

APPENDIX T

Northhill Parish Council

Clerk to the council: Leanne Bacon, 55 Fairfield, Gamlingay, Beds, SG19 3LG

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Minutes of a Meeting of Northhill Parish Council held at Ickwell Village Hall, on Monday 8th April 2013 at 7.30pm

Present:- Councillors D Milton(DM), (Chair), H Papworth (HP), T Dawson (TD), D Kay (DK), , K Bennett (KB), S Mandley (SM), I Robinson (IR), W Momen (WM), D Wilcox (DW), Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) Councillor T Turner (TT) Clerk L Bacon (LB), PS Gary Kidd and 21 members of the public (MOP)

1. To receive apologies for absence – P Maudlin and R Brinkley (unwell) and A Wild (other commitment).
2. To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda. DM 10.1, 10.2 and 13.1 (disclosable non pecuniary).
- 2.1 To receive any written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests
- 2.2 To grant any requests for dispensations as appropriate. I Robinson – affordable housing and allotments. Noted.
3. Police – to consider any items.i. PS Gary Kidd presented crime figures and detailed recent increase in domestic burglary. Packs for security marking property were made available. PS Kidd left the meeting. ii. To consider submission of schemes for funding from the Community Safety Fund – letter from Olly Martins, Police and Crime Commissioner. Not considered.
4. Open forum for 10 minutes to allow members of the press and public to speak on any agenda item.

Mrs Randle– Distributed a report copied to all councillors outlining objections of a group of residents to the proposed affordable housing site on Biggleswade Road.

Mrs Mullen – asked for the results of the survey of Northhill Pond and what was happening with the wild flower meadow. Chair explained that the Highways and Open Spaces Committee had recently inspected the area and recommended no increase in size of the flower meadow and added that it has now been tidied up. S Mullen expressed her opinion that the flower meadow was put in the wrong place.

Mr Innes – Considers that the terms and jargon used in parish council documents are unhelpful – plain English should be used. Expressed the opinion that the Council is not representing some of its parishioners and that meetings happen very quickly without adequate notice. Clerk responded - many councillors would agree with his comments about terms and jargon but some of these are prescribed wording – such as “pecuniary interests”. Clerk handed Mr Innes a written explanation of these. It was explained that the meetings schedule for the full year ahead is published on the website and in the newsletter distributed to all households. Some occupants of Biggleswade Rd said they did not receive the newsletter – this will be taken up with the distributors. A new website is currently under construction which may aid communications for those with access to the internet.

IR – noted that the draft minutes of the last planning meeting were not yet on the website and it has been 14 days since the meeting. DK – responded as webmaster. Will check why this has not happened and will rectify as soon as possible.

J Goodwin asked if the Council has a publicity officer – Chair explained that all Council administration is dealt with by its one employee – the Clerk.
5. To approve the minutes of meeting held on 25th February 2013. *Resolved.* and noted the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 25th March 2013.
6. To consider any matters arising.

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IR – 3ii. Request for speed checks on Biggleswade Road. Expressed thanks to Mrs Parker and D Price of the Speed Watch group for monitoring speed on Biggleswade Rd, the machine provided failed so no actual checks could be made. Asked if NPC could do more to reduce speeding on this road. Chair explained this was outside the remit of this council. Clerk explained that the Police had been asked more than once to do speed checks in this location. IR asked for them to be reminded again. KB noted that the equipment provided to the Speed Watch group seems to be both in high demand and unreliable.

IR – 4 .Matters arising from previous meeting on 21st January 2013. Asked if a decision had been made on removal of one of the two noticeboards in Upper Caldecote (the one outside the Church Rooms). IR referred to the article in the last newsletter and said that this was misleading and implied the decision had been made. Clerk pointed out that the minutes state this will be referred to Highways and Open Spaces for resolution. Chair explained that one parishioner had indicated to him that this noticeboard was used and that it would likely stay. Asked if the ownership of the noticeboard at Ickwell had yet been determined. Chair explained this belongs to the parish council.

IR – 5. Open Forum. Asked why names of members of the public are listed on agendas and minutes. Clerk explained that this was acceptable practice.

IR – 9.1 Asked Clerk to detail the responses from relevant parties to query why the Ickwell Rd site had not progressed. Clerk explained that she had circulated all responses to councillors, but did not have a copy of the correspondence to hand. Clerk invited IR to share the update to this matter that he had received from his own investigations and circulated to councillors. IR responded that he did not have an update and repeatedly insisted that the Clerk answer his original question. Clerk summarized the response she had received, with the caveat that this was from memory and should not be taken as verbatim - GUNG/CBC indicated that there were more complications regarding landowners willingness to sell and planning with the Ickwell site compared to the one on Biggleswade Road and therefore it had been decided to progress that one first. IR then admitted that he did indeed have an update – he had spoken to the landowner of Ickwell Road who indicated to him that they are prepared to sell the land. IR said council should reconsider the resolution made by planning committee to approve the application for the Biggleswade Road site in light of his new information. Clerk responded (with permission of the Chair) to clarify planning procedure, specifically the fact that the existence of a potential alternative site is not considered a material planning consideration and is therefore unfortunately irrelevant when determining this application. IR accused Clerk of “waving her arms around”. TD and other councillors asked IR to stop “grandstanding” and to calm down. During the discussions above, IR pointed at other councillors who made contributions and asked them to give their names as he said he had forgotten them.

IR – 9.3 Salt. IR asked why his offer to help with this was not minuted. Clerk pointed out that it was minuted “IR offered to provide a wheelie bin of salt for use at Garner Close.” IR said this was not the offer of help he was referring to.

IR – 9.4 Correspondence and Communications. IR asked if he could speak on behalf of Mr and Mrs Henegan and bring up their issues. Clerk reminded IR that this council had very recently resolved to invoke restrictions on communications with these two parishioners for 6 months due to the nature, volume and frequency of their correspondence . Clerk indicated that she was not prepared to continue being harassed by IR and left the meeting. HP also left the meeting. In their absence the Chair adjourned the meeting at 8.21pm to be reconvened at a later date.

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Continued - Minutes of a Meeting of Northhill Parish Council adjourned from the 8th April 2013, reconvened to consider item 6. onwards at Caldecote Lower School Hall, on Thursday 2nd May 2013 at 7.45pm.

Present:- Councillors D Milton(DM), (Chair), H Papworth (HP), T Dawson (TD), D Kay (DK), , K Bennett (KB), S Mandley (SM), I Robinson (IR), W Momen (WM), D Wilcox (DW), Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) Councillor T Turner (TT) Clerk L Bacon (LB) and approximately 15 members of the public (MOP)

6. To consider any matters arising (continued) 6.4 - IR asked if NPC had made an application for funding from Broom Quarry as he understood the deadline had passed. KB answered that he attends the Liaison Committee meetings and the application forms have not yet been agreed. IR said that he considers it will be a failure of NPC if funding is not gained from this source. KB pointed out that NPC does not currently have a project requiring funding.
9.1 – IR asked for copies of correspondence relating to 1. The decision by GUHG to progress the Biggleswade Road site first and 2. The potential development of both sites in Upper Caldecote, which he says he can't understand as it is not the wish of NPC to see this happen. AW (Planning Chair) read out an email trail, including an affirmative response from IR himself, confirming that NPC accepted 1. and 2. HP considered that 1. was a matter between the developer and the landowner. DM confirmed that it is possible that both sites in Upper Caldecote could be developed.
7. To receive and adopt minutes/reports from committees/working groups/councillors and to consider matters arising.
- 7.1 Planning Minutes – 25th March 2013.
IR – Asked if Council would consider rescinding the decision of Planning Committee to approve the application for affordable housing at Biggleswade Road. No support from any other councillors.
- 7.2 Highways and Open Spaces and Cemeteries and Churchyards 11th March 2013.
Amendments to draft minutes - DK – omission of discussion about request for signage near Ickwell Village Hall. KB – item 5a. should read "Caldecote Road". HP – clarification that wildflower area is not to change in size. Letter to be sent to thank Mr Binning and Phillips for work to Lych gate. Notification of schemes funded 2013/4 under CBC Local Area Plan. Not discussed.
- 7.3 Verbal feedback from Councillors on meetings/conferences attended i. Ivel Valley Forum – D Milton, W Momen. Noted included in error.
8. **Central Bedfordshire Council**
- 8.1 To receive a report from CBC Councillor T Turner. Latest Parish Forum meeting 28.3.12. Noted should read 24.4.13. Update at next meeting. TT gave summary of the impact of the reduction in the council tax base, funding available from CBC and support for schemes such as the "Dukemaster" running in Dunstable to help the elderly regain independence after a hospital stay. Pleasing education results in the Central Beds area. 11 Libraries upgraded. Gypsy and Traveller local plan under consultation – 65 additional pitches initially required. WM asked how CBC is managing public health now this function has been returned from the NHS. TT responded that this is working well but stressed the importance of working together with other agencies – for example with the immunization programme, IR asked for clarification on how members of the public can make representation at planning committee (specifically in relation to the application for affordable housing in Biggleswade Rd). TT reminded IR that she had already provided him with this information by email, but outlined the procedure – objectors have 3 minutes in total to present their case. The applicant and the parish council have separate slots – potentially 9 minutes of presentations in total.

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- 8.2 To consider the following correspondence from CBC:
- i. Rural Matched Fund – to consider support for bid for funding horse riding safety improvements. *Resolved* to approve T Soar to progress this bid. KB suggested Broom Quarry could be another potential source of funding.
 - ii. Member briefing on welfare reform. Noted.
 - iii. Update on budget and Council tax for 2013-14. TT covered this under 8.1.
 - iv. Consultation on Proposed Modifications to the 'Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Strategic Sites and Policies' 2.4.13 – 15.5.13. Noted previously circulated for councillors to comment individually.
9. **Finance**
- 9.1 Audit 2012-13 initial report following meeting with internal auditor. Noted no problems identified at this stage. Audit dates for 2012/13 – noted public inspection dates and requirements for display of notices and Audit Briefing note from BDO. Noted.
- 9.2 Accounts paid and to be approved. *Resolved* to approve.
- 9.3 Bank reconciliation Feb and March 2013. *Resolved* to approve.
- 9.4 End of year budget review. Noted. Full accounts to be presented to next meeting for approval in compliance with statutory timescales.
- 9.5 Request for funding – Link-a-ride Community Transport. Resolved that Clerk will ask for more detail of local usage and refer to Establishment Committee for consideration. WM added that parishioners should be encouraged to use local services as they will otherwise be lost.
- 9.6 Parish maintenance – i. Tree works Upper Caldecote Churchyard. Now completed – account not yet presented. ii. Additional bollard and chains on Ickwell Green. Noted, not yet ordered. IR asked if Council would consider installing similar at Caldecote Green – next Highways and Open Spaces to discuss. Local residents were not supportive of previous suggestion of installing kerbs to protect this area of the green.
- 9.7 Section 137 limit for 2013-14 £6.98 for info. Noted.
10. **Parish Matters**
- 10.1 Northhill Pond Committee update. Noted. Wildflower area will stay but not be enlarged next season.
- 10.2 Allotments – proposal to form working group – volunteers to next meeting. IR and WM volunteered to be involved. Asked if NPC would allow him to approach owner of Seddington site to suggest a portion of the site be reserved for council run allotments. DM considered that as these allotments were available to all, there was no need. IR explained that some people wanted the security of council tenure, rather than private. DM suggested the support for this suggestion should be assessed via the next newsletter.
- 10.3 Preen – Northhill Parish Council is runner up in highest percentage of households participating - £150 vouchers to distribute to good causes. Noted. HP to claim vouchers – *resolved* these could be divided between 3 schools in the parish.
11. **Correspondence and Communications** – to consider any received. IR asked if he could bring up some letters and articles he considered were relevant to various agenda items. As these were not listed or received by Council this request was declined. AW explained that the proper procedure would be for items to be sent to the Clerk for inclusion if necessary (Discussed again after item 14)
12. **Staff and Councillor matters**
- i. BATPC training programme 2012 – attendees. KB and DW booked on courses.
 - iii. Nominations for Chair/Vice Chair Council year 2013-14 for AGM. Noted Clerk will circulate expression of interest forms for completion prior to the meeting.
13. **Highways** – to report any urgent items and receive latest Highways bulletin. Noted. Parishioners encouraged to report any issues direct to CBC. i. Temporary road closure notice for May Day. Noted.
14. **Items for the next agenda** – IR asked that "Protocol" of council meetings be included. Council not in support as training for whole council covering this was recently undertaken

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– Clerk to circulate some training notes as a reminder. AW –To address recent concerns, Anglian Water representative to be invited give presentation on foul water treatment in Upper Caldecote. LB advised this would be better at a future meeting as the next meeting (AGM) has a very full agenda already. TD – presentation on preferred form of thatching – deferred to future meeting as previous. AW – Highways and Open Spaces item – verges encroaching on footpaths in parish. DM – PM sent apologies for tonight's meeting and has been unwell – suggests Council send card to wish him a speedy recovery and one to Cllr C Maudlin offering congratulations on her appointment to Chair of Central Bedfordshire Council.

The following relates loosely to agenda item 11. and is recorded to provide an accurate and complete record of the meeting:

IR – Referred to a recent letter in the Biggleswade Chronicle and asked on whose authority this was published. Clerk explained that the Establishment Committee had resolved that the Chair should make a public statement regarding its responsibility as a responsible employer to protect its staff and that he has the authority to make such a statement on behalf of the Council. As this was not made at the public session in April, it was made public via a press release. IR asked that it be recorded that the Chair has not responded to 3 messages he (IR) has sent. IR asked DM to comment on letter from J Davis in the Biggleswade Chronicle – no comment. . DM, HP and AW expressed concern that IR has been forwarding some messages outside the list of intended recipients, ignoring the privacy disclaimer. IR denied that he had forwarded Council emails, but one that "affects his integrity and caused a lot of upset". IR asked why the Clerk had forwarded one of his messages about Housing Needs surveys to John Atkinson. Clerk explained that Mr Atkinson, as head of Legal and Democratic Services at CBC is dealing with a complaint she has submitted about IR and she considered that matters within the email were pertinent to this complaint. IR asked that it be recorded that he didn't think this was necessary.

WM commented that when you ask a question you do not always get the answer you like.

"RESOLVED that under Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 and in view of the confidential nature of business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw whilst matters pertaining items 16 and 17 are discussed

15. **To consider: Update on Easements.** No update, this is an on-going item.
16. **Date of next meeting – Annual General Meeting Monday 20th May, Caldecote Church Rooms.** Noted.
17. **Closure of meeting. 9.36pm.**

Signed..... Dated.....