

# Caston Parish Council

CHAIRMAN: Mrs Jaki Porter

VICE CHAIRMAN: Mrs Kay Farmbrough

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF CASTON PARISH COUNCIL  
MONDAY 4 JANUARY 2021  
 BY ZOOM CONFERENCE CALL at 7.30 pm**

Councillor's present:- Jaki Porter, Kay Farmbrough, Brian Brooker, Chris Cook, Michele Grimsditch

Also present:- County Councillor Claire Bowes, District Councillor Phil Cowen and four Members of the Public

**1. Apologies for absence**

None.

**2. To approve the Minutes of the Virtual Meeting held on Monday 7 December 2020**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 7 December 2020 be signed, by the Chairman, as a true and correct record. All voted in favour.

**The Chairman closed the meeting to permit participation from the public.**

**3. Participation and questions from the public, session 1.**

A resident of School View contacted the Parish Council with regards to parking outside of the school and in particular to parking directly opposite the entrance to School View and on the dropped curb. The resident explained that personally she had had several near misses when trying to exit from School View and was aware that other residents had experienced the same.

The Chairman explained that parking at this location is a recognised issue. DC Cowen advised that this matter had been well documented when the permission was heard. Roads are the responsibility of the County Council but if vehicles are obstructing the highway then it is a matter for the Police.

CC Bowes agreed that any highway obstruction is a Police matter. This is a problem seen across the country outside schools. Locally, Carbrooke and Watton both experience parking problems. The 20mph flashing signs were installed outside the school in an attempt to slow people down but this does not help with the parking situation. It is a problem which is very difficult to resolve.

The resident advised that she had spoken to the Police, the school and Highways but is not able to get any help. She explained that where she had moved from, there were double yellow lines outside the school to prevent parking.

DC Cowen advised that School View is a private drive and is therefore not relevant to the Highway Code.

The Chairman explained that given the location of the school and the development, if yellow lines were installed, it would push the problem further up The Street.

CHAIRMAN.....

DATED: .....

CLERK: Joanne Blackman, Daisy Barn, 42 Long Lane, Feltwell, Norfolk, IP26 4BJ

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Both CC Bowes and DC Cowen advised that they had voted against the development mainly on the grounds of flooding as this location was prone to flooding even prior to the development being built. DC Cowen advised that parking was not a major consideration at this time but it was on the application adjacent to the school. The only real solution is a car park which is not feasible and double yellow lines pushes the problem further up the road and without enforcement is not a solution.

The Chairman suggested that the member of the public speak with the Speedwatch Co-ordinator who, whilst he cannot help with the parking situation, is very knowledgeable with regards to these matters. Both planning applications in the school vicinity had considered that parking was not an issue, despite the Parish Council’s best efforts. The Parish Council would be happy to support a letter to Highways in this regard and suggest a visit from Highways may be appropriate.

CC Bowes advised that a new Highways Area Manager would be in post shortly and she will ask him to visit to see if there is anything that can be considered at this location.

Cllr Brooker suggested that as parents currently park on the zig zag lines, it is likely that double yellow lines would also be ignored or cars may park further down The Street but again enforcement continues to be the problem. The Parish Council did everything they could to try to prevent the development.

The member of the public accepts that during drop off and pick-up times the parking will always be significant but parents arrive 40 minutes before pick up blocking the entrance for some considerable time and that she tries to go out before the vehicles arrive if she needs to but this is not always possible.

Cllr Farmbrough advised that she had lived in the village for a long time and she believes the school was always meant to have a drop off circle at the front of the school but this has never been put in place. Further, with regards to the flooding issue, the water reached the walls of her own property.

Cllr Grimditch suggested that an approach should be made to the Academy to find out why the original drop off system is not used.

Another member of the public advised that she had lived in the village for 35 years and flooding has always been an issue. With regards to the suggestion of yellow lines, it is agreed that this could potentially move the problem further up The Street and suggested that all properties that lead out on to The Street have difficulties exiting their drives. She believes the turning circle at the school was never put in place because it was considered unsafe for the children.

The Chairman suggested that maybe the school and the Parish Council should put their heads together to try and reach a solution. The Chairman suggested that we need to be able to talk to Highways, not submit questions to receive a no money response, it is important that a conversation takes place. CC Bowes advised that she would try and arrange for the Highways Engineer to attend a Parish Council meeting.

Another member of the public raised the question of the flashing 20mph lights outside of the school and questioned whether there was a way that these could be turned off during school holidays or when the school is not in attendance. CC Bowes advised that the school can control these and it would be worth contacting the school direct.

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Another member of the public raised the closure of the public footpath at Chase Farm. The Council was advised that there is a padlock on the gate and a notice advising that there are cows in the field. This is the only main footpath in the village and it is a public Right of Way and by law this cannot be closed. The informer accepts that this is not a Parish Council issue and that the relevant authority has been notified but the Parish Council should be aware.

DC Cowen advised that this is a Public Right of Way as shown on the OS Map and as such is not permitted to be closed

A question was raised as to who would be responsible if a member of the public climbed over the gate, as is their right, and was injured by livestock. The Council was advised that there are several cases in law on this subject and usually it is the responsibility of the landowner as in law, they are not permitted to close the Public Right of Way.

The informer advised that it is possible to keep both the livestock and the public safe but it involves the installation of some kind of fencing.

Cllr Farmbrough wanted to draw to the attention of the Council and a recorded note made of the number of incidents of power outage in the village especially over the Christmas Period. These are as follows:-

10 December – 5pm to 8pm

Christmas Day – 1pm to 3pm

30 December – 6pm to 8.15pm

31 December – 5.15pm to 7.45pm and two further losses of power after this time whilst being restored.

The problem reported by UK Power Networks has been cited as an overload on the system possibly caused by the new build properties at School View.

DC Cowen advised that power is not a planning matter. UK Power Networks have a responsibility to supply all properties. Shipdham had recently experienced a power outage for three days. It is imperative that residents write to their MP and UK Power Networks. The whole system needs updating and UK Power Networks need to be pushed into a corner to make this happen.

The Chairman advised that it is important that we document all power outages and prepare a letter to be sent to our MP and UK Power Networks. The Clerk to prepare a letter for consideration.

**The Chairman brought forward Agenda item 10G (Flooding) to enable the public to participate.**

#### **10G. Flooding**

The Chairman acknowledged that the flooding had been touched on in the open session. She reported that the flooding was first raised in 2006 and read through a series of events that have taken place over the years.

The situation will not improve as there is an increase in rainfall due to the 17% increase in extreme weather events in the UK since the 1970s. The stream comes from the River Thet but most runs off land. The Chairman reminded the meeting that everybody living on or adjacent to a watercourse is responsible for ensuring that it is clear and free flowing at all times. The Parish Council wrote to all residents on the watercourse through Caston in 2018 reminding them of their responsibilities as riparian owners.

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Cllr Grimsditch asked if it is not the responsibility of the farmers, who or what Agency is responsible.

The Chairman advised that a course of action needs to be considered as one property was under 18 inches of water and the Jujitsu Centre was severely flooded along with several other properties. It requires some kind of consultancy.

Cllr Brooker suggested that the stream can only take so much water and with only a small culvert at the Old Bakery, there is no other place for the water to go.

A member of the public advised that the stream rose by some 6 feet and the sewers were full.

DC Cowen advised that we need to understand what is going on. The flood map for Caston shows the watercourse runs from the Griston Road direction. Landowners on all sides, both residents and Highways, are responsible to ensure that the stream is deep enough and free from detritus to ensure a free flow. The difference is that ditches start the collection of water and a stream carries it on. Caston has a running stream. Further, we have very long periods of dry weather often followed by extreme rainfall. The ground is very dry which prevents the water permeating through and water then sits on top. Whilst DC Cowen had sympathy for the position people find themselves in, every house will ultimately drain into either the river through soakaways or direct into the watercourse. Lots of hard surfaces also prevent water from permeating away. Norfolk County Council are the lead flood authority and need to be much more attuned to development but it is almost impossible to resolve.

Cllr Grimsditch expressed frustration that we have to at least try, there must be a solution and it is not acceptable, somebody has to take responsibility.

DC Cowen said it is a fact of life that our drainage systems are very old and weather patterns are changing and this is a natural river, not manmade.

CC Bowes advised that Norfolk County Council is the lead flood authority but only on large planning applications but this is something she would like to see changed. CC Bowes suggested the setting up of a Drainage Group. There are groups in Watton and Carbrooke who are in contact with the Local Flood Authority to try and get to the bottom of the problem. CC Bowes agreed to provide the Chairman's contact details to the groups to discuss setting up a Caston group.

Cllr Grimsditch advised that she would like to meet with Highways to explain the problem properly. CC Bowes advised that engineers have been advised not to meet with members of the public at the current time due to the pandemic but suggested that the Parish Council prepare an email which she can forward to Highways prior to their visit.

The Chairman advised that the key things are that householders keep a regular check on the stream neighbouring their properties to ensure that they are free from debris and are free flowing. On a recent walk around the village, several ditches by School View and either sides of the school were full of leaves and branches. The site near the Barns, as you leave the village towards Attleborough, were already brimming two weeks before the flood, which was some 9 inches deep across the road.

DC Cowen agreed to speak to his colleague who has more knowledge of the issues and will revert.

#### 4. **Guest Speakers**

CC Bowes advised that the Rangers request had been received but that the team had been redirected on high priority work and are now dealing with flood matters but they will get back to normal duties in due course.

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CC Bowes asked with regards to the school parking, had the school written to parents? A member of the public advised that yes this had been done, notices had been placed in the School newsletter and text messages had also been sent. CC Bowes also suggested a poster campaign.

DC Cowen advised that with the more stringent lockdown and numbers of infections rising dramatically in the Norfolk area, Breckland are set up to support businesses and individuals and will continue to do so.

Budget proposals for next year are currently out for consultation. Breckland Council have been able to provide balanced budgets, despite income being dramatically reduced this last year, which protects services and are enhanced in certain areas.

**5. Speedwatch**

Speedwatch sessions are cancelled during the National lockdown.

**The Chairman reopened the Council meeting.**

**6. To record any Declarations of Interest and to consider any requests for Dispensations from Council Members.**

Cllr Brooker – 8l

**7. Planning Applications**

The following updates were provided in relation to current planning applications.

- A. 3PL/2020/1293/HOU – Foxhall Cottage, Dukes Lane – Single storey extension to rear. **Undecided.**
- B. 3PL/2020/0274/F - Proposed Detached House & Garage / Workshop To Garden Plot. (Re-Submission). **Appealed.**
- C. 3PL/2020/1000/F – The Barns, Attleborough Road, NR17 1DJ - Conversion of single storey storage building to dwelling. **Undecided.**
- D. 3PL/2020/1431/LB – The Mill, The Street, NR17 1DD – Temporary removal of the windmill cap to carry out repairs by Smithdale Millwrights, crane off the existing cap and replace it with a temporary cap whilst repairs are made. **Undecided.**

**8. Finance – to approve and report the following expenditure:-**

- A. To approve salary payment including holiday allowance to the Clerk, Mrs Joanne Blackman, for the month of December 2020 in the sum of £221.07.
- B. To approve use of home office payment to the Clerk, Mrs Joanne Blackman, for the 2020/21 year in the sum of £50.00.
- C. To approve reimbursement payment to the Clerk, Mrs Joanne Blackman, for half of Zoom Conference Call payment in the sum of £7.20 per month for the months of July – December 2020, total £43.20.
- D. To approve donation payment to Norfolk Accident & Rescue in the sum of £100.00.
- E. To approve donation payment to Watton Citizens Advice Bureau in the sum of £100.00.
- F. To approve donation payment to Wayland First Response in the sum of £100.00.
- G. To approve donation payment to Wayland Partnership in the sum of £100.00.
- H. To approve payment to Spanglefish for Gold Subscription for Caston On-line in the sum of £29.95 (incl VAT).
- I. To ratify payment to Brian Brooker in respect of Voipfone invoice number 1013406700, in respect of Caston Community Cars in the sum of £3.60 (incl VAT).
- J. To ratify payment to Plusnet for Broadband at the Village Hall in respect of invoice number 00004758344-017 in the sum of £34.20 (incl VAT).

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- K. To ratify payment to Ward Gethin Archer for legal costs incurred in relation to the Book of Remembrance in the sum of £276.00 (incl VAT).

The above payments were proposed by Cllr Grimsditch, seconded by Cllr Cook, all voted in favour.

**9. To discuss propose and vote on the following subjects**

**A. To approve Budget and agree Precept for 2021/22**

The draft budget had previously been submitted to all Councillors for consideration in the sum of £10,100. Having considered all matters the budget of £10,100 was proposed by Cllr Farmbrough, seconded by Cllr Grimsditch, all voted in favour. It was therefore **RESOLVED** that the precept requirement for the 2021/22 financial year will be £10,100.

**B. Tesco Blue Tokens grant for the Play Area**

The Council discussed possible opportunities for use of the Tesco Blue Tokens grant received last year. After consideration, it was decided that a springer be purchased and installed in the play area. Proposed by Cllr Farmbrough, seconded by Cllr Grimsditch, all voted in favour. The Chairman will make the necessary enquiries and arrangements. It was therefore **RESOLVED** that the Tesco Blue Token grant monies in the sum of £1,166 would be spent on the purchase of a springer for the play area.

**10. Matters to Report**

**A. Co-option Update**

The Clerk reported that she had not received any further interest in relation to the vacancies. It was agreed that given the current lockdown, we would look to try and promote the opportunity again in the Spring but residents are still welcome to apply in the interim.

**B. Financial Balances**

The Clerk reported the current financial balances.

**C. The Rangers**

CC Bowes has updated the Council on the position at 4 above.

**D. Play Area**

Inspections of the play area continue with no concerns raised. The branches that are touching the phone lines are not a danger but we will need to let BT know if things change. It is likely that some tree works will be required this year and they can be dealt with then.

**E. Coronation Terrace Green**

The Clerk reported that hedging is not currently available from the Woodland Trust. They have two distributions, one in March and one in November. They are not accepting any more applications for March so we would have to wait until November to obtain them this way. Having done a brief search of suppliers it would seem that costs would be in the region of £60-£100 for 50-100 plants if we were to purchase them independently. The Chairman suggested we approach Didlington Nurseries to supply the hedging. Further discussion took place and it was agreed to wait and apply for hedging from the Woodland Trust in November.

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F. **School Parking**  
Please see above.

G. **Flooding**  
Please see above.

H. **Fuel Allotment**  
Cllr Farmbrough provided a breakdown of the allocations for this year. Cllr Brooker suggested that recipients may consider donating their allocations to charity next year. It was agreed that this was a nice idea but it is a decision for the Trustees. It was therefore suggested that a letter is written to the Trustees putting forward the idea for next year. Cllr Brooker to put forward suggested wording. ***Item for next Agenda.***

11. **Correspondence**  
None.

12. **To agree the next meeting date**  
1 February 2021

**The Chairman closed the meeting to permit public discussion.**

13. **Participation and questions from the public – session 2**  
None.

14. **Matters for future discussion to be noted**  
Nothing further than listed above.

Meeting closed at 9.45 pm

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