

MELTON CONSTABLE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the monthly meeting held at the Country Club at 7.30 p.m. Tuesday 9th December 2008

Cllrs. present: - Cllr. Mrs. J. Heal Cllr. A. Loynes, (Chair) Cllr. Mrs. P. Stocking.
Cllr. Mrs. C. Velthaus. Cllr. S. Unsworth (Vice Chair) Cllr, Mrs. M. Hayes, Cllr. Mrs.
Bowes

Ms. Mandy Huntridge, Ms. Catherine Mackenzie-Dodds & Mr. John Cox were also
present.

The Chair opened the meeting at 7.30. p.m.

Apologies were received form Cty Cllr. Jacky Howe & Dist. Cllr. Robin Combe.

9/12/1 Minutes of 11/11/2008 & 25/11/2008

The minutes of the November meeting were unanimously passed as a true record
on a proposition by Cllr. Mrs. Heal seconded Cllr. Mrs. Bowes.

The minutes of the special meeting of 25th November were unanimously passed as
a true record on a proposition by Cllr. Mrs. Heal seconded Cllr. Mrs. Bowes.

9/12/2 Matters arising

1. Ms Mandy Huntridge suggested a collection system for the Xmas tree shredding
whereby trees would be left in peoples front gardens for collection & shedding
by a mobile machine.
2. The Tree Expert had given a prioritised report which would be circulated and
agendered for the next meeting, and a walk around could be arranged.
3. The fridge had been removed from plot 49 and also the rubbish from plot 6.

9/12/3 Railway Heritage Project

Cllrs. Mrs Stocking and Mrs. Heal had viewed the site of the old station entrance
and had had constructive talks with the owner of the site with a view to renovation /
preserving the arch & gates. This would hopefully be grant funded. The Council is
currently awaiting formal approval from the owners before taking the matter further.

9/12/4 Cllrs. Reports

Churchyard.

The Churchyard was again reported as still looking fine.

South Side

There was again little of note to report.

Bus Shelter Site

There was still some fly tipping. And one incident had been reported for possible
prosecution. There were still people dumping bags full of bottles seemingly too lazy
to place them in the banks and also other food rubbish. The Clerk to contact NNDC
again for some graphic signage stating pictorially what should and should not be left
there.

Cllr. Mrs. Stocking has purchased 3 Silver Birch trees to be planted on the site with
money remaining from the original grant. The fencing around the mound had now
been removed.

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Recreation Field

There were a few moles and the Clerk had contacted Mr. Wegg concerning these and was asked to make it clear to Mr. Wegg that if no action was taken by him then a new mole catcher would be contacted.

North side / Allotments

There had been no further complaints regarding the parking of vehicles on allotment plots. The area was otherwise reported as be satisfactory.

Play Area

The Council was saddened to hear that slats were missing from the millennium garden seat and that some ropes appear to have been removed from the Adventure Trail.

9/12/5 F.O.I .Publication Template.

The publication template for the 2000 Freedom of Information Act was unanimously & formally adopted on a proposition by Cllr. Loynes seconded by Cllr. Unsworth. Notice to be posted informing people where such information could be obtained.

9/12/6 Play Area

The Clerk told the meeting that the reseeded of the football pitch was in hand and that he was awaiting details and costs for temporary fencing and the reinstatement of the matting under the swings.

9/12/7 Parish Website

It was agreed to seek information on web hosting, persons to construct a site and costings to be discussed at the next meeting.

9/12/8 Planning Matters

There were plans before the Council for the replacement of doors & windows at Dairy Farm Melton Park. The Council unanimously agreed on a proposition by Cllr. Mrs. Heal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Bowes that no comment / no objection be offered to these plans.

9/12/9 Appointment of Clerk

Four candidates had been interviewed and the panel had unanimously agreed to appoint Mr. Kevin Uglow as Parish Clerk from 31st March 2008. Mr. Uglow had formally accepted the position.

It was further agreed that Mr. Uglow be paid on a pro-rata basis for time spent on Council Business during the hand-over period. Meetings between the Chair, the present Clerk and Mr. Uglow to be arranged to progress this. The Chair introduced Mr. Uglow to the meeting.

9/12/10 Correspondence

There had been 2 letters of complaint in the form of emails addressed to the Council which had been seen by all members. The Chair read out a statement which is appended to these minutes and which explained the Council's actions and that no wrongdoing or mistakes had occurred.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 8.15 p.m. to give one complainant who was present the opportunity to respond. The meeting was then reconvened at 8.25 p.m.

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9/12/11 Cheques for signature and / or approval

CHEQUES		FOR	SIGNATURE	&/OR APPROVAL
		09/12/2008		
CHEQUE No.	Amount	item	item	payee
101318	£34.63	Clerks Expns	December	Mr. J. Stocking
101319	£52.84	Street Light	Maint Contract	MHB Services
101320	£35.25	Clerk	Advertisement	Fakenham Sun
101321	£129.57	Fencing	Materials	Clarks of Walsham
101322	£75.00	Qtr year payment	Handyman	Mr. FJA Velthaus
Total	£327.29			

These Cheques were unanimously agreed on a proposition by Cllr. Mrs. Hayes, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Bowes.

9/12/12 Other Business

Cllr. Mrs Bowes reported on correspondence with Gary Grunwold concerning the street lighting grant. This was still ongoing but slowly. The Council unanimously thanked Cllr. Mrs. Bowes for her efforts in this direction and asked that thanks also be passed to Mr. Grunwold.

The meeting closed at 8.35 p.m.

See appended document below.

.....Clerk

.....Chair

STATEMENT READ OUT BY THE CHAIR AT PARISH COUNCIL 9/12/2008

I am making this statement as a result of two complaints recently received by the Parish Council, both of which have been circulated to all councillors

1. From Greg Moore, inferring that the donation recently made by the Parish Council to Melton Constable Community Association would have benefited the Country Club, and therefore I as chairman of the Country club should not have voted
2. From Catherine Mackenzie- Dodds, who asked the Clerk if there would be a public forum at the special meeting at the end of November, and is now complaining that she was misled by him.

This statement is read in an effort to enlighten members of the public on Parish Council procedures, and hopefully stop the recent minute examination of seemingly everything we do by a few individuals, so that we as a council can spend more of our time dealing with the real issues we face.

As unpaid voluntaries parish councillors perform their duties to the best of their abilities, and within the legal framework that we are bound by. We give a considerable amount of our time freely for the public good and like any other human being we can make honest mistakes, but we are not here to be vilified without good reason.

The clerk is not a Councillor, and does not have a vote on the council. Members of the public asking the clerk's advice will naturally be answered to the best of his abilities, but he does not determine the decisions or policy of the full council

The public has no automatic right to speak at Parish council meetings otherwise we would never be able to transact all our business. The chair in consultation with other councillors will use his discretion to decide if a public forum will take place, as you will be aware Melton parish council normally allows a public forum at its meetings. Indeed this is usually an agendered item. For the meeting of the 25th November the Clerk was instructed that there should be only one item on the agenda, namely the planning application, and this is the information he gave to Catherine Mackenzie Dodds. In the event, the chairman of that actual meeting, seeing that there was a large number of members of the public present decided to allow them to speak. So it was not a case of the clerk misleading anyone, but simply a case of circumstances changing.

Several months ago, and on more than one occasion, the parish council invited Catherine Mackenzie-Dodds (as spokesperson for the community association) to an informal meeting with the Parish Council, so that we could explain how the parish council works. For one reason or another she was unable to attend. Had she taken this opportunity then she would have fully understood the procedures relating to the public forum.

Donations to charitable bodies and other local groups are routinely made by parish councils, indeed this is seen as a necessary part of our business by central government. I have personally responded to Greg Moore on the points he raised, and in the absence of any further communication I will consider this matter closed.

The parish council is well aware of the opposition to the Grove Road development, but we are equally aware that many local residents are not so against the plans, and do not agree with the aims of the community groups. Our job is to represent the whole village.

For the avoidance of doubt I will restate that the Parish Council can only object to a planning application on valid planning grounds. All other representations by individuals should be made to the District Council who are the determining authority.

In our opinion, this council goes out of its way to be open and transparent, for example public forums and publishing abbreviated versions of its minutes in the parish newsletters neither of which we are legally obliged to do. In practice you will find us more open than many other parish councils

During all the recent events this Parish Council has tried to act professionally, and has taken on board the community groups that have recently been formed. In return we ask that in the future the community groups, and individuals within them, also act in a professional manner and carefully check their facts before sending what we consider vexatious communications if we are to continue to work together within the community.

Clerk.....

Chair.....