

Minutes of

GREATFORD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday 26th January 2021 at 8pm

Held online via zoom due to government restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Welcome from the Chair

Jon Workman opened the meeting, welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming.

Present

Parish Councillors - Jon Workman, Phil Britton, Gemma Taylor, David Anderson

Clerk, Helen Britton

CLlr Rosemary Trollope-Bellew

CLlr Kelham Cooke

Parishioners - Chris Granville-White (Flood Warden), Mike Stonestreet (Deputy Flood Warden), Jacquelin de Trafford, Kevin de Trafford, Elizabeth Ashby, Nigel Ashby, Bob French, Elaine Hawkins, Sarah Rodriguez, Richard Rodriguez, Simon Penson, Dani Wheeler, Bridget Everitt, Martin Brebner.

Andy Halfhide

20/21 - 40 Apologies for absence

CLlr Ibis Channell, David Trawford, Lois Webb.

20/21 - 41 Approval of Minutes from November 2020

Proposed by David Anderson and seconded by Phil Britton.

20/21 - 42 Reports from County and District Councillors

Report from the leader of South Kesteven District Council, CLlr Kelham Cooke:

The fact that within a matter of a few days over the Christmas and New Year period South Kesteven went from Tier 3 restrictions, to Tier 4 and then national lockdown shows just how quickly the Coronavirus variant has swept across the country – and how serious we need to be about doing all we can to minimise the opportunity for it to continue spreading at such a rate.

We have had to quickly re-adjust to life back under lockdown but communities, including your own, have risen to the challenge despite rapidly changing circumstances. Needless to say, at South Kesteven District Council we remain determined to maintain our essential services for our residents and businesses throughout this next phase of the pandemic.

It may be difficult to do so at times, but we must look for the light at the end of the tunnel and it is there in the form of the vaccinations that are now being given to those in the greatest need. It is a very welcome bonus that part of the Meres Leisure Centre in Grantham has been converted to a vaccination centre which means many appointments are being made available at a relatively convenient location. St Marys Medical Centre is also a vaccination site.

While this is a huge step forward in the efforts to subdue the virus it is important to remain patient and continue to follow Government guidance and take all possible precautions. The message is clear: Stay Home. Protect the NHS. Save Lives.

Testing station

Another positive move for residents of South Kesteven is that a mobile testing station for Coronavirus is now regularly setting up at St Martin's Park, Stamford. This, in addition to other testing stations in the district, should further reduce the need to travel long distances to get tested.

The testing stations are available only to those who have Coronavirus symptoms and appointments must be booked in advance at www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or by calling 119.

Business grants

SKDC's economic growth and regeneration company, InvestSK, continues to support the business community with expert advice on the latest Government grants that are available, including those for retail, leisure and hospitality sector businesses forced to close.

InvestSK is working to ensure the grants go to those entitled to receive them and is also hosting its next online Tea Break event at 9.30am on Monday 25th January where information will be available. To find out more go to www.investsk.co.uk

Helping the homeless

SKDC takes very seriously its duty of care to those sleeping rough or who have other accommodation problems and there have recently been a couple of good examples of how we can help.

Our Severe Weather Emergency Protocols – SWEP – is a voluntary council initiative, which has been triggered by cold snaps early this month and has seen us provide temporary shelter for rough sleepers who may not normally be eligible for statutory housing services. In fact, we encourage members of the public to report any rough sleepers so we can engage with them.

We have also completed a property conversion allowing us to house four homeless people and provide them with essentials such as bedding and toiletries. And they are receiving practical support to enable them to claim benefits, pursue job opportunities and secure longer-term accommodation for independent living.

These are practical ways in which SKDC helps people make a fresh start in life.

Leisure centres

LeisureSK Ltd, South Kesteven District Council's new leisure company, has taken over operations at 1Life fitness centres in Grantham, Stamford, Bourne and the Deepings.

While Coronavirus, unfortunately, means they are closed for the time being this is a move that can only be good for customers and centre staff – and also provides value for money for Council Tax payers.

LeisureSK Ltd is a company wholly-owned by SKDC, and will very much be looking forward to welcoming users when the centres re-open. I am convinced the change will have a positive impact on the wellbeing of residents by helping them to be active and stay healthy.

You can download the LeisureSK app from the App Store or Google Play and more information is available at www.leisuresk.co.uk/

Finally, while there is no doubt that more tough times lie ahead, if we stick together and continue to help and support each other 2021 can be a year we will look back on and take pride in a job well done.

Kelham reiterated that Gareth Davies MP would be happy to help the parish council in its response to the gravel pit application.

Report from District Councillor, Cllr Rosemary Trollope-Bellew's:

The Stamford Mid Lent Fair has been cancelled for the second year in a row in agreement with The Showmen's Guild. Stamford Market continues with traders wearing facemasks. Rosemary has been talking with businesses in tourism and hospitality about recovery from the effects of trade due to the pandemic. She sympathised with those affected by the episodes of flooding. A reminder that the number to phone if one's dwelling is flooded is 01522787082.

On behalf of Greatford, Rosemary has been seeking that Lincolnshire senior officers attend a meeting about the objections raised by parishioners to the application for a gravel pit at King Street. An email will be sent to the leader of Lincolnshire County Council, Martin Hill, to ask for him to elicit a response from the officers.

20/21 - 43 Financial matters

Cllr David Anderson reported that the cash balance was £7006 at the start of the year and £9207 at the half year as reported at the last meeting.

Since then we have received £530 including a Community Wildlife Grant of £500. We paid out £1379 of which the Playing Field Project was £1029, clerks fees £250 and £100 for the emergency phone line giving a current balance of £8358.

In the next 3 months we will receive no further income but are likely to spend £3171 on the Playing Field, £500 on clerks fees and £273 on hedge cutting etc.

This will give a year end balance of £4414. compared with a previous forecast of £4822 but this did not include payment for a strimmer and hedge cutter.

A Small Grant grant application for £800 had been submitted in November but turned down.

District Councillor Trollope later kindly offered £500. If we were to complete the football field levelling this year we would still end up with circa £4400 in the Current Account.

David said that he would alter the previous forecast and budget for next year to reflect these changes.

20/21 - 44 Planning matters - update on Category A application for gravel extraction & processing at King Street, Greatford

The parish council has responded to further consultation by meeting Garet Davies MP and following up with a letter summarising its concerns, and our suggestion of a meeting with senior LCC officers (Head of Planning, Head of Highways, Planning Case Officer). There has been no response to Rosemary's invitation to them to

attend the meeting, apart from Felicity Webber, Planning Case Officer who said that she will not attend. The parish council will write to the Leader of LCC, Martin Hill, for an urgent response, and to Cllr Richard Davies.

Jon Workman raised the recent accident on Kings Street on 22nd January '21; three vehicles and all emergency services were in attendance. David Anderson suggested this is reported as further evidence that King Street is a dangerous road. Martin Brebner asked the parish council to seek further information about the accident. Bob French suggested the clerk contact the accident clerk for a press release. Phil Britton will email another response on the planning portal.

Nigel Ashby suggested that King Street should be part of the gritting programme.

20/21 -45 Recent flooding in the village

Chris Granville-White (Flood Warden) update:

With the heavy rain over Christmas and during Jan there have been three occasions of very high river levels through Greatford.

During this time the main Greatford Sluice and the Cut, together with the Fitzwilliams Sluice at Greatford Mill, operated correctly to maintain river levels as far as was possible.

However, the quantity of water in the river from the saturated catchment was too much on Christmas Eve for the main Sluice and Cut to divert sufficient water into the Welland.

The river began to overflow upstream of Greatford when the Flood Alert height of water (1.18m) was passed during the afternoon of Christmas Eve, and surrounded some of the houses in Greatford Gardens. Although the flood water was up to a foot deep in places, water only entered two garages to a depth of half an inch or so, and no houses were flooded.

As Flood Warden I maintained contact with the Environment Agency (EA) Duty Officers during Christmas Eve and overnight to provide email updates to neighbours.

The height of the river during 24/25 Dec is shown on the graph below. The flat top to the curve indicates a probable failure of the gauge at Shillingthorpe to record the peak level at around 1.55m – above the Flood Warning level of 1.32m.

During the weeks after Christmas, there were two further periods of very high river levels on 15 Jan and 20 Jan shown on the graphs further down, although these periods did not cause further flooding in the village.

I am presently engaged with the Environment Agency about what work might be carried out upstream of Greatford to reduce the likelihood of such instances occurring in the future, as had last occurred in Dec 2012 and Jan 2013. As always this is a complex question of identifying the extent of risk, responsibility and any consequent liability aspects if changes are made, and the likely cost when seen in a cost-benefit relationship. I will keep the PC updated in the weeks ahead as this dialogue develops.

On 11th January Chris emailed the EA with a proposal to lower the river datums for the Greatford Sluice and the Fitzwilliams sluice by 10cm each winter between November to March as most flooding happens then. This was a repeat of my suggestion during 2015. At the time, the EA had intended to carry out a trial of this, but with a changeover of EA officials this never took place. The purpose of the suggestion is that it would initially provide some spare river volume to help cope with rising levels, and the lower/earlier opening of the main Greatford sluice would divert excess water away earlier through the Cut to reduce the likelihood of flooding at Greatford.

Chris is pulling together a paper for the parish council to raise issues with the Lincolnshire Lead Local Flood

Authority (LLFA), including the cost of potential damage and liability to be looked at.

Mike Stonestreet (deputy flood warden) mentioned LCC flood line number phone 01522787082. Clerk to advise villagers of the flood line phone number and to forward requests for help to village email group.

20/21 - 47 Playing Field project progress

The planting of shrubs has taken place by villagers, including children. The tree delivery is scheduled for February, week 3. David Anderson and Nigel Ashby will mark out where the trees are to be planted by pairs of villagers. The slide is refurbished, thank you to villager Jim Coulam. Maggie Kaye has completed the artwork which will now be sent to Lincs Printers who will produce an image suitable for the lectern to be produced. The Woodland Trust is to provide more trees once its website is working again. A grant application was turned down but Rosemary Trollope-Bellew questioned this and offered £500 there and then. Jon Workman thanked her for this generous grant. Mention of Mrs Dowsett will not be on the lectern.

20/21 - 48 Sports Holiday Club proposal update

Finding Fitness have proposed a summer holiday week-long sport camp for children from Greatford and other villages. Finding Fitness have asked parish councils to pay but Rosemary pointed out that PC funds are to be used for the majority of villagers. Helen Britton (clerk) suggested investigating the use of the Greatford CE School Fund (trust) to pay as it is educational. Bridge Everitt (Church Warden and Trustee) to look into this. Dani Wheeler noted that there are at least 30 school aged children in the village and so the proposal is worth investigating. Bob French asked if a basketball back-board may also be paid for out of the GSF trust.

20/21 - 49 Defibrillator

Recently checked the battery in date. Gemma Taylor asked about information stickers for householders and Nigel Ashby has these.

20/21 - 50 Football pitch

Gemma Taylor questioned the levelling and safety as this was a key response on a village survey. Jon Workman suggested that when the slide is installed, the contractor could be asked about levelling the ground. David Anderson said that he would contact the digger contractor for a quote for levelling the pitch as he has the appropriate safety gear on his digger to cope with buried cables. His prices were also very reasonable. We would also need 6-8 tonnes of topsoil.

20/21 - 51 Stones

Gemma Taylor suggested that villagers might like to paint and locate stones around the village for others to find as an enjoyable activity, especially during lockdown due to the pandemic.

20/21 - 52 Police - Safer Together initiative

Helen Britton mentioned Maisie McMahon, who represents North & South Kesteven in the Safer Together Team based at Grantham Police Station. She would like to work together in a range of ways with local communities such as Greatford.

20/21 - 53 AOB

Footpaths

Users need to be aware that they are crossing property and to keep to the path. The path behind Greatford Gardens is incorrectly marked on OS maps but adequately marked. A note is to go into the parish magazine reminding parishioners to keep to footpaths and not to walk on private land.

Malcolm Wells and Nick Novakovic had written to Jon Workman regarding the footpath from Main Street to the River Glen. They suggested that the path is onerous to keep clear, the bridge is unsafe, and whether the parish council would support their suggestion that the path be closed. The points in the letter were discussed and the consensus was that, while the parish council has no responsibility for the path and the bridge, that the path is a valuable amenity and provides access to the river for villagers and should remain open. Regarding the safety of the bridge, the parish council will enquire as to ownership and responsibility to maintain the bridge and will refer the matter to the Community Officer at LCC. Bob French expressed that volunteers from the village will keep the path passable and suggested that a bench be situated beside the river for enjoyment. Jon Workman will respond to Mr Wells and Mr Novakovic.

Dog theft

It has been brought to our attention that dog theft may have increased and for villagers to remain vigilant.

Speed sign

Dani Wheeler suggested adding a repeater speed sign along Carlby Road near the junction with Greatford Gardens. Nigel Ashby offered to relocate the interactive sign which is currently located on Baston Road.

Cllr Rosemary Trollope-Bellew announced that she will not be standing as the Conservative candidate for county council. Andy Halfhide, also Chair of Langtoft Parish Council, will stand in her place and he introduced himself at the meeting.

The meeting closed at 10:20pm

The next Greatford Parish Council meeting is on

March 30th 2021 at 8:00 PM