**BOUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL**

**DRAFT MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 2 October 2018
 IN ALL SAINTS CHURCH, BOUGHTON**

**Present:**

**Parish Councillors:** Tom Roberts (Chairman), Andy Beeston, Mark Pogmore, David Cooper.

**Public:** Two; County Councillor: one**.**

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**50.18**  **Apologies** were received from Tim Scrivener and Colin Sampson.

**51.18 Declarations of interest. None**

**52.18 To approve and sign** the minutes of the meeting of 10 July 2018. Having been previously circulated, it was proposed and agreed that the minutes be signed.

**53.18 To approve co-option of new councillors**. It was proposed and agreed that two parishioners namely Neil Matthew and Tam Payne be co-opted to the parish Council. Both were welcomed to he Council.

54.18 **Reports from visiting officers County and Borough.** Cllr Storey noted that there was a consultation now on-going about the closure of Children’s centres and encouraged anybody interested to respond; He noted that there was a proposal for the Norfolk Police and Fire services to be combined. This was being promoted by the current Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). However Norfolk County Council (NCC) did not agree with the proposal and a decision was expected from the Home Office – probably late November this year. NCC had a very significant budget for both adult and children’s social care. This was currently under discussion and there might be changes coming.

In response to a question Cllr Storey noted that he will find out the current budget for pothole repairs. He noted that he had a small sum of money available for road projects – any bids had to be in by 6 December 2018.

**55.18 Chairmans report**

 Some parishioners have mentioned the increase in aircraft activity and noise levels from planes based at RAF Marham; there have also been some concerns about vehicles thought to be travelling to and from RAF Marham. Following from that I was recently able to meet with the Station Engagement Officer at RAF Marham (many thanks to Warrant Officer Mo Howard for arranging this) to discuss these issues and I give below a short update.

The RAF have as I think all know been doing extensive upgrades to RAF Marham (some £550 million committed). One aspect of this is the runways. The main runway is currently being rebuilt / refurbished and they hope work will be finished by the end of 2018 There is then a full and comprehensive certification requirement which the RAF advise makes it difficult to predict when the runway will be available for use. This could range from immediate certification to flaws being found that may result in remediation work. In the meanwhile work on the secondary runway has been completed and currently all planes take off from it. Because the take off (and landing) direction is different (and towards Boughton) is the reason why we hear and see more planes. This will change once the main runway is fully operational when around 75% of planes will revert to using the main runway.

There are currently nine F35’s at Marham with more due. Interestingly the last Tornado flight will be in March 2019 when doubtless there will be much interest from aviation enthusiasts.

Separately there have been a number of instances (often early morning / early evening) with small commercial vehicles speeding through Boughton. If you can get details (company names or registration marks) then the RAF will take very strong action if they are found to be contractors not adhering to the law.

**Environment Agency**

The EA have a significant project on-going (The Wissington catchment area project). Essentially it is looking at the condition of all the rivers which feed into the Wissey and identifying what can be done to improve them. One such river is the Stringside drain which runs for some quarter of a mile alongside Boughton Fen. The Stringside has been identified as in very poor condition for both Phosphates and Macrophyes which is essentially weed and reed growth stopping or hindering water flow. They have a number of plans and I hope to be able to circulate a brief summary of their work shortly. The Stringside is of course only one of the rivers in the Wissey catchment area and I have to give considerable credit to the EA for their work in improving the quality of the rivers in our area. However I think we should be under no illusion that in common with many government agencies money is in short supply and there is no guarantee when they can find the necessary resources to solve all the issues in the Wissey area.

**ROAD DRAINAGE**

Patience and persistence. As I think most are aware the flooding in Mill Hill road at the Junction with Wretton Rd has been getting progressively worse over the last few years. It has taken some time to get a solution (drainage installed) but that has now been done and hopefully that work should be a permanent solution. It has taken over five years of discussion with NCC but it has paid off.

**CLERK and RFO**

We have now received two expressions of interest – details to be circulated shortly.

Finally a reminder of our visit to British Sugar at Wissington on Wednesday 31st October – final details will be circulated shortly.

56.18 **Reports from Councillors**

1. Comunications: Cllr Scrivener sent apologies.
2. Fen: Cllr Pogmore: The formalities of the Countryside Stewardship application are still ongoing. More information, forms, maps and so on have been submitted, and we hope to hear the final outcome of all this very soon. Nothing is certain until it has been confirmed, but if this is successful it should allow for a further ten years of continuous funding to ensure the future of the fen, which I trust that the PC supports.

In the meantime, our first working party has taken place on the wildlife walk, to make it more accessible after the rain and warmth caused everything to run amok. This was a small group who bravely tackled the brambles and nettles, after our cutting contractor had mown the entire path. Obviously no other work was permissible until 1st October – and the first proper working party is to take place this coming Sunday, 7th October. We need to get on in the areas that will quickly become waterlogged before that happens, and worry about working in the drier parts later in the season when those places have become inaccessible. Some new volunteers have come to join us, and any one else interested in taking part over the winter can contact Mark on 01366 500461.

1. Highways: Cllr Roberts. Apart from the work done at the junction of Mill Hill Road and Wretton Road, Councillors asked about the verge from the Doctors surgery towards the village centre. It was agreed to pursue NCC to see what could be done to prevent verge erosion in that area.
2. Planning: Cllr Roberts: Nothing to report with no further news about the future of the Church Farm bungalow site.
3. Playground and pond: Cllr Beeston: Following the approval to replace the hedge bordering the play ground with a wall, it was agreed with Mr Frank Reid that for safety reasons, the playground would be closed for one day whilst the hedge was removed. This enabled me to lay a concrete ramp for access into the playground. This was to eliminate the potential trip hazard highlighted in the playground safety report. The barriers will remain until the wall is completed in 6-7 weeks’ time. The metal loop fencing will be shortened to meet the new wall with Mr Reid paying for any materials needed for the alterations.

Several posts have been replaced around the pond and the benches have been treated preservative. The wooden playground equipment will be treated following the extremely hot dry weather which has left the wood vulnerable to the rain. Hopefully this can be done in the time usually spent mowing the grass over the next weeks.

The playground equipment will becoming to the end of it’s life expectancy within the next 2-3 years, during which time we will have to consider what options there are for the future. Grants are available from such people as WREN, along with other companies who may support the local community. However, sourcing and applying for the funding will be a considerable undertaking. A group was set up a few years ago to raise funds for the replacement of the equipment and amounts to well over 2K. The total required would be at least 35K.

The ride on mower will be booked in for it’s annual service once the grass stops growing.The footpath between the church and Cavenham corner will be cut over the next few days allowing the public access to the abundance of sloes in the hedgerow alongside.

The Chairman noted that obtaining funding to replace the playground equipment is likely to be challenging, but it was quite important to secure the future of playground for the next few years. However there are possible options albeit they are likely to require careful planning – perhaps involving / including the use of other bodies for example the Village Caravan. The Chairman encouraged all to look at all possible options and any requirements needed to obtain such funding. This will be a formal agenda item for the next meeting.

1. Public footpaths and signage: Cllr Cooper reported that he and Cllr Beeston had cleared the footpath between the Church and the Gibbet Lane / Mill Hill Rd Junction. The various footbridges were not in the best of condition and it was agreed to ask NCC to check and repair anything necessary. Action TR.
2. Village assets: Cllr Cooper. Nothing to report.

57.18 Fen committee – Terms of reference (TOR): At the last meeting the Chairman had proposed a small change to the TOR to correct wording that he considered to be inaccurate in respect of “ownership”. Subsequently there was a suggestion from one councillor that the old wording was in fact correct and should stay. The Chairman noted this and commented that he was awaiting the outcome of some further enquiries. This item will be discussed further at the next meeting.

58.18 Financial matters:

1. Cllr Roberts noted that as at todays date he still had not heard whether the new signatories to the Barclays a/c had been recorded by Barclays – he had chased Barclays for a response. It was proposed and agreed that Cllr Beeston take on the interim role of Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).
2. Auditors report – Certificate of Exemption: The Auditors had suggested that as Boughton PC’s financial turnover is very small – that we could file a certificate of exemption. This would, amongst other things, save us several hundred pounds in the Auditors fees. It was proposed and agreed that we complete and file a Certificate of Exemption.
3. There were two payments for authorisation - £250.00 contribution to Boughton PCC towards Grass cutting in the churchyard; and £98.91 NALC membership fee. It was proposed and agreed that these be paid.

59.18 **Public questions.** There were none.

60.18 The date of the next Parish Council meeting was agreed for Friday 11th of January 2019.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 20.40 pm.