



WOODNEWTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING MONDAY 5th December 2022, Village Hall, 8pm

(DRAFT) MINUTES

Present: Cllr Hansford (Chairman) Cllr Neville (Vice Chairman), Cllr Blackmore, Cllr Guttridge, Cllr Swallow, Cllr Phythian Cllr Goodall and Amy Miller (Clerk and RFO)

1. Declarations of Interests from Councillors

None

2. Apologies for absence

None

3. Public Time

No members of the public attended.

4. Minutes of Meeting Held on 7th November 2022.

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 7th November 2022, having been previously circulated, were **AGREED** and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

5. Matters arising from Previous Minutes (not covered elsewhere on Agenda)

None.

6. Church Yard (Cllr Phythian)

Cllr Phythian thanked all those who helped with the cemetery rewilding, the scarified area has now been resown with the wildflower seeds purchased for the project.

It was agreed to remind the contractor about cutting the area behind the Church where the modern graves are for next season and as the final cut this year was missed due to wet weather, the wild areas would be strimmed manually.

7. Speeding in and through the Village

Cllr. Blackmore updated that all speed signs were fully operational and functioning well and hopes to provide a precis of the data collected at the next meeting.

8. Playing Fields/Playground

- (a) The playground safety inspection report was carried by Cllr Swallow who noted the main hazard was the volume of leaves characteristic of the time of year. Users of the play area are asked to be mindful as they can be slippery.

- (b) Cllr Blackmore updated that the table tennis and adult exercise equipment installation has now been completed.
- (c) Richard Hegarty continues to assist the clerk and VH committee members in the process to register ownership of the allotments and playing fields at the land registry.
- (d) There are no ongoing repairs – the wooden edging around the rubber matting in the slide area has settled, however, possibly a badger is digging under the wendy house – to be monitored.
- (e) The suggestion of a petanque/boules pitch received positive feedback from residents and it is definitely something to consider further in the future.

9. Planning

- (a) NE/22/00816/FUL – Permission granted
- (b) NE/22/00867/FUL – Permission granted
- (c) NE/22/01446/TCA – 32 Main Street – annual pruning of trees – No Objection
- (d) Area Planning Committee – debrief by Cllr Guttridge. It was noted several residents and Cllr Guttridge (speaking on behalf of the PC) attended the meeting to resolve the planning permissions above (a) and (b). Both applications had been referred to the APC following a number of objections. Permission was granted for both applications, but it was felt the process flawed.

Retrospective permission was granted on (a) despite there being 11 amendments to the original planning permission and that an incorrect site plan had been submitted showing the property being sited further forward towards main street than it is, resulting, in the extension built being the correct size but extending further back than expected due to the incorrect plans. Regardless of all the amendments the application had to be considered as a new application totally unrelated to the previous application granted.

When (b) was discussed, many objections related to the building clearly extending several meters beyond the settlement line. Official advice provided to Councillors in the planning report, saying the proposed building would be within the settlement boundary was factually incorrect. In another statement it is said the garden area would fall outside the settlement boundary, implying it would only be the garden area, then refers to being broadly in line with other properties that do breach the building line, but have class Q permitted development rights as they were old agricultural buildings, this plot does not.

The size of the building was raised, and references made to a "large" building in 6 or 7 places in the planning officers supporting report, however, we believe that because of the size considerations, it does not satisfy Criterion c) of Policy 2 in the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan.

When the planned ridge height of 9m, 2.5m higher than surrounding properties was mentioned the planning officer tried to suggest that this would be mitigated by the slope of the land down to the brook but failed to mention that Stable Barn would be on land of a similar ground height. Only 2 other listed buildings in the immediate vicinity were mentioned in the report when there are 4 listed buildings in the immediate vicinity. It is hard to see how these buildings could not be affected by the huge scale of this new building. Surprisingly, the Conservation Officer raised no objections.

There have been many comments about the access on to Main Street and how constricted it is at this point, creating safety concerns. The Highways report says

that certain criteria "must" be satisfied, but a simple viewing of the site easily reveals that many of these criteria cannot be satisfied, yet Highways raised no objections, which is puzzling. The Planning Officer's report relies on permitted use (7.5.5), but the "permitted use" seems to depend on hearsay with no concrete and specific statements about the exact planning status of the "existing agricultural style portal frame building currently [that] stands within the site which is understood to have formerly been used in connection with the business interests of the former occupier of number 31 Main Street." (para 3.3). In spite of a question raised by a resident at the meeting seeking clarification of the exact planning status, none was forthcoming and none of the Councillors raised the question. At the meeting a resident representing several villagers said that [a named resident] had been resident in the village for 25yrs and had never seen the site used as a market garden and every resident I have spoken to has seen no commercial activity at least in the last 20 years. So where was the evidence for commercial use that was used to convince the councillors in the meeting that residential use would result in a reduction in vehicular traffic? The Solicitor was consulted for advice on whether there could be an appeal if the application was rejected due to Highways access issues, he replied yes. This was based on the planning officer's assertion that there was previous commercial activity on the site, never proven or checked out. This raises an important question about what the planning status of the site is, and what in law, is, allowed? Decisions appeared to be based on assumed previous use, never factually proven or checked, and this say so was then allowed to take precedence over modern Highways safety requirements.

The consensus of the case is that the planning report presented to the committee appeared to have been written to justify the recommendation to grant permission.

At this stage other than a Judicial Review the Parish Council is left with little option but to lodge a formal complaint to NNC.

10. Accounts

As at 30/11/2022 the bank balance stood at £27,526

The following payments were **AGREED**:

Clerk Salary (Nov)	£440.00
Freshair Fitness	£8,184.14
David Townshend (seeds)	£131.02
Wave (allotment water) DD	£34.03
VH Hire	£111.00
NCALC (VAT invoices)	£64.60

The following remittances were **NOTED**:

Allotment Rents	£16.00
Crowsons	£68.00
Grantscape	£10,195.00

11 Financial Update

Discussions took place with regards to the precept setting for 2023/24 The current financial year has a budget of £20,598 and a precept of £16,172. Costs for the following year were discussed. Keeping current inflation rates in mind, the budget was split out by known costs for 2023/24 (ie. mowing contracts) flexed costs for unknowns (ie. street light electricity) and the general view of keeping any potential

projects on hold the following year. A budget was agreed of £22,161 for 2023/24. This is an increase of 7.5% on the prior year. It was acknowledged reserves carried forward following this years projects and including reasonable reserves for works to the church wall (10k ring fenced) would be circa £12,500. With inflation currently running at around 10.5%, but recognising the cost of living pressures the budget would require a minimum precept increase of £1,213 (£16,172 to £17,385) an increase of 7.5%. This was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Hansford and **AGREED** by all. Any shortfall at this stage was expected to be covered by reserves or grants before considering any service reductions.

12. Allotments

No Update

13. Church Yard\Cemetery

James Rowlett hopes to action the tree work by the end of the year.
Cllr Blackmore is meeting another contractor for a quote on the church wall on 6th December.

14. Village Bonfire

We wish to reiterate the bonfire is now **CLOSED** and after a suitable dry spell hope that it can be burnt.

15. Overgrown Verges

The Parish Council wish to thank Mr Cheney, a local farmer, for the cutting of the bank on the right-hand side after the bridge from Fotheringhay coming into the village – Clerk to thank in writing.
The brambled area around the banks of Meadow View to be noted in street doctor by the clerk.

16. Ongoing

An agenda item to **CONSIDER** items that may be included on the agenda going forward and discussed as appropriate – it will be entitled rolling agenda items so they are not forgotten but may not always be discussed.

- (a) Village Information Boards – possibly rewilding areas to show the flowers?
- (b) Planning continuity\awareness
- (c) Church Wall Survey
- (d) Petanque\boules pitch

17. to Correspondence

- (a) Ward boundary consultation to reduce the number of councillors from 78 to 70 but we are not currently represented locally so is expected to have little effect.
- (b) Request for councillors to complete online declaration of interest forms - noted

18. Councillors' Opportunity to Update Colleagues

None.

19. Woodnewton Newsletter

It was **AGREED** the next monthly newsletter would wish all residents Happy New Year.

20. Date of next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is Monday 9th January

21. Close of Meeting

The Chairman closed the meeting at 21.46

Chairman's Signature.....

Date 9th January 2023

Prepared by Amy Miller Clerk and RFO

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15th December 2022