

Girton Parish Council

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

Minutes of the meeting of Girton Parish Council held on Tuesday 17th December, 2019 at St Vincent's Close Community Centre, Girton, at 7.00 p.m.

Residents in the parish were invited to attend this meeting and to speak at Item 19/126.1

Present: (Cllrs) Williams (Chairman), Buckler, Cockley, Dashwood, de Lacey, Griffin, Hickford, Kettle, Mitchell, Thomason

Cllr T Bygott (South Cambs District Council) (until end of 19/126.1)

Mrs A Bonnet (Girton Town Charity)

2 members of the public (from item 19/128 to end of 19/126.1)

In attendance: S Cumming (Clerk)

19/123 Welcome from the Chairman. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially District Councillor Bygott and the Girton Town Charity Trustee, Mrs Bonnet.

19/124 Apologies and Reasons for Absence. Apologies had been received from Cllrs Godby, Rodger and Thorrold, and from County Councillor Harford. The Chairman explained that Cllr Rodger had offered her resignation as her husband is very ill, but she is happy to stay on as a dormant member. The Council sends best wishes to her and her husband, and to County Councillor Harford following her hip surgery.

19/125 Members' declarations for items on the agenda. None.

19/126 Public Participation session on agenda items and matters of mutual interest:

1. Members of the Public. The item was returned to later in the meeting – please see below.
2. County Councillor's Report. Cllr Harford had sent her apologies.
3. District Councillors' Reports (*Appendix A*). Cllr Bygott reported that he has been working on a complaint about the drain at the junction of Bandon Road and St Margaret's Road. The drain floods and it's believed the stormwater drain has collapsed. County Council Officers will make some repairs. There were no questions for Cllr Bygott regarding his report. Cllr de Lacey was asked if there are any developments on the replacement of trees in Thornton Way, but this is Cllr Harford's domain. Two trees are also supposed to be planted in place of the Holm Oak by Cotton Hall, but the SCDC Tree Officer's inbox is reported as full.
4. Police Report (*Appendix B*) Received by the Council.

19/127 To confirm the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 19th November, 2019 (previously circulated). In item 19/121.5 the word 'warning' was incorrect and should be deleted. With this amendment, the Minutes were proposed as a true record of the meeting by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr de Lacey, and approved with three abstentions.

Two members of the public joined the meeting at this point.

19/128 Matters arising from the Minutes (for information only)

The Country Park will be considered later on the agenda.
It was proposed to have the mobile phones unlocked.

19/126.1 Public Participation Session: Members of the Public

The members of the public had been misadvised about the start time of the meeting, so the

Chairman proposed to suspend Standing Orders to allow them to speak, seconded by Cllr de Lacey. Standing Orders were duly suspended.

The Secretary of Girton Bowls Club spoke about the suggestion for the building of a new Bowls Clubhouse. Although the William Collyn Community Centre has been used for bowls club evening receptions, the club has only been able to book the hall 9 out of 19 times. Whilst they appreciate that the WCCC is a business, and will attract more bookings in future, it is therefore likely that the Bowls Club will be able to use it less and less and so are looking for their own clubhouse. The GTC Trustee responded that a preferential rate of £8/hr. was given to the Bowls Club for hire of William Collyn Centre but the Charity has to be able to cover the cost of the building. It was questioned whether the changing rooms could be converted to Bowls Club use, and Mrs Bonnet agreed to take this back to the Trustees. It was also queried how much could be raised by the Club themselves. It would only be possible to decide at this meeting whether or not the Bowls Club should go ahead with feasibility.

The two members of the public and Cllr Bygott left the meeting at this point. Standing Orders were reinstated before the following item.

19/129 Business items requiring a decision, or consideration by the Council.

1. To consider Girton Bowls Club's position in relation to provision of a new Clubhouse versus use of the William Collyn Community Centre. The Chairman proposed that Girton Bowls Club be notified that we have listened to their proposals but have expressed no commitment to the building of a new clubhouse. Seconded by Cllr Hickford. Approved unanimously.
2. To approve that the Loft Conversion Project Task and Finish Group's remit be expanded to a wider brief to consider what further modifications could be made to The Pavilion and approve a budget for feasibility plans. Following discussions between the Chairman and Cllr Hickford, it is suggested that a higher-up plan is needed to broaden the remit and to make the building a more useful facility. Proposed by Cllr Hickford, seconded by the Chairman. It was noted that the office space and layout is not good. Approved unanimously.
3. To review safety matters regarding the Recreation Ground Car Park and adjacent footpath. The Chairman had circulated correspondence from a Health & Safety Officer for a major company who had queried if there should be posts along the footpath. The footpath has a normal-sized kerb rather than a raised kerb as the footpath was installed prior to the resurfaced car park. The Chairman proposed to consult Health and Safety experts and to come back to the Council with ways to resolve the issue, and also to discuss with GTC. Seconded by Cllr de Lacey, and approved unanimously.
4. To consider possible Parish Council involvement in the management of Darwin Green Country Park. After the last Parish Council Meeting, the Chairman had received the suggestion that the parish council might like to take on the management of the Country Park at Darwin Green 3. The Chairman proposed that we abstain until we know more, seconded by Cllr Cockley. Cllr de Lacey proposed an amendment that at this stage we propose not to consider it at this stage, seconded by Cllr Mitchell, and agreed unanimously.
5. To approve the Local Highways Improvement Grant Application response and to decide representation at the Cambs County Council Review in January 2020. The report from Cambs Highways suggests that there are not enough traffic cushions between the Language School and Church Lane and this would add £5k to costs, including £1k contribution from GPC. The Council would need to decide if we want to go ahead with these. Proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr Hickford. It was suggested that speed cushions cause drivers to use much more petrol. There were three votes against, six votes in favour and one abstention.
6. To consider ideas for Girton village signage wording. The Council were not able to come to any conclusions because costs weren't known. Cllr de Lacey asked for wording suggestions and will bring these to a future meeting.
7. To approve replacement of the damaged dog-waste bin in Pepys Way. The bin had been burnt-out and as it is well-used by dog-walkers needs replacement. The Chairman proposed that the bin be replaced in the most economical manner, seconded by Cllr Buckler, and approved unanimously.

19/130 Finance and Resource Management

1. To approve the payments schedule for the past month (*Appendix C*). The Payments Schedule had been checked by all Councillors present at the meeting. Proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr de Lacey, and approved unanimously.
2. To note any significant variance from usual levels of monthly income/expenditure. None.

19/131 Correspondence (to be received).

19/132 To receive reports

1. Chairman's Report (*Appendix D*). The Chairman reported about the A14 Legacy Funding application, that he has received an email regarding organising a meeting to discuss the footpath proposal but would rather discuss this once he's found out about the other two proposals. Cllr Hickford will look into this with Cambs County Council. The Chairman has also received a letter regarding the A14 which said that Oakington Road access is being closed because modern highway design doesn't allow two access routes within this distance. Concerns are raised about rat-running through Girton and the Chairman will consult Cambridge University about this too.
2. Girton Town Charity Report. Mrs Bonnet reported that the charity's plans for the High Street development have been submitted to South Cambs District Council, and that they are also looking at tenders from contractors for the three High Street homes on the former Women's Institute site. A bat survey and archeological works are needed at the High Street development site. Copper pipes had been stripped out so the existing properties are now boarded-up. Asbestos survey is also being undertaken. Mrs Bonnet was thanked for her report.
3. Girton Youth Project Report (*Appendix E*). Cllr Kettle reported that numbers have declined quite substantially, and Girton Town Charity have expressed concern. Girton Youth Project are looking at where young people are going and how funding will continue in the new year.
4. Footpaths Officer's Report. A user of Footpath 4 has reported how well it is being maintained by the Girton Green Team.
5. Water Management Report. No report this month.
6. Parish Website Report (*Appendix F*) Cllr Thomason has concerns about accessibility so wants to make sure of compliance. The website is due to go live by the next Parish Council meeting. Cllr Thomason has contacted the Clerks at Histon & Impington, Oakington and Cottenham who'd be happy to advise on our website.

19/133 Items which the Council need to discuss at the next meeting.

Cllr Hickford will arrange a Finance Committee Meeting in the New Year.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm

APPENDIX A

i) Report from District Councillor Douglas de Lacey 10. 12. 2019

Our Quality Panel has looked at preliminary plans for Darwin Green 2 and 3, outside the City and including a sliver of Girton parish. A large arc of 'Country Park' will protect the development from the A14 and separate it from Girton, though that separation will be largely school playing-fields (the land remains Green Belt but recent Government legislation permits playing-fields within the Green Belt). No other local council seems interested in adopting the park (why should they?) which probably means there will have to be a management company paid for by a levy on residents.

The Scrutiny Committee on 14 November looked at the Council's progress and

plans: in some areas (contact centre, mainly) progress remains abysmal and we asked, as we always do, for explanations. Plans include significant property investment to provide a replacement income for dwindling Government grants. We expressed concern at the risks but have to accept the opinion of our experienced officers that these are manageable.

An extraordinary Cabinet meeting on 18 November approved a report from the Chief Executive on a major restructuring of our Senior Management team.

Details are still confidential but I approve of the approach which I think will provide significantly better service. A new administration inevitably entails change: this is perhaps the only chance we shall have to produce a structure fit for purpose. And I am very impressed at our new Chief Executive's record and her approach to this.

The November 28 Council was an unusual meeting, and difficult to organise, as we had a petition which related to an item of business, an unprecedented situation which our Constitution does not really encompass.

The item of business was a new taxi policy, and the petition was strongly opposed to one aspect. In the event, though, we had legal advice that the policy needed more consideration and the item was dropped, though we heard the eloquent petition. We also approved a motion (almost unanimously) which among other concerns about sustainability declared a Climate Emergency; a fact which I hope will be able to inform the developing Local Plan.

The Civic Affairs Committee is revising our Constitution and received a draft from its working group..

Two issues from the meeting are worth noting: a member of the public submitted 5 pages of comment which we took very seriously; and the Leader argued for removing the current requirement of 100 signatures for a petition to be received. For these and a few other reasons which I had submitted the draft will go back to the Task and Finish Group for more work.

In September I noted that disabled parking is not allowed anywhere on Eddington Avenue, and advised disabled drivers to stick to the designated parking bays. Shortly afterwards I received a comment that a vehicle in one of the bays had been issued with a ticket for protruding from the bay.

The owner was incensed as the bay is significantly shorter than the vehicle. In a flurry of correspondence with the University I have still not received clarification; initially the University denied all responsibility as parking control had been farmed out to a commercial company and the bays were compliant with current standards. Now they are stating that the bays are to be upgraded as the line marking was faulty, and that no more parking tickets will be issued to blue badge holders until then. However they also claim they are 'unable to intervene' with the parking company to rescind fines already levied. They have offered no meaningful apology, nor stated that the bays will indeed be large enough when re-lined. I am still in discussion.

On a more positive note I am pleased to see that the latest list of names for future roads in the site includes that of Alice Hibbert-Ware.

With Cllr Harford's agreement I have contacted the Highways Officer now in charge of Girton while ours is on sick leave, and he has been very helpful. He will help with kerbside tree planting: there is still one needed in Woodlands Park, and there may be more in the Thornton area. He is also seeking costings for Girton signs, and it would be helpful if Councillors could send me suggested wording so that we could have a motion to agree it. Neighbourhood Watch have already requested the option 'Welcome to Girton. A Neighbourhood Watch village'. Wording must be sparse!

I am told that demand is at an all-time high for Cambridgeshire Police, with the force receiving a 999 call every four minutes and reports of a non-emergency every 90 seconds. I recently discovered the police webchat site, which can now be used as an alternative means of contact even for reporting a crime. Within the week I had cause to use it and can report that it seems to work very well; so well that I have set up an alias:

tinyurl.com/cambspolice will take you to it.

Douglas de Lacey

ii) **District Councillor's Report - Cllr Tom Bygott**

Consultation to prepare for the next Local Plan

In my November report I mentioned the Issues and Options Consultation for the next Local Plan. The consultation will commence on January 13th and run until February 24th 2020. When the consultation is complete, the full list of sites that have been suggested will be published. The Plan itself will be drafted this year.

When the consultation begins, it will be available at: www.scambs.gov.uk/Consultations

Winter preparations

It is always hard to say whether we will get snow, but sensible to prepare if we do. Advice on how to clear pavements of snow are available on the Government website: www.gov.uk/clear-snow-roadpath-cycleway

If your neighbours might have difficulty getting in and out of their homes, offer to clear snow and ice around their properties as well. Check that any elderly or disabled neighbours are alright in the cold weather, as extreme cold can make many illnesses worse, for example heart disease.

The County Council is responsible for salting and gritting main roads. There is more information and a map available on their website at: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-andparking/roads-and-pathways/gritting-roads-cycleways-and-paths/. In addition to the M11, A14 and A428, the roads scheduled to be gritted are: Huntingdon Road, Girton Road, Cambridge Road, the High Street from Cambridge Road to Oakington Road, Oakington Road, New Road to Histon and The Avenue to Madingley. The map is a bit out of date, and I assume it also includes the new A1307 local road next to the A14.

Climate emergency declared

At November's meeting, South Cambridgeshire District Council voted to declare a climate emergency. This had support from all parties and was only opposed by one Independent councillor. As a result, South Cambridgeshire's next Local Plan will consider how new homes, jobs and services will support that commitment to making South Cambridgeshire carbon neutral by 2050. An audit will be conducted into what steps the District Council can take to become carbon neutral itself by this date and what opportunities there are to meet this target for the entire District.

More information can be found at: www.scambs.gov.uk/climate-emergency-as-council-aims-to-makesouth-cambridgeshire-zero-carbon/. According to www.climateemergency.uk, 65% of district, county, unitary & metropolitan councils in the UK had declared a climate emergency by October last year.

I have been asked several times why a Conservative would support the principle of becoming carbon neutral. It is a misconception that there is a trade-off, in Cambridgeshire at least, between economic growth and carbon neutrality. Our local economy is not dependent on either the oil or coal industries, both of which are becoming obsolete. Our main local industry is technology, and there are a large number of local businesses developing green technologies, which will be greatly in demand on the path to carbon neutrality. It is a win-win situation for South Cambridgeshire as this growth will be accompanied by lower levels of air pollution, which will make us healthier and increase the average lifespan.

Cllr Tom Bygott

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APPENDIX B

Police Report for November/December 2019

Crime Ref 35/83758/19 – Dodford Lane, Girton 22/11/19

Unknown offender has tried the back door handle and kicked the door. No entry has been gained.

APPENDIX C
Girton Parish Council Payments Schedule for December 2019
(forwarded separately)

APPENDIX D
Chairman's Report

Chairman's Report
11th December 2019

As I write no response has yet been received from the A14 Legacy Fund administrators following my email complaining about lack of communication and decisions on our applications. Cllr Harford is chasing.

Following my email to Highways England outlining concerns about the closure of the east bound access to the A14/M11 at the Oakington Road junction I eventually received a semi-literate response from a 'Correspondence Officer' based in Bedford which missed the point entirely. I have replied expressing my extreme disappointment at the disrespectful way Highways England is treating Girton Parish Council. I hope to be able to update further at our meeting next week.

All will be aware of the damage caused to the new artistic fence by a hapless motorist and the consequence in terms of the need for some sort of protection to users of the footway. We shall seek to resolve this at our meeting.

We have received a cost quotation for remedial work to the lighting to the artistic fence and footpath and this has been forwarded to GTC with a request for provision of safety certification on completion.

The new MUGA carpet installation is nearly complete. It is already back in use to aid bedding down of the sand but bad weather has delayed the incorporation of the final quantities of sand which are required to optimise support to the carpet pile. The new lighting has been ordered and is expected to be installed in the New Year.

A spate of accidents at the Language School corner of the High Street and Cambridge road appears to be the result of contamination of the road surface resulting in loss of grip. This has led to an undertaking by Highways to apply a surface treatment to the road to improve this.

Thanks to Lynda again for her prompt assistance with this.

Cllr Hickford and I have met to begin drawing up a budget forecast for the next two years.

This has raised questions on how individual costs are posted in our accounting system and we hope to be able to streamline and rationalise this aspect before presenting to the Finance Committee in due course.

I am sure all the Council will join me in sending to Lynda our very best wishes for a speedy recovery after her surgery. Finally of course I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and all good fortune in the New Year.

Haydn Williams

APPENDIX E
Summary of Girton Youth Project Report

As noted in October's report, and evident from the above figures, Monday numbers have been very low in November. This is due to the footballers having temporary training on a Monday evening. They had made the effort to pre warn us that this would be the case. They do tend to make up most of the group on a Monday so we really felt the hit. I have discussed

with the staff team that we really need to initiate moving these older boys into our early Thursday slot. They young people are reluctant to do so, as they feel Thursday is more 'chilled' and they still enjoy the games and running about element of a Monday. We have reassured them that we could still do these activities on a Thursday and that, if they bring along their friends, they can make the session whatever they want it to be! We will continue to encourage this transition and hope to have them attending a Thursday by the end of January. This will make way for new younger members in our Monday group that we hope to recruit from our advertising. They will feel less intimidated by the 'older boys' and we will be able to plan more diverse activities which the older ones tend to be reluctant to join in on. Thursdays have taken a real hit to numbers. We have seen our older members pop in and say hello for a catch up. They tell us that they all now work on a Thursday at the colleges. They also all are experiencing a huge increase in homework and college work that must take priority. Although we are sad to not see them as often, we fully support that this is part of growing up and are proud of how well they are doing. We have gained a new member at our Thursday early group. This is a friend of existing members. We hope that with the shift of the older boys from Monday moving up we should be able to populate our Thursdays again. I appreciate that the numbers reported are very low. However, please note that we are continuously working on ways to advertise and recruit and are auctioning these ideas. Unfortunately, Patricia Johnston did not have much of a response from her older people in the village for our Christmas event. She suggested cancelling and rescheduling an event for the Easter period. This way we should be out of the cold, dark weather and residents will be more willing to come out in the evening. It is a real shame, but we are positive for future projects. In the New Year we will be designing and asking to put up posters on the notice boards around the village. We will hopefully be able to leave some leaflets with the William Collyn Centre too.

Frances Roach

APPENDIX F

Parish website report - Girton Parish Council meeting, Tuesday 17 December 2019

By Rachel Thomason

Website preview available here: <http://www.girton-cambs.org.uk/wp/>

I have conducted some research into local village websites and reached out to three of them: Cottenham, Histon-Impington and Oakington. The two that have responded so far have been very helpful. Oakington-Westwick are in the process of approving a full briefing document to get quotes for outsourcing the creation of a new website. The site is principally focused on the Parish Council, but does offer information on the village, events and clubs etc. Cottenham have transitioned to a Wordpress site, like the one we have created, and focus mainly on PC content and activities, generally not promoting non-PC events. They do pay a management company around £300.00 per year to do Wordpress updates necessary for the website function, and they will be making changes to templates in the next 6 months in accordance with new accessibility guidelines. These new guidelines were also mentioned by Oakington-Westwick and were not something with which I was familiar. I will be ensuring that the new website is fully compliant before going live - this will take some additional time. In both cases the Clerk is mainly responsible for the site i.e. keeping it updated with minutes but also adding news items etc., with Cottenham's Committee Clerk's adding their own minutes when applicable.

Thank you to Councillor Mitchell who offered her support with the website. I am in the process of creating a standard privacy policy in line with GDPR that is based on Cottenham and Oakington's

general privacy policies. Overall, progress is slower than I would like due to time constraints and also limitations of my expertise, but with increased understanding of the compliancy issues and how we can focus and maintain the site, I would be grateful for the Parish Council to decide on a date when we can go live (subject to any further recommendations or changes from Councillors, and the site being compliant).