

Methwold Parish Council Meeting
Thursday 13th June 2024 at 7.30pm
21 Room, St George's Hall Complex, Methwold

AMENDED 8TH AUGUST AGENDA ITEM 5 – TO INCLUDE CLLR O'WARE, CLLR J RODWELL, OMITTED FROM ORIGINAL MINUTES.

Present

Councillors: Cllr M French (Chairman), Cllr A Grassick, Cllr B Horton, Cllr F Riches
Cllr T Ryves, Cllr M Storey

5 members of the public
Clerk

1. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. Apologies for absence accepted for absence from Cllr. R Minkler, Cllr. T Thomas, Cllr. K Rodriguez, Cllr. R Scott.
3. Declarations of Interest (In accordance with S31 of the Localism Act 2011) and requests for dispensations – Cllr, French for information only, planning.
4. Cllr. F Riches proposed to accept the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 9th May 2024 as an accurate record of this meeting, Cllr. T Grassick seconded the motion. APPROVED with 2 abstentions
5. Matters arising from the Minutes not included on the agenda but for information only. – Due to resignations need to revisit the list of committees and working groups.

6. Open Forum for Public Participation

An opportunity to hear from members of the public, Borough, and County Councillor.

The Chairman reminded everyone that we are now in a pre-election period and our district councils are all busy getting ready for 4 July 2024, when the election will take place.

During this pre-election period, parish and town councils must remain completely neutral regarding political campaigning. Parish and town councils should avoid any form of publicity referring to individual candidates, political parties, or the election itself during this time.

Cllr. Storey – Norfolk County Council has a lot of information on their website <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/>

Cllr. Ryves – regarding the Cranswick planning application on the airfield Methwold, Mundford have submitted their comments. Methwold Parish Council are a consultee and therefore will have the opportunity to make comments when the plans are circulated.

Is there an update of the Old Chapel and bus stop? This has been brought up again in a meeting with Highways.

Road signs outside the primary school? - The SAMs2 unit has been set up in this area and has shown that the problem is not speeding traffic but due to the parking. The 30 mph roundalls are on Highways list to be done.

Street cleaning was last done on the 2nd February, 17 weeks ago, does anyone listen? Cllr. Ryves and Cllr. Storey will pick this up with the relevant department but cannot make them clean the street.

Hockwold seem to have their weed sprayed, when will Methwold be tidied up?

Bins at the Drill Hall look a mess, they are outside the boundary wall.

The shrubs at the hall have been tidied up, this is a Trust matter and have to be kept separate.

The dog waste bins are emptied on a Wednesday morning.

The Borough Council have asked for an application to be made to instal the new bins in Methwold Hythe and at the bottom of the recreation ground, this is in hand.

Resident referenced the October 2023 minutes and a reference to the hall complex and if it were to be sold in the future. The Chairman said there are no plans or intention to sell the hall complex.

Confirmation requested of the breakdown of the donations towards the toilets on the recreation ground project.

Annual CIL reports for 2022/23 and 2023/24 not on the website yet.

Resident felt that there seems to be a lack of transparency and communication between the Trust and the public. This will be passed onto the Trust.

7. Reports

7.1 Update and Report from the Open Spaces Working Party to consider the recommendations made at the Open Spaces Working Group on 23rd May 2024 to include:

The Old Chapel is there an extant hording licence, Borough Council is to chase legal to find out what is happening. Pavement around Cock Corner, possible joint funding, hoping to be ready to apply for parish partnership funding later this year.

Traffic survey – to look at reducing speed on B1112 – Highways looking at this?

Highway looking into a build out or similar solution where the pavement at St Georges Hall narrows.

7.2 Cllr. T Grassick – presented the parish councils Biodiversity Project. This will be posted on the parish council website.

The very small area of grass behind The George does not belong to the parish council anymore.

7.3 Toilets on the recreation ground project – Open Spaces Group felt that there is already anti-social behaviour on the recreation ground with glass being smashed and the mats for the new play equipment pulled up, public toilets could add to this, and it was felt that the upkeep, maintenance, security, and risk of attracting more anti-social behaviour outweighed the benefits a toilet would bring. Therefore, the recommendation is that the project for toilets on the recreation ground is stopped. Cllr. B Horton recalled that this has been looked at by previous parish councils and the cost of running and upkeep is prohibitive and wasn't taken forwards.

Locally in the area other parks do not have toilets, does Methwold need to have toilets, Swaffham Park toilets are constantly locked, would we be spending a lot of money on an ongoing financial obligation. Another councillor stated that another local council opened toilets and had to close them shortly after due to anti-social behaviour. Cllr. B Horton proposed the council cancel the toilet project, seconded by Cllr. F Riches – Agreed with 1 abstention. The council will think carefully and discuss with the organisers of the craft fairs what will happen to the funds specifically donated to the project.

8. Finance

8.1 Accounts Update – Bank Reconciliation

Current Account total on 30th May 2024	£62,062.17
Tracker Account total on 30th May 2024	£30,070.63
Saver Account (CIL & S 106) total on 30th May 2024	£63,438.85
Emergency Reserve Fund 30th May 2024	£25,481.65
Total	£181,053.30

8.2 For Approval of payments – Income & Invoice List – Cllr B Horton proposed acceptance and payment of invoices, Cllr. T Grassick seconded – APPROVED

Payments include an additional £96.00 to add new outdoor gym equipment to the insurance policy.

Payment to Norfolk ALC for Payroll/PAYE 2024

New signs for recreation ground

Half cost of new noticeboards to be paid upfront.

8.3 Update and Report from Finance Committee meeting to consider the recommendations made at the Finance meeting held on Tuesday 11th June 2024 to include:

8.4 Cllr. J O'Ware proposed to accept and approve the Internal Auditor's report, Cllr. J Rodwell seconded - APPROVED.

8.5 Cllr F Riches proposed to accept and approve 2023-24 Annual Governance Statement, Cllr. T Grassick seconded – APPROVED Chairman and Clerk signed document.

8.6 Cllr. T Grassick proposed to accept and approve 2023-24 Accounting Statement, Cllr. B Horton seconded – APPROVED Chairman and RFO signed document.

8.7 Cllr. T Grassick proposed to re-allocate the £6672.49 to the traffic survey and traffic calming and safety measures to approve the Annual CIL Report 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, Cllr. F Riches seconded – APPROVED 1 abstained

8.8 The Chairman of Methwold Hall Charitable trust has requested payment of the Support Grant of £12,000.00 Cllr. J O'Ware proposed to approve payment of the Support Grant to Methwold Hall Complex Charitable Trust, Cllr. B Horton seconded – APPROVED.

8.9 Two quotes received, additional play equipment means there are 2 sites, quotes received from ROSPA £375.00 and Wicksteed £300.00 both + VAT. Cllr. J Rodwell proposed to accept £300.00, seconded by Cllr. J O'Ware, Wicksteed were chosen to undertake the Annual Play Equipment Inspection.

9. Planning

9.1 To receive planning decisions

24/00302/F Land Between 12 And 16 The Avenue Brookville Thetford Norfolk IP26 4RF - Variation of Conditions 2, 4 and 5 of Planning Permission 23/00914/F: Replacement of existing bungalow with chalet dwelling and detached garage/annexe Application Permitted 3 May 2024 Delegated Decision – comment – does this building have any openings for a garage? Ask the planners.

24/00084/TREECA Red House 1 Hythe Road Methwold Thetford Norfolk IP26 4PP - T1 Horse Chestnut and located in the corner of the rear garden. The tree is around 3 metres from the building on one side and flint/clunch boundary wall on the other. Remove 5 lower branches as they currently prevent light from reaching the boundary and building walls, resulting in damp. Tree Application - No objection

22 May 2024 Delegated Decision

24/00096/TREECA 11 Old Feltwell Road Methwold THETFORD Norfolk IP26 4PW - T1 - Maple tree- partial crown reduction by 2.5m - 3m to reduce it back from the footpath, carriageway and cables.

Reduce shrubs on opposite side of the driveway away from the cables Tree Application - No objection

22 May 2024 Delegated Decision

24/00035/TPO The Gatehouse 8 Old Feltwell Road Methwold THETFORD Norfolk IP26 4PW - Reduce the side laterals of beech tree by 2.5m, crown raise over building by 1.5m & thin. The height of the crown will not be reduced TPO Decision Consent 22 May 2024 Delegated Decision

9.2 To receive planning applications

24/00915/F Retrospective: Retention of single storey extension to dwelling at Blackberry Barn 49H Main Road Brookville THETFORD Norfolk IP26 4RB – NO OBSERVATIONS

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

10. Items received for the agenda

SAMs2 update – Cllr. R Minkler

Continues to be moved around the 8 locations on a weekly basis. The figures produced from the device have not changed and we continue to see high percentages of speeders in Brookville and The Hythe. The post on Hythe Road Methwold is still not located however we do know that Highways have scheduled it to be installed.

The SAM sign is currently located on Cock Corner monitoring traffic heading toward Brandon through the Junction. On my return next week, the sign is scheduled to be relocated in Hythe.

Figures so far from Cock Corner show that although the percentage speeders is currently low at 10% (compared to Brookville and Hythe at 26% and 30% respectively) some speeders have managed to achieve up to 70 mph though the Junction. There is at least one vehicle each day reaching speeds of between 60 to 70 mph.

Community Speed Watch Statistics for the Month of May 2024 – Mr R Minkler - Co-ordinator

Methwold Parish is the top of the league for the whole of Norfolk. Of the 69 speed watch groups in Norfolk the Methwold Parish Team, made up of Brookville, Hythe and Methwold achieved the most hours monitored with 18.25 hours. The most sessions with 13. The most vehicles recorded speeding with 140. The most further action with 6. 140 vehicles owners received a 1st letter, 16 received a second letter. This is the first time we have been top of the league after coming a close 2nd several times. The Speed Camera Enforcement Officers look at these figures and as such the Parish does now receive more visits.

Propose invest funds into independent traffic survey which costs £5,000 – discussion at next parish council meeting.

11. Correspondence – None

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT JUNE 2024

Regrettably, I have to share with you the worrying increase in wanton vandalism and antisocial behaviour in the Parish over recent months.

These are some of the most recent incidents.

The fence at the back of the Mini Methwold outside play area has been damaged on a number of occasions by people breaking in whilst climbing onto the roof.

To combat this, we are having to install anti climb strips, anti climb paint, passive infra red lights, and we are considering CCTV.

This will all come at a cost to The Parish. It is your money.

Also, someone thought it a good idea to ram wood into one of the security padlocks on one of the oil tanks, rendering it unusable, and it will need to be cut off and replaced.

More unnecessary expense for you, The Parishoners.

Recently, teenagers were seen pulling up some of the safety matting around the new gym equipment in The Rec., requiring it to be relayed.

Also on The Rec., another group of teenagers were seen deliberately smashing glass bottles and scattering the broken glass. In this incident a member of the public was injured. This behaviour shows a callous disregard for others' safety.

If you see an incident taking place, please ring 999, do not under any circumstances approach the perpetrators. Police are aware of the increase in this sort of behaviour and will respond.

If you come across the results of vandalism or antisocial behaviour, please call 101. The Police will not take third party statements, so it has to be you. All incidents need to be recorded.

There have also been recently a number of what can best be described as "disgusting" and "anti social".

Someone left an un-bagged soiled nappy in one of the bins on The Rec., others have been using the bins as a urinal. This presents a health hazard to the person emptying the bins, and it is totally unacceptable.

On a more positive note, we still have some Section 106 monies available for improvements to The Rec. I'm sure that you are all making use of the new outdoor gym equipment, but are there any other things that you would like to see?

It is very important that Parishoners participate in what is going on in the village.

Having said that:- As you will be aware, that sadly, having recently lost a number of Parish Councillors, we are getting seriously close to having the Borough Council dissolve the Parish Council and run us from Kings Lynn.

This would be an absolute disaster for The Parish, for all of us, and a situation that would take a long time from which to recover.

Please think about stepping up to be a Parish Councillor and supporting our community. Or if you know someone who might Please contact me, or our Parish clerk.

Together we can, and must, move forward together, making our Parish a better place for all.

12. Further reports and items for the next meeting agenda – Thursday July 11th 2024

Church Wall – Meeting with Church Warden, church architect next week, report next meeting.

Resignations have been accepted from two parish councillors, currently one vacancy is available for co-option and two are displayed on noticeboards as casual vacancies.

Open Spaces – Sand Pit – for information - confirm that this does not belong to the parish council, confirmed that this is correct by previous Chairman, this was recorded several years ago.

Chairman thanked everyone for their input and wished them a safe journey home.

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: None

Meeting ended: 21.00