

Easton Parish Council
Minutes of the meeting held on
Monday 14th September 2015 at 7.30pm
In the Village Hall, Marlingford Rd, Easton

Present: Mrs Linda Ford (Chairman), Mr Peter Milliken, Vice-Chairman, Mrs Clare Chisholm, Mrs Margaret Hart and Mr Michael Jobling.

In attendance: Mrs Diana Dring (Locum Clerk), County and District Councillor Margaret Dewsbury and 3 Policemen; LPC Provart, PC Gary Owen and PCSO Matt Bradshaw

Members of the public: 15

1. Apologies for absence

The Chairman asked for one minute's silence in respect of the passing of Dennis Barrow, a respected member of the Parish Council.

The Chairman advised that the passing of Mr Barrow had created a casual vacancy on the council and that following advice from South Norfolk District Council procedures were being followed to fill the vacancy.

Jonathan Bailey had also sent his apologies due to family related issues.

2. To receive declarations of interest in items on the agenda and any requests for dispensation

Declarations of interest were received from Margaret Hart and Linda Ford in respect of item 10.i. as allotment holders they could be perceived to have a personal and pecuniary interest in the allotments and therefore should not speak or vote on the matter.

3. Public Participation

The Chairman reminded members of the public of the rules for public participation and opened the meeting to the public.

Brenda Daynes said that she had sent emails on the 8th August and 8th September to the Vice-Chairman, Peter Milliken, who was the contact point for the Parish Council, requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) but had received no response. Peter said he had not received the emails. Mrs Daynes said her request was for minutes of non-public meetings relating to a letter from the Chairman to the District Council regarding the planning application for 907 houses. She also asked why the Parish Council was not recording meetings and putting them on YouTube in the interests of transparency. Brenda passed her signed request to the Clerk.

Melissa Turner asked whether the Parish Council was consulted about Showground events such as the Youth Churches New Day event, which she said was excluded from the usual licensing laws as a Christian event and that the noise levels had been quite disturbing. Peter said he would follow up with the District Council.

Bernard Weston said there were problems with the drains flooding on Marlingford Road near the flashing lights and that the double yellow lines should be extended a further 5 to 6 Feet. Peter to follow-up with Highways.

4. Reports:

i) Police

Local Policing Inspector Provart presented the crime report for Easton covering the 3 months between 14th July and 11th September. There had been a total of 15 crimes and/or incidents of which 8 were domestic related incidents, 1 sexual offence, 2 thefts (one a pedal cycle and the other a caravan window) and 3 violence against person, 2 of which were domestic related and 1 assault.

LPC Provart advised that the recent Sundown and Reload music events at the Showground had both been successful in terms of policing. There were no crimes reported at the Reload event and 24 from Sundown which included use of drugs, violence and sexual offences. There has been significant seizures at the gates of legal highs. He felt the success of both events was due to the good relationship the police had with the site staff.

Peter raised an issue regarding parts of the village being used for police practise with firearms and high pursuit, which was a particular issue around the school area. LPC Provart said he would follow up with Firearms and Special Ops. He also said he would look into a residents concern that the A47 approaching the Easton roundabout was used as a racetrack, particularly after Showground events.

PC Owen asked if there were any parking issues in the village resulting from the Showground events, as this was run by a traffic management company. Peter responded that the Council had received some good feedback from the public, although there had been one negative comment regarding cones being removed from Cardinal Close on the Saturday evening of Reload and not replaced so the road was full of parked cars on Sunday. Peter said that overall the pro-active approach worked well and he thanked the police on behalf of the Council.

The Chairman commented that Margaret and Peter had also contributed to the success of the parking by going around on Friday making sure the cones were in the right place, she thanked them for their help.

Margaret Dewsbury commented that the only complaint she had received was that the Dereham Road was closed for access only. Mike added that he had also only heard one complaint on Marlingford Road and felt that the lesson learned was that a more pro-active approach worked.

Peter said that he wanted to encourage and continue the good working relationship with the head of security and would feed back the positive comments.

ii) District & County Councillor, Margaret Dewsbury

Margaret commented that the additional £30 million cost of the Norwich Distributor Route (NDR) would be met by contributions from the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), County Council and central government funding. Discussions were ongoing

regarding the final stretch of the NDR from the Fakenham Road to the A47 west with 13 options under consideration, including access through Longwater or Honingham. A meeting with stakeholders would be arranged nearer the time.

Margaret said that devolution was under consideration by county and district councils with Norfolk and Suffolk councils were currently in discussion. Districts may work with LEPs. Margaret will keep the Parish Council informed.

In response to a query Margaret clarified that the Lower Easton roundabout was unlikely to be a suitable access route for the NDR.

iii) South Norfolk Council Environmental Protection Officer

The Environmental Protection Officer who had been doing work in the Parish had been invited to the meeting but the Head of Environmental Services declined the invitation and sent an email, which Peter read out advising that, ‘conditions would be framed to deal with any land contamination which meant the developer would need to submit robust proposals to ensure that any contamination was addressed appropriately before development proceeds. These proposals will need to be agreed with the Council and the appropriate levels of control demonstrated. Given this it would be more appropriate when such proposals are submitted that the developer also explain to the community what is proposed to address any local concerns’.

Margaret Hart said that the Parish Council had simply highlighted possible contamination and just needed clarification.

5. Approval of the minutes of the Parish Council meeting of 13th July 2015

Following a correction to a typing error on the payments list from Mr to Mrs Cordy, the minutes of the meeting of 13th July 2015 were approved as a correct record on the proposal of Peter, seconded by Margaret.

6. To report matters arising from the minutes not on the agenda, for information only

The Chairman reported that the overgrowth around the bus shelter had been cut back, thanks to Mr Cutting. Peter commented that the removal of the bank behind the bus stop had yet to be carried out by Showground staff.

Peter reported that the Parish Council website was in the process of being upgraded and made ready to hand over responsibility to the new Clerk.

The Chairman reported that residents of Lower Easton would be in further discussions regarding the historic parts of their properties to help to upgrade their property listing.

7. To make recommendations on planning applications, note decisions and other planning matters

i) Planning Applications;

a) 2015/1813 The Ash Trees, Bawburgh Rd, Erection of a day room

Following discussion Peter proposed supporting the application as the Council supports a diverse cultural mix but to question the size which seems large for a day room. Seconded by Michael.

Clare proposed an amendment that South Norfolk Council should monitor this to ensure that the building is not turned into a dwelling. Seconded by Margaret.

The proposal as amended was approved.

- b) 2015/1407 12 Bawburgh Rd, Proposed static caravan for living accommodation
Peter said that he supported independent living rather than the need to go into a care home and that the application was not for a normal static caravan. The Chairman expressed concern about this setting a precedent for similar applications and proposed supporting the application provided the caravan was temporary while the need existed. She also wanted to make sure a full disability access assessment is carried out by specialist. Seconded by Clare and approved.
- ii) Decisions – Peter reported that the Premier Inn application had been agreed with conditions, but the A47 crossing had not been taken into consideration, which meant there was no safe pedestrian route across the A47. Peter said that planners would need to address this as it affected all the plans for the village.
- iii) Other Planning matters
Members noted that no comments were made on the Planning Application 2015/1736 for land west of 1 Keepers Cottage for outline permission for a new single detached dwelling as the Council was unable hold a meeting due to holiday/work commitments.

8. Confirmation of eligibility and adoption of the General Power of Competence, and to adoption of Financial Regulations and Standing Orders

- i) Following circulation of a report providing information about the General Power of Competence, the Parish Council resolved that from this meeting until the next relevant Annual Meeting of the Council, having met the conditions of eligibility as defined in the Localism Act 2011 and SI 965 The Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012, to adopt the General Power of Competence, on the proposal of Peter, seconded by Michael.
- ii) The Chairman pointed out that both the Financial Regulations and Standing Orders were based on model documents recommended by the National Association of Local Councils and provided important and legal governance rules for the Parish Council. The new Clerk/RFO will be reviewing the Council's policies and practices and will advise any amendments required. Margaret queried the need for such stringent rules particularly relating to public participation but the Locum Clerk advised this was at the discretion of the Chairman and the Standing Orders could be changed, unless they were legal requirements.
On the proposal of Clare, seconded by Michael it was agreed to adopt both the Financial Regulations and Standing Orders

9. Neighbourhood Plan progress report, appointment of a Consultant, approval of the Neighbourhood Area, the Project Report, grant funding bid and newsletter and the first Workshop meeting. Also to approve the Neighbourhood Plan Aims and the revised Steering Group Terms of Reference

Peter explained the process to appoint a Consultant to help draw up the Neighbourhood Plan, which needed to be organised quickly, aiming for completion within a year. The plan would influence the level of Community Infrastructure Levy and would be related to the level of lower cost housing. A number of organisations were approached regarding the Consultancy service but could not help due to the timescale required or they required the Parish Council to be more involved which was not feasible. Following an interview and research Shaun

Vincent was appointed and a contract agreed which includes a requirement to produce the Neighbourhood Plan in the requisite time

The Chairman introduced Shaun and invited him to address the meeting.

Shaun explained that his company was called Abzag and that he would be running a number of events to support the Parish Council with the public's input to develop the Neighbourhood Plan. He advised that the Plan could not stop development but could influence development and improve it for new and existing residents. A newsletter with more information would be distributed to residents, a draft was circulated to members.

Shaun advised that a Steering Group would be formed involving residents and stakeholders to take forward the plan, the first workshops were planned on 31 October and 21 November. The governance was being set up, which would involve the entire parish of Easton. Grants would be obtained to cover most of the cost and the Parish Council would contribute too. Shaun read out the 5 Aims of the Neighbourhood Plan, which had been circulated to members with the revised Terms of Reference for the Steering Group.

Margaret asked about the involvement of groups such as the Consortium as members of the Steering Group and whether they would have undue influence on the plan. Shaun responded that their role would be as a stakeholder and they would be encouraged to participate but they wouldn't be allowed to shape the Plan, they would have to declare an interest.

The revised Steering Group Terms of Reference were approved on the proposal of Peter, seconded by Clare.

The Aims of the Neighbourhood Plan were approved on the Proposal of Margaret, seconded by Michael.

Following comment about the quality of the parish map Margaret Dewsbury said she may be able to help with a better map. The Newsletter was approved on the proposal of Peter, seconded by Clare.

Linda confirmed that the Neighbourhood Plan area of Easton Parish had been approved following consultation.

10. Progress reports

i) Parish Allotments

Peter reported that the allotments had been tidied up with the overgrowth trimmed back by Mr Cutting. Peter advised that a meeting with the allotment holders was needed, in relation to the 106 Agreement. When the allotments are moved there would be no compensation paid as alternative land would be provided. Although this may not happen for 5+ years Peter said it was necessary to arrange a meeting in the near future so that a negotiated 106 agreement could be sorted out. Michael supported this plan.

ii) Jubilee Playing Field

Margaret reported that the play equipment had been repaired by Ian Wickham who had only charged for the materials used. She advised that the gap in the hedge made by children had got bigger and was a danger to children as it came out near the road. It was suggested putting a message in the Grapevine and via the school to raise parents' awareness. A fence was suggested and Clare said she would look into Lottery funding, Peter suggested Aviva Community Projects.

Michael said that he had had a look at the possibility of relocating the gym equipment at College Heights as he felt the Jubilee Playing Field was more suitable for younger children's equipment. Margaret commented that younger children also used the gym equipment. Michael and Peter suggested leaving the equipment in place until such time as repairs were needed or they became a risk and then re-consider whether to repair or remove. Peter commented that the covenant for the Playing Field only allowed for children's play equipment.

The Chairman said that gym equipment was deemed a high safety risk. A discussion followed about the weekly health and safety checks of the gym equipment and whether this complied with the Council's insurance requirements. Clerk to check.

11. Arrangements for village grounds maintenance

Peter suggested that the Council should review all the village maintenance arrangements, where and when they were carried out and ensure that a proper plan is put in place. He suggested that a working group of members could look into this over the next few months. Linda agreed and suggested that the new Clerk would need to get to grips with this and proposed that Margaret and Michael should take this on and liaise with the Clerk, seconded by Peter and agreed.

Margaret asked about litter picking as residents had asked why all the village was not litter picked and only certain areas. Following a discussion Clare suggested the Council should ask Easton College to increase their contribution towards the cost of litter picking, which Peter supported.

12. Review of the Parish Council Facebook account and the adoption of a Social Media policy

Clare gave a report of recent Facebook activity; although the last month had been fairly quiet with appropriate comments, the previous month had been more difficult with personal attacks and inappropriate comments. She said it would be useful to have the Social Media Policy in place and the new Clerk involved.

Peter supported continuing the Facebook account but to carry out an annual review.

Margaret felt that the Facebook account should be shut down as it was too much for one Councillor to maintain, and the Council should just have the website. The Chairman said it was useful to have different platforms to express views.

Clare responded that the new policy would give greater powers to deal with inappropriate comments and proposed the Council adopted the Social Media Policy and continued to use Facebook but review after the new Clerk has been in post for 3 months. Seconded by Michael and agreed

13. Report of meetings with the land agent and with the development consortium regarding the parish land on Dereham Road

Peter had circulated a report summarising the background, current position and options for the way forward for the parish land based on information received from discussions and meetings with the Land Agent and the Consortium.

Peter summarised the report which gave the background to the Parish Council's acquisition of parish land, the emerging EAS1, which allocated a new heart to the village including a new village hall and the new large planning application giving an opportunity to make alternative use of the parish land. The previous Parish Council had agreed Heads of Terms for the sale of the land to the Rampton Trust in Oct 2014 but this was stopped in February 2015.

Peter advised the Parish Council is now formally a consultee and a signatory of any agreement achieved in relation to the housing development.

Peter said he was surprised the Consortium was not going to build the new Village Hall with the Parish Council paying for added extras but apparently the planners would provide the land and the Parish Council would have to pay for building the hall. Peter has argued under EAS1, that the Developer should pay for the hall it was the use of EAS1 by the developers to secure its plans. The Parish Council may want to spend the CIL on other options and may not want to build a village hall. At present the District Council were thinking about that.

A meeting was held with the Consortium at their request and with the Land Agent David Harvey to better understand the Heads of Terms brokered by the previous Parish Council. The Parish Council are obliged to achieve 'value for money' and when selling land there should be an adequate level of consultation with the public.

The report presented three options;

- 1) Proceed under the current Heads of Terms to a Parish Poll
- 2) Renegotiate the current Heads of Terms then to a Parish Poll
- 3) The PC not including its freehold land within the Easton consortium project and pursuing a separate sale and subsequent development subject to a Parish Poll.

Option 1. Peter explained that under the Heads of Terms there is a deduction 'share infrastructure costs' leaving the Parish Council with only 65% of the land value, a share of the costs but no share in the potential benefits. The 'equalisation of costs' between Consortium members was of no benefit to the Parish Council as it was not part of the Consortium and was only involved with the Rampton Trust. There was an additional issue of when and how payment for the land would be made, the Council would be second on the list of payments to be made by the Rampton Trust.

Option 2. Renegotiation would involve re-employing the Land Agent and solicitor and would need to be progressed in a timely manner so that a parish poll may be called in good time. Under this option more favourable terms would be sought under the heads of Terms such as receiving payment for the land straight after the exchange of title deeds and not having to wait. As there were professional costs involved in this option, the Council would need to consider this as a confidential matter under item 19.iii.

Option 3 could achieve best value with regard to price for the parish but there were risks in terms of services that would not be so accessible if the Council sold the land separately and in the long run it could cost as much gained through the expense of 'going it alone.' Peter said the Council would need to go back to the village and ask them about this option through a poll. If we asked the village now if they wanted to sell the land to Rampton they would probably say 'no' and the Parish Council must respect that.

The Chairman pointed out that the Parish Poll should be a simple choice so people are clear what they are voting on. Once it is decided to call a poll, the District Council can sort this out in 14 to 21 days and the Parish Council can then move forward with the result.

No further discussion of the report or options took place at this point.

14. Accounts

i) Payments for August/September 2015

The following accounts were approved for payment on the proposal of Peter, seconded by Margaret

Payments August

HMRC	Quarterly Tax payment (April, May, June)	£200.94
NPTP	2 x Intro + 1 Chairmanship training	£165.00
Mr Harrowven	Jubilee Playing Field August	£40.00
Mr Ditton	Bus Shelters- August	£40.00
Mrs Cordy	Litter & College Heights August	£100.00
Diana Dring	Locum Clerk 1-31 July	£292.24
Ribbonsdale Nurseries	Grass Cutting July	£659.20
The Play Inspection Company		£225.00

Payments September

Mr Harrowven	Jubilee Playing Field September	£40.00
Mr Ditton	Bus Shelters- September	£40.00
Mrs Cordy	Litter & College Heights September	£100.00
Diana Dring	Locum Clerk 1-31 August	£270.79
Ribbonsdale Nurseries	Grass Cutting August	£659.20
Abzag	Neighbourhood Plan Consultancy Fee	£600.00
Anthony Cutting	Allotment Strimming 12 x £8 p hr - £96 + Petrol- £10.92 + line £14.35	£121.27
Ian Wickham	Re. Jubilee Playing Field repairs	£45.00
Easton Village Hall	Rent (May, June, July August)	£99.00

The Locum Clerk advised that an HMRC penalty notice for not filling PAYE returns in time had been received and the response to an appeal was pending. The matter should be resolved when the new Clerk sets up the online HMRC PAYE system and can get submissions up to date.

ii) Purchase of a laptop for the new Clerk

Following discussion Mike proposed that Peter purchase a suitable laptop up to £350 and software up to £100 for the Clerk, seconded by Clare and agreed.

iii) Donation to Good Companions

The Chairman proposed that a donation of £30 be made to Companions from the donation budget, seconded by Clare and agreed.

15. Correspondence and agreed a response or other action;

- Correspondence from a resident concerning potential development land

A letter suggesting professional options had been circulated to members. Peter had contacted the organisation from which the letter had purported to have come from. They investigated the matter and received confirmation that it was a personal not an official email that had had been sent from a son to his mother and had been modified to make it look official.

Peter was concerned the letter purported to look like it was from an authority in London and was used to manipulate the decision making process of the PC. He suggested that the Council could pass on the correspondence for the authorities to look at but felt it was a naïve act and wouldn't happen again.

Clare said that it was difficult as the article in the Grapevine gave the impression that this was a professional opinion.

Margaret said that although the letter (wrongly) accused the council of misleading the village she didn't think it was malicious.

The Chairman said that the way it had been put forward as expert advice was misleading and the Council could take it further to the authorities as Peter had said.

Mike asked if that meant the police, which Peter confirmed as an option. However, the Chairman proposed that on this occasion the council would let the matter rest and take no further action, seconded by both Margaret and Michael and agreed

- Letter regarding overhanging tree from school
A letter had been received from neighbours of the school asking if the chestnut tree in the school grounds can be cut back at as it has overgrown and needs tidying up. It was pointed out that the holly tree on the boundary of the school also needs attention
- Correspondence from residents regarding music events- noted the positive comments

16. Agenda items for the next Parish Council meeting is on 19th October 2015

Grounds Maintenance Contract, Anglian Water to attend to provide information

17. Dates to Note:

Councillor Drop-in and Neighbourhood Plan Workshop **31 October 2015**

18. Resolution to exclude Press and the Public in order to discuss matters where publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature under the provisions of Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admissions to meetings) Act 1960, that is contracts.

The resolution was passed on the proposal of Mike, seconded by Margaret

The public left the meeting

19. Contracts to approve

i) Employment Contract for new Parish Clerk

The Chairman said that the new Clerks contract had been drawn up using the model contract, terms and conditions with appropriate adjustments; that the Clerk would start on 1 October 2015, at salary pay scale level 21, progress to 22 after completing a six month probation and

rise to the top of the scale after 1 year to level 23. Her hours would be fixed at 12 per week and these would be reviewed at 6 months. There were policies included in the contract that would need to be updated once the Clerk was in post.

On the proposal of Mike, seconded by Peter the contract was approved.

ii) Contract for grounds work at College Heights

Councillors had been circulated the three quotes for the grounds maintenance contract at College Heights and on Margaret's recommendation Peter proposed the acceptance of the quote from Adam Mabee for £2,565, seconded by Mike and approved.

iii) Land Agent contract for advising on the sale of Parish Land

Following a lengthy discussion option 1 was discounted, Clare proposed the Council moves forward with option 2, the re-negotiation of the Heads of Terms and asked if the Parish was likely to get more than 65% of the land value.

Peter advised that this could be negotiated a bit, a promoter would normally achieve around 25% of the value, and 10% covers the land covenant, maybe renegotiate on equalisation costs.

Mike suggested keeping option 3 as an alternative to option 2..

Peter said he would need to publish the option report but to negotiate option 2. The Land Agent, David Harvey would need 2 weeks to re-negotiate and then go back to the parish poll.

It was agreed on the proposal of Mike, seconded by Clare to instruct David Harvey to renegotiate the Heads of Terms, particularly the percentage of the land value, equalisation and the payment date and continue consideration of option 3.

Members discussed publicity of the Parish Councils decision and Clare agreed to look at reducing Peters report into a more concise public version, which then could be distributed by leaflet and social media and to look at calling a parish meeting to propose the parish poll

Meeting closed at 10.50pm