

GREAT GRANSDEN PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 3rd April 2017

Those present were:

Ian Selkirk Chairman

Andrew Pett Vice Chairman

Diane Taylor Clerk

Michael Capps Parish Councillor

Debi Pearce Parish Councillor

Stephanie Beaumont Parish Councillor

Alan Rowbotham Parish Councillor

Ann Cosgrave Parish Councillor

Jeff Gorton Parish Councillor

District Councillor Barbara Boddington, District Councillor Richard West

and 2 members of the public

1. The meeting was opened at 7.30 pm with a silent prayer

2. Apologies. Apologies were received from County Councillor Julie Wisson.

3. Declarations of Interest. There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minutes of the previous monthly meeting held on 6th March 2017, which had been circulated, were approved and accordingly signed by the chairman.

5. OPEN FORUM. The meeting was closed for eight minutes and members of the public were invited to speak. Councillor Barbara Boddington spoke about last week's public meeting on the proposed routes for the A428. HDC's scrutiny committee will debate the matter, recommending the orange route, before going to cabinet. She also spoke about the press release for an Enterprise Zone for St Neots. Community Chest applications for funding are once again available to any local groups. Councillor Richard West spoke about the working party set up to consider HDC's tree strategy. There have been problems understanding the role of the Tree Officer and the Tree Warden, the latter post is due to be axed in September along with the tree planting scheme. Will Lamb, resident, spoke about the tree problems along Little Lane affecting his landline which having been reported to CCC, do not accept responsibility for the maintenance of the trees. He also asked about the possibility of refreshing the village playground. Stephanie Beaumont commented that some 8 years ago, the playground was refurbished with a wooden train, new slide and rubber surfacing at a cost of £16,500. Cost is an issue although ways of raising money would be well received. Money may be available from the Community Infrastructure Levy from the proposed new housing development in Eltisley Road. This matter to be placed on next month's agenda.

6. Matters Arising: 6.1. Cemetery Tree. Jeff Gorton reported that having checked, there are no trees along the boundary by the stream that are posing a danger. Whilst trees/branches have fallen in this area along the boundary, it is not accessible and no action is necessary.

6.2. Huntingdonshire Town & Parish Conference. Andrew Pett reported on the conference, notes for which had been circulated to councillors. He commented on the Market Town Strategy which was presented in general terms at the conference with the aim being to regenerate St Neots. There has been a huge reduction in financing for the voluntary sector. Information about the Innovation Fund was also provided. At the planning workshop, housing will need to accommodate extra population growth, with 20,000 new homes up to 2036. Neighbourhood plans were encouraged. Huntingdonshire Design Guide has just been approved as a supplementary planning guide. During the Communication and Engagement workshop comments were noted and a report should be available. Councillor West commented that if planning is not responding to parish councils due to staff shortages, this should be addressed and should be put to full council. Andrew Pett was thanked for attending the conference.

7. Ecops Report. There were no reported incidents affecting Great Gransden. Debi Pearce reported the recent break in at the allotment site. Entry to the container was made using a disk cutter and £5,000 of equipment stolen. No information had been received from ecops for quite some time and clerk to query this.

8. Financial Statement for March 2017. The sheet filed as Appendix No.1 had been circulated. The statement was unanimously approved and signed by the chairman. Councillors also noted the budget review as at the end of March 2017.

9. Cheques for approval. The payment for the renewal of the web domain was added to the list of cheques for approval following discussion of the item under correspondence. The following payments were approved:

Proposed Ann Cosgrave, seconded Stephanie Beaumont.

Peter T Round for Sportsfield grass cutting (March)	£225.00
Clerk's salary for March 2017	£470.81
Clerk's office expenses February and March 2017	£34.82
Mr & Mrs McIntosh for Garden of Remembrance	£15.00
Anthony Malone for cemetery grass cutting (re-issue of cheque)	£300.00
Renewal of Web Domain	£37.77

10. A428 Improvement Scheme. Councillors discussed the response to the proposals to support the orange route as well as helping the community to compose a response. Points to consider included increasing overall capacity, journey time reliability, improved traffic flow, supporting local growth. Points raised at the public meeting included the housing issue (orange route can be moved slightly to accommodate this), southern routes would have maximum upset for villages, St Neots is the second largest county town and would be by-passed if southern routes chosen, orange route would cause least environmental damage, local considerations are important, not just through traffic, 2 southern routes go through a fog hollow. The letter from Croxton Parish Council was also considered which supports the orange route in principle. Concern was raised about stopping up of local roads whereas the orange route will take more local traffic off the A428. Councillors also discussed the options for the Black Cat roundabout. Option B was not supported, option A seems to give the least interruption to the busiest routes although option C could also be supported. Councillors agreed Stephanie Beaumont and Debi Pearce will work together to publish useful points for the public to use to write to Highways England and to encourage everyone to respond. If large numbers respond supporting the orange route the consultation process will be undermined if one the other routes is chosen. Ann Cosgrave and Andrew Pett will compile the parish council response based on the list of points raised.

11. Ash Trees, Little Lane. Michael Capps spoke about the on-going tree issue. For over 30 years he has been dealing with the tree officer who has had an input on tree works. Now the tree officer is not involved and the parish council has to find a commercial contractor to advise on work before submitting to the Tree Officer for approval. HDC's Tree Strategy suggests that advice should be sought from the Tree Warden but that post is being axed in September. The suggestion is that a volunteer (untrained) is appointed as tree officer within a parish to advise on inspection, remedial work and planting. It is hoped that our district councillors will take the matter up again. When there are tree queries we need to be able to seek the advice of the Tree Officer. Councillors considered the dead tree in Little Lane which needs removing. Highways is the responsible authority but again have refused to take action. Councillors agreed to engage a contractor to do the work as the probable cost should be no more than £150. Clerk to once again ask Highways to remove the 3 dead trees in Fox Street. The work to the tree in Church Street will be carried out by the adjacent land owner as CCC has refused to accept responsibility.

12. Review of Cemetery Charges. These were last increased in 2016. Councillors agreed that there should be no increase (proposed Jeff Gorton, seconded Stephanie Beaumont). Councillors also unanimously agreed that the following should remain the same:

Pay for Gardeners. No gardeners are presently employed. Dan Pettit tendered for the cemetery grass cutting at a cost of £95 per cut which councillors had already accepted.

Payment for Churchyard Maintenance. Payments for the churchyard remain at £1,500 pa and £120 for the old chapel graveyard.

Contribution to Roundabout Costs. The contribution should remain at £125.

Review of Clerk's Core Hours. Councillors agreed there should not be an increase in the clerk's hours and that these should remain at 10 hours per week although this would be reviewed during the year if it was found that an adjustment was necessary. Councillors accepted the national pay scales for the year commencing 1st April 2017 confirming clerk's pay at spinal column point 24 (proposed Stephanie Beaumont seconded Andrew Pett).

13.1. Review of Internal Controls. Councillors reviewed the internal controls considering them to be adequate and effective and agreed to appoint LGS Services as internal auditor.

13.2. Annual Governance Statement. Councillors also considered the Annual Governance Statement in Section 1 of the Annual Return 2016/17. Councillors unanimously approved each of the nine statements, answering yes to those numbered 1-9. Proposed by Ann Cosgrave and seconded by Michael Capps.

14. Highways. Stephanie Beaumont reported the large puddle along Waresley Road which has been reported by Waresley Parish Council. Clerk also to report.

Michael Capps reported the puddle in Eltisbury Road which has been rodded on a number of previous occasions but needs further investigation.

Jeff Gorton commented on commercial vehicles parking at Mill Weir. Councillors decided that signage to prevent large vehicles parking there would be ignored and difficult to enforce.

Ann Cosgrave reported that all the road markings along Caxton Road into the village from the allotments need renewing.

Councillors commented on the tidiness of the Middle Street roundabout which is now looked after by Debi Pearce.

15. CORRESPONDENCE. 15.1. Email from the communications manager advising that the A14 Mobile Visitor centre is available for bookings. Noted by councillors.

15.2. Councillors noted the free workshop on war memorials.

15.3. Councillors noted that Great Gransden Parish Council was not successful in its bid for speed reducing measures under the Local Highway Improvement Scheme for 2017/18.

15.4. Councillors had received a quote for the replacement of the Sand Road street light which will be submitted to the third party's insurers.

15.5. Letter from the Bowls Club requesting permission to carry out work to the site to include filling in gaps around the green and clearing weeds on the tennis court side. Councillors agreed.

15.6. Request from Each for financial assistance. It is not within the parish council's remit.

15.7. Tree Strategy for Huntingdonshire. This had already been discussed. This suggestion to survey the village trees will be left on the table.

15.8. Councillors agreed to renew the web domain for 3 years at a cost of £37.77 and the item added to the list of cheques for approval. (Proposed Andrew Pett, seconded Jeff Gorton).

15.9. Request from the PCC to replace the existing path to the church door with a wider tarmac path following a parishioner tripping on the existing path. Councillors agreed to make the existing path safe. Any additional costs incurred for an alternative solution would need to be funded by the PCC.

15.10. Councillors noted the forthcoming planning forum.

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 3rd April 2017 – concluded

16. Planning. 1. Land at Sand Road. Concerns had been expressed about the owners living on site. The planning enforcement officer will be asked to attend.

2. Hangar 92 North East of Great Gransden Windmill, Mill Road. The planning enforcement officer has been to the site. Planning permission is needed and clerk will ask if an application has been made.

The Next Meeting has been arranged for Monday 8th May 2017

This meeting closed at 9.20pm.