

Girton Parish Council

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The Pavilion
Girton Recreation Ground
Cambridge Road, Girton
Cambridge CB3 0FH

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting

Wednesday 25 April 2006, Girton Glebe School

The meeting was attended by approximately 50 residents, Parish, County and District Councillors, PC Kevin Misik and PCSO Llian Cole. The Vice-chairman, Helen Wilson took the Chair.

1. Welcome from the Chairman and introduction of Parish Councillors

The Vice-chairman introduced herself followed by the Parish Councillors, the Clerk and the Bookings Administrator who all introduced themselves.

2. Apologies for absence

Andrew Meek, Richard de Horsey, David Gardiner, Councillor Jane Healey and the Revd Will Adam.

3. Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on 20 April 2005

The minutes had been circulated. Hilda Dowding proposed and Ann Round seconded and it was agreed the minutes were a correct record of that meeting.

4. Matters arising from minutes

Mrs Wilson said there were probably no matters arising that would not occur later on the agenda.

5. Chairman's report for the year

Mrs Wilson said that the Chairman's report had been circulated and explained that it also included the Recreation Ground report. Members of the audience were given some time to read the report after which the Council received questions and comments.

Q. With regards to the traffic calming measures I haven't seen traffic slowed by the speed cushions which can be straddled at significant speed. Cars, buses and lorries do not slow down. It would have been better to restrict the width of the road.

Q. I happen to have a raised table outside my house and I have had to move to a bedroom at the back of the house because of the noise.

A. Mrs Wilson replied that she thought the majority of people do slow down. R Hiley said that measurements of speed taken after the traffic calming measures were completed showed the average speed to be around 28mph. He said that chicanes had been considered but that examples had shown that at less busy times of day some drivers treat chicanes as a challenge!

Q. Speed bumps will cause long-term damage to car suspensions. Ridges (rumble strips) would have been less damaging.

Mrs Wilson reported that the trim-track on the Recreation Ground was finished. In response to a question asking what the trim-track was, she replied that it was a series of wooden exercise installations placed around the Ten Acre field for families to use together.

7. Accounts 1st April – 31st March 2006

Copies of the accounts had been circulated. Mrs Wilson invited questions from the floor.

Q. Who are the debtors?

A. People who haven't yet paid fees for hire of the sports fields and use of the Pavilion hall. M Woodisse, the Parish Council's internal auditor explained that the end of the financial year was only a few weeks ago which was why there were some outstanding fees.

Q. What is the Weaver's Field money for?

A. The money came from the developer and is used for the maintenance of the open spaces. When the funds run out the costs will become part of Open Spaces general expenditure.

Q. How much extra is the cost of funding the footway lighting in the village. I very much resent this extra cost to the village.

A. Mrs Wilson replied it was about £1300 per year which is around 47p per year per elector. The Council have agreed to cover this cost for one year but will continue to press the County Council to take it over. R Hiley added the cost to the village of the capping was greater than just the extra expenditure of the lights because the recycling payments to the Parish Council had also been cut.

7. Report from County Councillor

John Reynolds said he wished to talk about the important issues the east of England were facing and in particular the issue of growth in Cambridgeshire where there has been rapid growth over the past 40-50 years, largely due to the technological revolution in the city which had put pressure on the city itself as well as surrounding areas. The continuing innovations coming out of Cambridge University were generating more companies who employ more people who have to live in Cambridge or travel in by bus. J Reynolds said it was important to look at how to provide affordable and key worker homes and homes which are close to the jobs in order to reduce congestion. He said the County Council were trying to get the Government to bring forward the A14 upgrade and the A428 was being progressed. They are also seeking to ensure that as some of the new communities around Cambridge are developed they are provided with the correct infrastructure.

J Reynolds said the development of the North-West Cambridge site gave him real concern for Girton. He said that when this area had been included in the Structure Plan several years ago [it said] it would only come up [for development] when the University could demonstrate a need. He said he was not satisfied with the proposals put forward and that as the plans progressed the density was rising. He said the County Council were looking at producing a Local Area Agreement over the next 2-3 years which should help safeguard Girton and its environment. He also talked about the NIAB development and said he was concerned about its density and the impact on Girton.

With regards to congestion he said the County Council were looking at further methods to encourage people to use public transport and he commented that the Concessionary Fare Scheme based on District Councils had not helped encourage the use of buses. To deliver a county-wide scheme more money than was available was needed. He said they were continuing to lobby Government over this issue. He said his objective is to give 130,000 people over the age of sixty free transport wherever they wished to go. He said there may be hope in the Chancellors' budget that there will be a National Scheme similar to the one on Scotland.

Q. I am pleased you have raised the two planning issues but you didn't mention the Anglia Ruskin site in front of the Felix Hotel and the threat to the green separation of Girton from Cambridge. Could I have greater assurance this will be sat on at all levels.

A. Planning policy documents do incorporate this.

Q. Buses – I am confused about where I am able to travel free on buses as I have been given conflicting information.

A. My understanding is that if you get on a bus anywhere in South Cambridgeshire you should have to pay £1. J Reynolds said he would look in to this matter.

Q. I would like to know about the proposal for a waste and recycling centre opposite Girton College. Surely this will increase traffic.

A. There has been a proposal which is part of the second round of the Options and Issues Paper. Following the consultation all comments will go for evaluation. It will then come back to the Service Development Group for consideration who will produce another draft for consultation. J Reynolds said that waste is a real problem but that it needs to be viewed as a resource. He said the District Council have put a lot of money into recycling and that currently in Cambridgeshire 47% of waste is recycled. He also said that people have the need to dispose of waste without having to travel too far. He also talked about plans to change site 'philosophy' and look at having smaller sites.

Q. Buses should be more user friendly to encourage use. Older buses are not user-friendly.

A. I will take this up with the Chief Executive.

Q. Please could we have some buses that go through the city to the train station and hospital.

A. A very good point. We also need buses that go round the city. There are plans to improve Drummer Street and the surrounding areas to make sure some services can go right through and that buses do not lay over in the centre.

9. Reports from District Councillors

Eustace Bullman gave Mrs Healey's apologies and explained she was at another meeting. A report from the District Councillor's had been previously circulated which he read out.

10. Reports from Police

Mrs Wilson brought this item forward. PC Misik reported that over the past year reported crime in Girton had decreased from 153 to 147 this year. He said that Girton was generally quieter than other villages of a similar size. He invited questions from the floor.

Q. There is a continual problem with rat running in Thornton Road during peak times.

A. I will look into this.

Q. Do you have any input into the siting and size of signs – in particular Girton Corner. It is difficult to see the traffic coming when crossing from Huntingdon Road in to Girton. Bicycles are sometimes chained to the sign which adds to the problem.

A. This is a Highways Issue.

Q. When will the 0845 number be workable?

A. I think the 0845 call centre is improving and more staff are being trained.

Mrs Wilson thanked PC Misik and PCSO Cole for attending the meeting. The two officers left the meeting.

11. Questions/comments relating to South Cambridgeshire District Council matters relevant to the Village

Q. The paper bank on the Recreation Ground is inadequate.

12. Conservation Area

Mrs Wilson said that the village had had a chance to come to the exhibition earlier in the year. She said that the Parish Council were keen to press ahead with the proposal because having a conservation area would give the Council more power to reject

inappropriate development – such as development of the land between the two pubs. She said that people would still be able to make changes to their properties.

Q. I am concerned about the issue of trees, amongst other things. Does the restriction applied to trees include fruit trees which are not normally covered by TPOs?

A. M Wilson replied that this a grey area and we would need to take advice from SCDC.

R Hiley said that the idea was that traditional management processes should be continued. If she wanted to replace the orchard with a swimming pool this would impinge more than just normal planning regulations. He said the idea of the conservation area is to preserve the historic centre of the village, including open spaces. He explained that the conservation area had two viewpoints – the side facing the road and the side facing the fields. It designates views of special interest to be preserved – the view from the back of the church for example.

13. Questions/comments on County Council matters relevant to the village

Mrs Wilson said that Phase I of the Wellbrook Way development was nearing completion. Phase II will include the development of the community facility – bowling green, hall, café and children's equipped play area.

Mrs Wilson said that many Girton residents had responded to the NIAB objection sites with their objections to Objection Sites 4 and 5 identified for potential development in conjunction with the NIAB site. She said the Council had received support from some residents in responding to major development consultation but that better means of communications with parishioners was needed. She said the widening of the A14 will add to the noise and that the waste site will also have an impact if this is to proceed.

Q. A comment was made about the feel of the village as one enters Girton. We have already lost one property on Huntingdon Road for development – what can we do to prevent Huntingdon Road turning in to high density development as every large house with a large garden that is sold will be developed.

A. I agree this is a problem and we are up against central Government if they desire to increase [housing requirements]. We are continuing to fight these developments when we can.

Q. It would be useful if the Parish Council or District Council could keep residents of Thornton Way/Thornton Close aware of any changes to the NIAB site.

A. It would be worth trying to have a representative in each area to contact. Mrs Wilson reminded the meeting that the extra 1000 houses were not at the planning stage yet.

Q. Is there an issue between Wimpey and the Parish Council regarding the Wellbrook Way community site?

A. The legal position is that the original site is still designated. Wimpey have to apply for planning permission for Phase 2. There were objections from residents to the development of this area. The site for the LEAP is now on the other side of the road where the Parish Council want the community site to now be located. The site has been approved. The Parish Council are asking for the community building to be located next to the play area.

Q. Have there been any advances on the proposal for a wind turbine in Girton?

A. A feasibility study was carried out which is still being looked at. Sustainable Girton are planning to have a display on renewable energy resources which will hopefully result in a firm proposal that can be brought back to the Council.

14. Neighbourhood Watch and Police Liaison

D de Lacey introduced himself as the NHW coordinator for Girton. He said that NHW covers about half of the village currently. He asked that if anyone does not know who their representative is they should contact him and that if they don't have a representative he will try to find someone. He said that NHW was an excellent system of

conveying information to the community, for example potential crimes to be aware of. He said NHW were lacking in coordination from the police and he would have like to have challenged PC Misik on this point. D de Lacey said his aim was to improve communication with the police and have all of Girton covered by NHW.

15. Girton Town Charity Report

R Hiley introduced himself as Chairman of Girton Town Charity. He said the report on the Charity's activities, which had been previously circulated, was longer than last year's which was a reflection of the extra work this year. He said that a number of schemes had been launched this year – youth provision with the YMCA, Cam Sight, an Educational Grant Scheme and taxi scheme.

Mrs Wilson thanked Mr Hiley for his report.

16. Additional questions/comments from the floor

Q. Have there been any developments with the post code proposal?

A. We have received an acknowledgement to our letter objecting to a division of the post code in the village. J Reynolds agreed that Girton must have one post code.

Q. The pavements in Hicks Lane have still not been repaired/resurfaced.

A. Highways have informed the Clerk that these repairs are scheduled for repair in next year's budget.

Q. We were told the contractor would be contacted regarding puddles on pavements.

A. They have been contacted and some repairs have been made.

Q. The pavement near the Co-op is still bad.

Q. Is anything known about the sale of the Littleton House site?

A. J Reynolds replied that contracts were being exchanged between the County Council and St Collett's school who are moving out of Cambridge as they do not have adequate playing fields. There will be an article in the forthcoming Parish News.

Q. There is a problem with the contractors at Wellbrook Way with loud radios and scaffolding poles being pushed through fences. Please could I have a contact number for Wimpey.

A. The Clerk will provide you with a number.

Mrs Wilson thanked the residents for attending the meeting. J Reynolds proposed a vote of thanks to the Parish Council.