

MULBARTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on

Monday 7th February 2022 at 7:30pm

Councillors present: Derek Aldous, Adam Banham, Steve Sewell and Richard Tucker.

1.0 District and County Councillors' Report

District Councillor Legg reported:

- SNC propose to increase council tax by 3%, equivalent to £5.00 for a Band D property and SNC staff will be starting to work in their offices for three days a week, from this week
- Catbridge Lane flooding issues have now been dealt with after several months
- He has a meeting planned this week with the local police sergeant to raise concerns that the Beat Manager is being taken away for other duties
- SNC are proposing some major development projects that would be funded by borrowing, taking advantage of low fixed rates
- Discussions about a new doctor's surgery continue although there is no definite plan and still needs the agreement of the doctors. Whilst this won't cure all the problems it may attract more staff with better working conditions
- He had attended an Equinor presentation about the substation at Swardeston and noted that traffic would now be off the A140
- The District Direct project, set up a few years ago, to provide facilitators to assist with getting patients discharged from hospital continues to face difficulties in getting a commitment for regular funding to employ people to do the work.

District Councillor Francis, in response to a question, reported that the Humbleyard Practice (GP Surgery) are taking turns across the three sites to be closed one day a week (Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday) and this appears to be due to a lack of doctors and staff absences due to Covid. Cllr Francis written report was received and noted.

Cllr Clifford-Jackson had sent her apologies for absence and her written report was received and noted.

1.1 Public Session

No members of the public wished to speak at this time.

2.0 To close the meeting to public participation

Cllr Aldous closed the meeting to public participation and formally opened the Parish Council meeting.

3.0 To receive and consider apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Reeve and Cllr Peachey. Apologies were also received and accepted from Cllr Leek, due to Covid.

4.0 To receive declarations of interest on items on the agenda

Cllr Banham declared an interest in matters relating to items 9.0 and 17.0.

Cllr Sewell declared an interest in matters relating to item 9.0.

5.0 To confirm and sign the minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council meeting held on 10th January 2022

The minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council meeting held on 10th January 2022 were unanimously agreed as a true record of the meeting after being proposed by Cllr Sewell and seconded by Cllr Tucker.

6.0 To receive financial report and approve invoices for payments as per schedule for January

The financial report including the budget tracking report was noted. Following proposal by Cllr Banham and seconding by Cllr Sewell all payments for January were unanimously approved. A copy of the payments is attached to these minutes.

6.1 To review quotes and approve contractor for works to trees at the Meadows and Village Hall car park

It was noted that only one of the three contractors asked to quote had done so. Following discussion of the quote it was proposed by Cllr Aldous that Contractor 1 be awarded the contract, which will include a tree safety inspection of the oak trees and Meadows play area; this was seconded by Cllr Tucker and unanimously agreed.

6.2 To approve appointment of annual play inspection contractor for 2022

It was noted that the contractor who has previously completed the annual play area inspection had quoted £180 plus VAT to complete this year's inspection; this is the same price as last year. Following proposal by Cllr Banham and seconding by Cllr Sewell it was unanimously agreed to engage the contractor to complete this year's play area inspection on the four play area sites.

6.3 To approve Jubilee Gardens maintenance for March to October 2022

It was noted that the current contractor has increased his price to £72.00 per month. Following proposal by Cllr Aldous and seconding from Cllr Sewell it was unanimously agreed to continue with this contract.

7.0 Working group report on completing items on the outstanding works list & next working group meeting

Cllr Banham reported that a working party had achieved their objective of digging out a section of ditch on the Common. The next Working Group meeting would discuss a work scope for the Common play equipment repairs.

Cllr Sewell reported that he had taken delivery of ten fruit trees for the Oakley Park allotment site and he would liaise with Cllr Peachey to get these planted.

8.0 Review of pro forma for requests to use MPC land

Due to councillor absences at this meeting it was unanimously agreed that this item would be deferred to the next meeting.

8.1 Annual review of Council's major documents

Cllr Aldous proposed that that all MPC's major documents are formally accepted as they currently stand and should it be necessary to review or update any individual policy or document during the year then this can be completed using the current process. This was seconded by Cllr Sewell and unanimously agreed.

9.0 Neighbourhood Plan Review working group update and consideration of actions required

Cllr Banham did not take part in discussion of this item.

A report from the Working Group's meeting with the planning consultants was received and noted. Another meeting is scheduled for 22nd February and an update will be presented at the March meeting.

10.0 Retrospective approval for the Clerk and the Vice Chair to proceed with appointing a solicitor for the renewal of the lease for the Bus café and update of proceedings

Following review of previous correspondence on this item Cllr Aldous proposed that retrospective approval be given. This was seconded by Cllr Banham and unanimously agreed.

11.0 Review of safety at Long Lane/The Rosery junction

Due to councillor absences at this meeting it was unanimously agreed that this item would be deferred to the next meeting.

12.0 Update on legal advice regarding the lease of Mulberry Park

Cllr Leek had provided an update on developments for inclusion in the minutes. In the absence of Cllr Leek this was read to the meeting by Cllr Banham:

Following on from last month's PC meeting when I explained we had no update on the position of the lease from our solicitors I took on board the request to try and move this forward as requested by the Football Club. Two days after the meeting I spoke to our solicitors who informed me that they were still extremely busy and could give no indication as to when our questions could be heard. Bearing in mind the long delay with our other leases for allotments, we therefore agreed to move this work to another solicitor recommended by them. I spoke to the new solicitor briefly and gave permission for MPC's file to be transferred to them. I am now awaiting a response from the solicitor, hopefully this will be soon.

At the last meeting MPC deferred any decision on the new green hedging and the other spectator stand to make good use of the legal information from our solicitor, due to concerns relating to the fact that these would be put onto land not leased to the Football Club. It just makes sense and shows due diligence to ensure we are acting correctly when it comes to insurance/liability and legal standing for these structures.

Because of the number of questions/concerns I still feel it is best to get clarification first from our solicitor so we know how we can proceed. At present I believe MPC is under immense pressure from the Football Club to make quick decisions that may or may not be the correct ones. MPC makes decisions in public meetings, and follow our Standing Orders. 30 minutes after MPC's last meeting I received a text from the Football Club Chairman requesting to speak to me, yet he hadn't said a word in either of the public sessions at the meeting. It also transpired that two other councillors were approached via private email requesting a meeting and being informed that if the adult team did not get what was needed for their league it would jeopardise the children's team's future. My understanding is that the children's teams generate a healthy income for the Football Club every season.

I'd like to remind the Football Club that MPC had meetings with them and the FA to improve drainage on Orchard Park; MPC was in support of this, but the Football Club failed to follow up on their agreed actions.

It is regrettable and also unhelpful that posts on social media originating from club officials are antagonistic towards the MPC, and then they are requesting open dialogue and assistance of the MPC.

Much has been made of a site meeting between two MPC councillors and representatives of groups using the communal land at Orchard Park. The purpose of the meeting was to have an open discussion about the land being a possible option and with the 25m by 10m dimensions could involve moving one of the football pitches and not the loss of two whole pitches reportedly described by FC.

I believe MPC should remind the Football Club that the Parish Council has agreed to a number of requests over the past few years. In the last couple of years it has been increasingly difficult for MPC to know exactly what the Football Club wants as their requests keep changing either in design or priority and on occasion contradictory information. MPC is not responsible for the Football Club meeting FA deadlines and I am encouraged that MPC continues to follow its own Standing Orders and consideration of relevant laws, regulations and guidance to reach decisions that could impact the village for many years in the future.

13.0 Transfer of allotment land and request from Cadent Gas to install a gas governor

It was noted that there has been no update from the solicitors regarding the land transfer and no decisions or actions are required by MPC at this meeting.

13.1 Request from MALGA regarding site checks, community shed and terms of allotment agreement

Due to the absence of several councillors at this meeting it was agreed that the Allotment Working Group would consider these requests and respond as soon as practical. It was noted that any change to payment dates would necessitate changing all 72 allotment agreements currently in effect.

14.0 Renewal of EE & Three mast agreement

It was noted that there has been no updates and no decisions or actions are required by MPC at this meeting.

15.0 Update and consideration of any actions required on wind farms

A report on recent developments affecting the local area was received and noted. This document will be added to MPC's website.

A request from Oulton and Cawston Parish Councils for a meeting was noted. It was agreed that this falls within the existing delegation of authority for dealing with offshore wind farms and related matters.

16.0 Update and consideration of any actions required on solar farms & industrialisation of South Norfolk

A new map showing planned industrialisation in the area was received and noted. This document will be added to MPC's website.

During discussion it was noted that there is growing national concern about the amount of farm land that is being used for solar farms and CPRE are campaigning on this matter.

17.0 To consider planning applications received

Cllr Banham left the meeting prior to discussion of this item.

2021/2645 - Land North Of Stoke Lane Dunston Norfolk - The installation and operation of a Battery Energy Storage System. Cllr Sewell reported that comments had been submitted by MPC raising concerns about health and safety risks, disruption during installation, and cumulative impact of the development.

2021/2706 Land East Of Main Road, Swardeston, Norfolk - Hornsea Three Battery Storage – Environmental Impact Assessment. Comments have been submitted by MPC.

Amended planning application: 2021/1647 - New dwelling with integrated garage. Location: Land North Of Lantana, Norwich Road, Mulbarton, Norfolk. Cllr Sewell reported that previously submitted comments need to be resent and the District Cllrs asked to recommend that this application is referred to committee.

Cllr Banham returned to the meeting after discussion of this item.

18.0 Correspondence requiring consideration

- Email from MVHMC – a meeting is planned for tomorrow (08.02.22) to address matters arising
- Email from a resident about speeding on Warren Lane/Swainsthorpe Road/Church Road and request that the speed limit between Swainsthorpe and Mulbarton is reduced to 30mph. It was agreed that MPC would support this suggestion and would link it to future discussions for the earlier agenda item 11.0.

19.0 Liaison officer reports

Due to councillor absences there was no report on allotments.

The Mulbarton Common Steering Group has not met since the last meeting of the Parish Council and there was no further update for this evening's meeting.

The clerk reported that the Community Speed Watch volunteers will be completing their on site training on Monday 28th February with the Police and will be up and running after this date.

20.0 To receive any items for inclusion on the next agenda.

No Councillor had any items for inclusion in the next agenda in addition to those already noted.

21.0 To adjourn the meeting for the 2nd public session

Cllr Aldous adjourned the meeting for the second public session.

Cllr Legg commented that he had already asked for planning application 2021/1647 to go to committee, and that SNC's enforcement department had declined to take action on the previous planning application and the unauthorised removal of trees until the application had been determined. He noted that there was nothing on the new application regarding reinstating the trees.

In relation to item 13.1, a representative from MALGA requested that that site checks be quarterly and confirmed the community shed request was for the Meadows site.

A member of the public asked that the update given under agenda item 12 was read out again and asked for permission to record it. This was agreed and Cllr Banham read the update a second time.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.15pm.

The next meeting will take place on Monday 7th March 2022 at 7.30pm in the Committee Room at the Village Hall.

Payments for January 2022

Cheque Number	Recipient	Details	Net total	Vat	Amount £'s
102797	Spire Solicitors	Blakey's Lease	200.00	40.00	240.00
102798	DJ Ireland Groundworks & Paving Services	Jubilee Garden borders	5503.00	1100.60	6603.60
102799	Thrings LLP	Planning Advice	2250.00	450.00	2700.00
102800	Bartlett Signs	Disabled parking and Bye Law signs	174.00	34.80	208.80
102801	APC Pest Control	Quarterly invoice	120.00	24.00	144.00
102802	A Phillips	Expenses	37.49	3.63	41.12
102803	A Phillips	Salary	760.58		760.58
102804	HMRC	PAYE	250.55		250.55
		Total for month:	9295.62	1653.03	10948.65