

# Methwold Parish Council

Meeting of the Parish Council  
Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2023 at 7.30pm  
21 Room St George's Hall Complex Methwold

Present: – Cllr. R Scott – Chairman, Cllr. Marriage, Cllr. Liddle, Cllr. French, Cllr. Rodwell, Cllr. D Scott, Cllr. Horton.

16 members of the public

1. The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting.
2. The parish council received and resolved to agree apologies for absence - Cllr. Beukes - apologies accepted.  
Cllr. Charlesworth-Smith chose not to take her seat on the council and sat with members of the public.
3. Declarations of Interest (In accordance with S31 of the Localism Act 2011) and requests for dispensations. Cllr. French requested a Dispensation to explain a planning decision.
4. To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 9th March 2023 – Cllr. D Scott proposed to accept the minutes, seconded by Cllr. Marriage. Cllr. Horton and Cllr. Scott abstained as not present.
5. Matters arising from the Minutes not included on the agenda but for information only - None
6. Reports
  - 6.1 Update and Report from the Open Spaces Working Party to consider the recommendations made at the Open Spaces Working Group on 23rd March 2023, to include:  
Permission requested to purchase a replacement bench for the grass area on the corner by the old noticeboard in Methwold Hythe, current seat is past repair, residents have asked for a new bench. Costs - bench is £649, fittings for the bench to be anchored to ground and delivery +VAT Cllr. French proposed to purchase bench, Cllr. Liddle seconded - APPROVED
7. Finance
  - 7.1 Accounts Update – Bank Reconciliation – Clerk gave an update on accounts.
  - 7.2 Income & Invoice List – Clerk explained there was a duplicate payment received from a funeral director, this is to be repaid. There were two hire fees paid into MPC account which will be transferred over to MHCCT. Alford Storage (clothes bank) paid £38.00 and the cost of running the complex since the Trust was formed has been refunded to MPC and the insurance premium for St George's Hall and The Old Social club has been repaid to MPC. Cllr S Liddle proposed to accept and approve payments, Cllr. French seconded – APPROVED.
  - 7.3 To ratify the appointment of Norfolk ALC to provide Payroll Services – current Accountant has informed the parish council that he has stopped undertaking payroll services for parish councils. Norfolk ALC cost for payroll services for three staff is £216 per year, permission requested to move payroll - Cllr D Scott proposed to accept, seconded by Cllr. Liddle - APPROVED
  - 7.4 To ratify the purchase of orange fencing and pins for churchyard wall – cost £63.00, Proposed Cllr. French seconded by Cllr. Liddle. APPROVED
  - 7.5 Architects fees for phase 1 of development on recreation ground already approved – Notification of 10% increase to cover rising costs. Cllr D Scott proposed to accept increase, Cllr. Marriage seconded – APPROVED.
8. Planning
  - 8.1 To receive planning decisions  
22/01158/A 42 High Street Methwold Thetford Norfolk IP26 4NT - 1no externally illuminated fascia sign, 2no poster display units, 1no flat panel, 2no sets of window vinyl's Application Refused 7 March 2023  
Delegated Decision

23/00037/F Himley House 47 Hythe Road Methwold Thetford Norfolk IP26 4PS - Proposed new roof to create second floor accommodation along with rear dormer window and associated works

Application Permitted 7 March 2023 Delegated Decision

22/01678/F Romney Hut Cooks Farm Severalls Road Methwold Hythe Norfolk - Replacement of Romney Hut with new Barn Style Dwelling Application Permitted 15 March 2023 Delegated Decision

22/01535/F 49A Main Road Brookville Norfolk IP26 4RB - Detached dwelling and carport garage with landscaping works incidental to the development area. (Retrospective Revised Design to planning approval 18/00430/RM) Application Permitted 15 March 2023 Delegated Decision

22/01966/FWissington Sugar Factory College Road Wissington, Wereham Norfolk PE33 9QG - The de-carbonisation project comprises of a new 1st effect evaporator, a Juice Run evaporator, inter-connecting pipework, new heat exchanger's, structural steelworks and civil bases. Application Permitted 13 March 2023 Delegated Decision

23/00282/F Quorn Foods Brandon Road Methwold Norfolk IP26 4RL - Proposed un-loading canopy Application Permitted 28 March 2023 Delegated Decision

21/02111/NMA\_1 11 Old Feltwell Road Methwold THETFORD Norfolk IP26

4PW - NON-MATERIAL AMENDMENT OF PLANNING CONSENT 21/02111/F: Swimming pool cover and associated rooms, enlargement of the pool in length, application has been approved for a smaller version - 14/01193/F Application Refused 29 March 2023 Delegated Decision. Cllr. French declared an interest and explained the reason for the refusal, there will be an amendment.

23/00375/PAGPD 2 Denton Lodge Cottages Mundford Road Feltwell Norfolk IP26 4DT - Single storey rear extension which extends beyond the rear wall by 5.32m with a maximum height of 2.7m and a height of 2.7m to the eaves GPD HH extn - Approved 4 April 2023 Delegated Decision

8.2 To receive planning applications

22/01352/NMA\_1 NON-MATERIAL AMENDMENT to Planning Permission 22/01352/F: Proposed Rear and Side Two Storey Extension with Rear Single Storey Extension and Front Porch 14 Stoke Road Methwold Thetford Norfolk IP26 4PE

2300638/F Replacement dwelling at 14 Stoke Road Methwold Thetford Norfolk IP26 4PE – NO OBSERVATIONS

23/00433/F Side and rear extension to provide 2 additional bedrooms and 1 ensuite bathroom at The Squirrels 1 Mundford Road Methwold Thetford Norfolk IP26 4PD – NO OBSERVATIONS

23/00544/F Garage extension and loft conversion forming 2 bedrooms and 1 bathroom at 2C Brandon Road Methwold THETFORD Norfolk IP26 4RH – NO OSERVATIONS

23/00404/F Single Storey side and rear extensions 1 Denton Lodge Cottages Mundford Road Feltwell Norfolk IP26 4DT – NO OBSERVATIONS

8.3 To consider planning applications received after the agenda was published - None

9. Items received for the agenda

Brookville defibrillator – Request for the council to insure the posts for the cabinet which holds the defibrillator in Brookville. Cllr. French explained that the old phone box in Methwold Hythe which accommodates their defibrillator is included on the council Asset Register, Cllr. French proposed to be fair to all, the posts should also be added as street furniture to the register. Seconded by Cllr. Horton – APPROVED.

Cllr. M French stated he was impressed at how quickly Brookville Defibrillator Group were able to obtain the funding. It was stated by a resident that the remaining funds would be used for additional maintenance. Cllr. French thanked Cllr. Charlesworth-Smith who has been extremely helpful guiding Brookville Defibrillator Group to where funds could be extracted.

There are already two successful business models - Methwold and Methwold Hythe, they raise funds, look after the defibs on a week-to-week basis, maintain and undertake any required pad changes, as this has worked very well for a number of years there is no reason to break this business model and therefore the council would expect Brookville Defibrillator Group to do the same rather than having the defibrillators funded across the board by the council. Cllr. French proposed that MPC do not take over the funding for maintenance of the defibrillators - Cllr. Liddle seconded – APPROVED.

10. Correspondence – Clerk read out emails received

Parish Clerk

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Dogs are being exercised off leads in the Cemetery – letting dogs off the lead and them run around is very disrespectful, if anybody notices this happening please report it, a notice will be put in the Methwold Times with a reminder of the Cemetery Rules regarding dogs.

Email reported that from the 27th to 31st of March there were 50 articulated lorries coming through the village and down Buntings Lane, not other vehicles going to and from the site, can a restriction put on the number of lorries?

The parish council have no jurisdiction over this issue, there was no change of planning permission when the factory changed from one industrial development to another and as far as the parish council are aware there are no vehicle restrictions. If there has been a breach of planning, it is a matter for Highways/Planning, however on previous occasions when the parish council have spoken with the Borough Council, they have not been aware of any vehicle restrictions on Buntings Lane.

It has been rumoured, that many years ago there were Court Proceedings which stated a vehicle limit, but papers have never been produced to substantiate this.

Planning Application Appeal for 15 Feltwell Road Methwold Hythe has been received – OBJECTIONS remain the same as previously submitted.

#### 11. Open Forum for Public Participation

An opportunity to hear from members of the public, Borough, and County Councillor Cllr. S Liddle asked for the floor to make a statement.

Thank you Chairman, Councillors and members of the public.

Parish clerk I'd like this minuted if you will.

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm aware of a post and a number of comments made today on Facebook in the "Methwold and Local Villages Community Group" by a fellow Councillor who, well, she's present today but not in her capacity as Councillor so I'll limit the comments I make.

I'd like to take this opportunity to address some of the comments and claims the Councillor has made and attempt to set the record straight.

I'm going to quote - unless Mrs Charlesworth-Smith has any objections - I'm going to quote parts of her post on Facebook today (in the public domain). Have you any objections to that Mrs Charlesworth-Smith? (Somebody comments "it's in the public domain")

I'm just offering the courtesy.

So, this is in the public domain so I don't think I'm being untoward in quoting.

So the first quote is regarding the Parish Council:

"We can't even take people on as co-opted because of some policy, with no explanation as to why these candidates are not selected and even more insulting to these poor people, it's done by secret ballot... and these are local people who would certainly make a difference to this council but they fail and why?? No one has given anyone a valid explanation as to why they were not considered. It's appalling!!"

Ladies and Gentleman, there is a clear and documented co-option policy in place, a copy of which can be found on the Methwold Parish Council website. Indeed, I was co-opted onto this council myself, and I was present and voted on the co-option of two more councillors since. Each of these co-options was carried out by a vote, by way of a show of hands. I do recall on one occasion two councillors present did complain that the vote was carried out by a show of hands instead of a secret ballot.

The co-option policy, which has been in place for a number of years, makes it clear that councillors are not required to explain or justify their voting decision.

The next quote I would like to address is:

"The Parish Council...will spend £4000 of your money on new noticeboards."

The Parish Council has budgeted £4000 to replace the three parish noticeboards. This figure was reached by looking at prices on a number of websites for metal noticeboards and poles, ones that are designed to last and will not require replacing again in the near future; however no decision has been made to replace noticeboards yet, let alone particular noticeboards chosen.

The next quote is...this was accompanied by a picture of the fencing, which the clerk mentioned a short while ago, around parts of the church wall. The quote is:

"The start of fencing to protect the church wall .... Apparently not yet falling down but budgeted to cost the parish council in excess of the 25-30k!! But I did hear it's been like this for over 50 years!! Tough those chalk walls!"

Ladies and Gentleman, there have been concerns for a few years, indeed before I started on the Parish Council, about the structural integrity of the churchyard wall, which is the responsibility of Methwold Parish Council; some flagstones have already fallen. We were, as the clerk mentioned earlier, fortunate that a chartered surveyor volunteered to do a walk-around of the wall, and was concerned about some stretches of the wall, and for this reason the orange fencing was erected to warn people to not go too close to the wall. And, well, I'm going to stop there because the rest of....I don't want to address my other concerns about this while the councillor is not here in her capacity as councillor.

That is all I wanted to say. Thank you.

Cllr Ryves – apologised, although he told everyone he wouldn't be standing again for election he will be standing again. Cllr. Ryves stated that he has enjoyed working with this parish council and appreciates the time and effort that is put in by all parish councillors and offered a vote of thanks to the council.

Cllr. Storey – people give up time to volunteer to become a parish councillor, it's not easy and there are times when some decisions made are not popular. Cllr. Storey wished councillors going forward success, there is a lot of work to be carried out with the best intentions at heart, those who join the council do so for the right reasons, to make the parish a little better than it was when we first join it.

The Norfolk County Council Budget is available online.

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/news/2023/01/council-budget-proposals-published>

This has meant a 4.99% increase to a Band D house which is approximately £75.69 per annum or £1.46 per week.

County Deal - <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/policy-performance-and-partnerships/policies-and-strategies/corporate/county-deal> A decision is expected on phase 1 by the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023, Cllr. Storey will keep the public informed of progress, if you would like to know more, please contact Cllr Storey.

Old Chapel – covering and bus stop sign? Cllr. Storey updated the meeting, still ongoing with Highways and a 3<sup>rd</sup> party.

Suggestion the parish council hold regular meetings with Highways, this has been happening.

Road surface repair to potholes heading to Weeting from Methwold south of the Lodge Road junction, on the parish boundary has been rough patched but this is lifting and needs the repair to be done properly.

Cllr. Storey to take this up with Highways and will contact the Clerk with response.

Cllr. Ryves – requested the planning consultation period for the airfield is extended, this has been granted. It was pointed out that the HGV's will not be using this part of the road, the route from the airfield site is left onto Lodge Road and left onto the B1112 to Whittington to get onto the A134, concern was voiced regarding the vehicles who may use the Cranwich and Northwold roads as a cut through as many already take these routes.

There was a lively discussion regarding the planning application for the pig and poultry unit.

Speedwatch – sites and training have been organised, more volunteers are required for Methwold. If you are interested please contact the group.

Brookville Defibrillator Group asked for the use of a room to hold a training session, this will be dealt with by the Trust.

Meeting extended to allow business to be concluded.

Permission asked to sow some native wildflower seeds in the wildflower meadow, permission granted.

Vote of thanks asked for Cllr. Marriage who is attending his last meeting.

Thanks to Cllr. Horton who has served on the council for 50+ years and has not received any recognition for the work she does as well.

12. Further reports and items for the next meeting agenda – May 11th 2023 - None

Parish Clerk

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13. To pass a resolution (under the Public Admission to Meetings Act 1960 to exclude members of the public and press for the following confidential items – Recommendation from the HR Group to correct calculation on staff Contract. Cllr. French proposed to accept, Cllr. D Scott seconded – APPROVED.

Meeting ended 9.45pm.

DRAFT