	100035	£	26.29
J R Mann Builders Ltd	Repairs to VMP		£	375.82
			<b>£</b>	<b>693.74</b>

Cllr F Leamon proposed that the payments be agreed and paid. This was seconded by Cllr Morrish and agreed by all.

**19. Items for report of future agenda only.**

It was agreed to suspend standing orders in order to ask Mr Fuller when the felled trees on the North Runcton Common, off Common Lane will be removed. Mr Fuller advised that only the tree roots are left and that these will be cleared and grassed although no timescale for this was available. Standing orders were reinstated.

**20. Dates of forthcoming meetings in 2013: -**

The following meeting dates were agreed: - 11<sup>th</sup> February 2014.

There being no further business the meeting closed.

Signed .....

11<sup>th</sup> February 2014