

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 19th December, 2017 at St Vincent's Close Community Centre, Girton, at 7.30 p.m.

Residents in the parish were invited to attend this meeting and to speak at Item 17/140.2

Present: (Cllrs) H Williams (Chairman), Bygott, Dashwood, de Lacey, Godby, Kettle, Taylor, Whittle.
1 member of the public

In attendance: S Cumming (Clerk)

17/137 Welcome from the Chairman. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

17/138 Apologies and reasons for absence. Apologies had been received from Cllrs Buckler, Thorrold, L Williams and County Councillor Harford, and the Chairman accepted their reasons for absence.

17/139 Members' declarations of interest for items on the agenda. None.

17/140 Public Participation session on agenda items and matters of mutual interest:

1. Presentation on proposed change of use at Manor Farm Road. There will be an application for a change of use at Manor Farm to accommodate Cambridge Dog Centre Ltd, offering puppy training and rehabilitation and dog day care. The application is not for a kennels. The applicant had hoped to be at the meeting but will come to the next meeting when the plan will have been submitted.
2. Members of the Public. The new bus timetable at bus stops shows no buses between 6-8pm from the end of November. The Chairman agreed to check the timetables.
3. County Councillor's Report. There were no comments to be relayed to Cllr Harford.
4. District Councillors' Reports (*Appendix A*) Cllr de Lacey reported that travellers had been moved on to Cowley Road Park & Ride from Cambridge North Railway Station. Girton College are manning their gates and Cllr de Lacey is liaising with them. Further to his report, Cllr de Lacey was asked if upgrading footpaths would be suitable for a grants application and Cllr de Lacey will speak to Cllr Harford about this. Cllr Bygott reported on Mobile Warden grants, whereby community groups may bid for up to £20,000 to provide social support for sheltered housing schemes. The first of the SCDC blue plaque schemes is in Connington and commemorates the Revd W Awdry. Cllr Bygott wondered if there could be a Girton plaque for Louis Leakey, who had lived in the village.
5. Police Report (*Appendix B*) The next Police Executive Meeting will be held on 8th January, 2018. The decision to reduce the number of PCSOs will be discussed – Cambs Constabulary wish to employ more Special Constables who have powers of arrest.

17/141 To confirm the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 21st November, 2017 (previously circulated). The Minutes were proposed as a true record of the meeting by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr Whittle, and approved unanimously.

17/142 Matters arising from the Minutes (for information only)

17/131.1 & 17/131.2 GPC letter of approval for GTC projects has been sent to the Town Charity.

17/131.3 GPC response has been sent to SCDC Planning Department.

Noted by the Council.

17/143 Business items requiring a decision, or consideration by the Council.

1. To co-opt a new member of Girton Parish Council (correspondence item 17/145.1) A letter of application had been received from the headteacher of Gretton School. Ms Kirby had sent her apologies for being unable to attend the meeting. Her co-option was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr de Lacey, and approved unanimously. The Clerk will tell Ms Kirby in writing that she has been co-opted.
2. To agree new arrangements for the management of Girton Bowling Green (*Appendix C*). The Chairman has spoken with the Groundsman who takes issue with some items in the letter. The Chairman proposed that the Bowls Club's proposal be accepted and amend to 'up to' and just for the current year and next year and then it will be renewed. The Parish Council should ask for a statement of the Bowls Club's accounts. Seconded by Cllr de Lacey and approved unanimously.
3. To agree groundsman duties' cover for three weeks in February 2018, particularly over weekends and mid-week. Standing Orders were suspended to allow Mr C Wilson, Groundsman, to speak. Mr Wilson has spoken with Mr S Campkin, groundsman at Histon & Impington Parish Council. His apprentice is now being employed almost full-time and if he took over duties during Mr Wilson's absence he himself would need cover. Mr D Stearn, who has worked as the main grass cutting operative at the Recreation Ground, would be happy to undertake Mr Wilson's basic duties for the period. It was proposed by the Chairman that we pursue hiring Mr D Stearn on a temporary basis, seconded by Cllr Bygott, and approved unanimously.
Standing Orders were re-instated.

17/144 Finance and Resource Management

1. To approve the payments schedule for the past month (*Appendix D*) The payments schedule had been checked before the meeting by Cllr Whittle. Much of the billing from architect Tim Brading relates to works undertaken at the request of Girton Town Charity, and the Chairman has asked Mr Brading for a breakdown of costs. It is hoped that GTC will help with costs and these will be presented at their next meeting. Northmores have recently undertaken drainage and topographical surveys of the car park. Proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr Whittle, and approved with one abstention.

17/145 Correspondence (to be received)

1. Letter of application to GPC from Zoe Kirby.
2. Letter of thanks from Girton Social Club re Christmas Event.

Received by the Council. The Chairman noted that this year's Village Christmas Event at Girton Social Club had been very successful.

17/146 To receive reports

1. Chairman's Report (*Appendix E*) The Chairman thanked volunteers for putting up Christmas lights on the Pavilion and Cotton Hall, and asked for Councillors to let him know if they can help to take down the lights on 5th or 6th January.
2. Girton Town Charity
3. Girton Youth Project. The current GYP leader seems less enthusiastic about a graffiti wall than her predecessor.
4. Footpaths. The quotations received for clearing Footpaths 4 and 7 have been high, so the Chairman and Cllr de Lacey will go and look at the works needed.
5. Water Management. The new Environment Agency Manager has not responded to the Flood and Drainage Officer's approach.

17/147 To receive unconfirmed Committee Minutes (to be circulated)

1. Planning Committee Meeting held on 1st December, 2017.

17/148 Items which the Council need to discuss at the next meeting.

The Council was pleased there had been good turnouts for the Remembrance services held in Girton. The tactile paving at Eddington is confusing and could be dangerous as traffic builds up. The CAPALC Meeting had not been quorate, so a decision on increasing annual fees has had to be

postponed.

There have been no further expressions of interest for the Finance Officer post.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm

APPENDIX A

Report from District Councillor Douglas de Lacey

10. 12. 2017

In November the County Council held its second annual Parishes Conference, which I had helped to organise. Last year it launched this new venture to streamline its interaction with parishes -- yes, to offload more of its responsibilities onto them; but also to provide money in the form of a £1M fund from which parishes could bid. For 2018 this is split between smaller grants (up to £10,000) and larger (£10--50,000). Could Girton do something useful with such a grant?

As our PCC was in attendance I tried to tackle him on the issue of cycle safety and Operation Close Pass. His response bordered on rudeness and I was just about to ask him to stop bullying me when the bell went for the next session. His mind seems more closed than his written response to me suggested, and I shall ask our MP if she might take an interest.

In the middle of November the Council's Leader, Peter Topping, sent out of the blue a very upbeat letter to councillors about the inspection of our Local Plan, claiming that the Inspectors have suggested that all is well.

He subsequently issued a press release in his own name. This provoked a storm of protest, not least from the Inspectors who felt the need to repudiate it, and wrote `We are also concerned that a recent email ...

suggests that ``the Inspectors...have not raised any fundamental concerns with the development strategy". You will recall that we raised some fundamental concerns regarding the development strategy in our preliminary conclusions of May 2015.'

This ill-advised publicity stunt has proved very damaging for the Council, particularly since the Leader refused to apologise, instead ordering officers to apologise to the Inspectors as though the error was theirs. So the opposition asked leave to present an emergency motion to Council: `Following a reprimand of this Council by the Local Plan Inspectors, this Council apologises on behalf of the Leader, for ... jumping to conclusions and requests that the Chief Executive convey our apology to the Inspectors'. In the debate we gave the Leader ample opportunities to apologise himself which would have stopped the debate, but despite acknowledging that he had not actually read the correspondence all he was prepared to do was to state that mistakes had been made and we should move on. It was clear even before the debate that the Tories were all whipped into voting against the motion, which was therefore lost. I should say that the Tory leadership emphatically denies that whipping takes place, but when two members of the party confess to me that they felt they had no option and were frightened, and that they hated to do it, what other word is appropriate? It was deeply distasteful to see Tom Bygott, the other Girton Councillor, thus shamefully defending the indefensible.

At the Council meeting we had a report from the scrutineers of the Combined Authority. They acknowledged that the promised £197M to move the Milton Sewage works is nothing but a blatant bribe, a bribe which our Leader described as a `nice lot of money'. We also noted that the questionnaire which had been used as the basis for the new Corporate Plan were biased in the extreme and provided no real indication of the public's feelings. The questions were: `What do you love about living in South Cambridgeshire?' `What makes your community a great place to live now and why'?

How can we preserve and enhance what is important to you whilst the district is changing?' I cannot see these help us to understand local concerns.

Several of our portfolio holders receive a goodly allowance for apparently doing very little work: the LibDems proposed a motion that they should each hold at least 3 public meetings per calendar year -- hardly, one would have thought, an unreasonable request; but the Tories pushed through a wrecking amendment changing '3 ... per year' to 'as appropriate'.

Recently I received a message out of the blue from a County Councillor who announced herself as my Area Community Champion, in an extraordinarily illiterate and vacuous communication. The arrogance of the suggestion that neither I nor County Cllr Lynda Harford is a champion for our community I find deeply insulting. And apparently for this role -- whatever it is -- she will receive an extra allowance of £5,000 -- more than the whole of mine. She invited questions so I have asked what powers she will have which Lynda does not; so far I have not had a relevant answer. She wishes to be invited to speak to the Parish Council: frankly, I see little point.

Over the month I have received some information you might find useful:

* From 8 Jan the Citi5 06:02 journey between Fenstanton and Cambridge will operate 6 minutes earlier between Fenstanton and Bar Hill (Monday to Friday); 18:11 and 18:31 journeys between Bar Hill and Cambridge will run up to 15 minutes later and additionally serve Water Lane, High Street and Mill Road in Oakington.

* maps.cdrc.ac.uk is a recent publication giving useful data from broadband speed to workplace population density, and much more: it is worth a browse.

Douglas de Lacey

APPENDIX B

Police Report: November – December 2017

Date Occurred: 24/11/2017 18:00 and 25/11/2017 08:30hrs

Location: Fairway, Girton

Description: Unknown offender/s have stolen the rear number plate of a vehicle whilst unattended parked in the area stated.

APPENDIX C

Letter from Girton Bowls Club

Dear Haydn

I am writing to bring you up to date with the position over professional maintenance of the bowling green.

Once the original contract with Three Counties ceased, the bowling club agreed with the parish council that Chris Wilson would undertake the green maintenance, arranging for any special treatments including scarifying and administering any fertiliser as and when required. To recognise our joint responsibility for the green, the council would contribute Chris's time and £500 per annum of any cost of third party materials and services in excess of £500.

This arrangement has been in operation in the past two years and, as you know, we have had some concerns that Chris has not been able to devote sufficient time to the green due to other priorities and calls on his time. Despite several discussions with Chris, the condition of the green has deteriorated, and we have a responsibility to ensure that this does not continue. The club has therefore taken

professional advice as to what is required to reverse the deterioration and maintain the green in good shape for the future.

Based on this advice, a scarifier has been purchased, largely financed by the Town Charity but with a contribution of £1000 from the club. A professional greenkeeper, Mr Steve Kane, is carrying out the essential restoration work and winter upkeep assisted by certain club members, and a cost of £1000 has been provided in the accounts for 2016/2017. Having reached this point it will make sense for Mr Kane to take over the responsibility for routine maintenance.

I hope you will agree that this represents a good way forward, and one under which the parish council will be content to continue with the agreed basis of funding.

Yours sincerely

David Fryer

Chairman of the Girton Bowls Club

APPENDIX D
GPC Payments Schedule for December 2017
(please see separate document)

APPENDIX E

Chairman's Report
13th December, 2017

No further interest has been shown in our vacant RFO position from any candidates with relevant experience/qualifications so we have approached our internal auditor with a view to engaging her as a temporary accountant on contract. A response is awaited. Meanwhile the new IT system has been installed with no glitches to date. It is hoped that this will mean that the next RFO we appoint will be for the long term.

The GTC Project Management Company, Northmores, are progressing the car park refurbishment and arranging topographical and drain surveys at GTC expense. Matters appear to be somewhat delayed so we have taken up a kind offer from a parishioner to carry out repairs to car park potholes, at cost.

Our concerns about location of the new A14 borrow pit and possible use to alleviate flooding in the village and about consequences for a Girton Interchange upgrade on pollution, noise and rat running in the village, have been relayed to the Highways Agency by Lynda Harford. I hope this will be more effective than my futile attempts of 2015. We also received an email from Madingley PC in support of our position on the new borrow pit.

Along with District Cllr. Douglas de Lacey and County Cllr. Lynda Harford I attended a meeting with concerned residents from Wellbrook Way with representatives of Taylor Wimpey and Paradigm Housing Association to hear plans for underpinning of the block of flats there. I am pleased to report that our fellow councillors are strongly supporting the residents in their difficult circumstances. They are also dealing with other complaints we have received relating to construction and road works on Wellbrook Way.

Thanks are due to the volunteers who helped put up the Christmas lights on the Pavilion and Cotton Hall; they make the village look that little bit more festive. Thanks also to the Social Club for hosting the Annual Christmas event at the Village Institute in early December. It was well attended and appreciated.

Finally I would like to wish all Councillors and Staff best wishes for a very Happy Christmas and all you would wish for yourselves in 2018.

Haydn Williams