

GREAT GRANSDEN PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 4th April 2016

Those present were:

Stephanie Beaumont Chairman

Ian Selkirk Vice Chairman

Diane Taylor Clerk

Andrew Pett Parish Councillor

Debi Pearce Parish Councillor

Jeff Gorton Parish Councillor

George Craze Parish Councillor

Alan Rowbotham Parish Councillor

Michael Capps Parish Councillor

Ann Cosgrave Parish Councillor

District Councillor Richard West, County Councillor Julie Wisson

and 4 members of the public

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

2. Apologies. Apologies were received from District Councillor Barbara Boddington.

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

4. Minutes of the previous monthly meeting held on 7th March 2016 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 Julie Wisson reported on the proposal for devolution which had recently been debated by CCC. The proposal put forward by government is that Norfolk, Suffolk, Peterborough and Cambridgeshire will form one area and will receive £10million pa for 10 years. The Government also wants an elected mayor although this is not supported by residents. The amount of money is not enough and of the 26 councils involved, only CCC voted against the proposal in its present form. Despite government trying to push the proposal through quickly, the electorate needs to be consulted and further proposals are awaited. When asked whether the proposal can be forced upon us, Councillor Wisson confirmed it could not. (Councillor Wisson left the meeting). Councillor West spoke about the outcome of Potton Ltd's planning application which came before the panel. Although approved, condition 3 remains about noise. On the electoral review of Huntingdonshire, he reported that the only proposed change will be the loss of The Offords from the ward. He also spoke about the housing crisis, there being some 2,100 applicants on the housing list and he will be attending a debate on this. George Craze thanked Desmond Merrill for organising the litter picking along the verges leading to the village. A resident spoke about the work of speedwatch and how things had moved forward with Debi Pearce having got a lot further than 3 years ago when speedwatch was first initiated. Whilst speedwatch is helpful and should continue, it needs to be run alongside anything else to address speeding traffic through the village.

6. Matters Arising: 6.1. Church Yard Trees. The chairman reported that an application had been made to HDC for consent to carry out the tree work. HDC has until 11th April to respond and has requested a site visit with our contractor to discuss the proposed work. No date has yet been arranged.

6.2. Village Emergency/Neighbourhood Plan. Councillors agreed not to pursue an emergency plan. Councillors considered the preparation of a parish or neighbourhood plan, the latter usually produced by larger villages or small towns wishing to expand. Involvement of the community from the outset and a co-ordinator would be needed for a parish plan. Andrew Pett offered to prepare a report providing more information for councillors to make an informed decision and the matter will be discussed at the July meeting. Debi Pearce had recently attended a Neighbourhood planning workshop at HDC where the team had expressed a willingness to provide advice and assistance.

Matters Arising – continued:

6.3. Mill Weir Lay-by. The chairman and vice chairman had met with Ian Winfield, Highways, to discuss the work. He proposes meeting with the council's contractor to discuss the installation. Parked lorries on the site may have caused the problems with the surface, which is cracked and broken in places. The bollards are standard issue and the cost and maintenance of any alternative such as wooden bollards would have to be borne by the Parish Council. The position of the bollards should have been on the original drawing. There is a large gap between them along the grassed area. The cost of any sign to prevent lorries parking would be expensive. The process involves obtaining a Traffic Order and Highways would not want to pursue this as the order would be unenforceable.

6.4. Electoral Review of Huntingdonshire. Councillors had decided at the last meeting that there was little point in commenting if the size of the ward was seen as paramount. The review officer had responded urging a response as the review is separate from the one for CCC. As Great Gransden will continue to be grouped with Waresley, Abbotsley, Yelling and Toseland, councillors agreed to write accepting the proposal.

6.5. Parking in Middle Street. The results of the 'No Parking' questionnaire had been circulated. There were more positive than negative comments. There is increased parking in Fox Street. As a result of the survey the school will be looking into setting up a walking bus, with children being dropped off by parents at the Reading Room car park. A resident had asked about double yellow lines along Middle Street. This had been looked into previously and was not supported by the police. Councillors agreed to refer the matter to the Road Safety sub-committee to consider.

6.6. Queens's 90th Celebrations. As there was a minimum order of 50 for a commemorative medal, councillors decided not to proceed. It was agreed that the sample medal could be awarded as part of the prize for the children's poster competition, organised as part of the celebrations.

6.7. Litter Bins. Michael Capps reported that the grey village bin was no longer being emptied every week. Enquiries will be made with the Reading Room who have a commercial arrangement for the emptying of bins. The red wooden bin in Middle Street has been removed.

7. Ecops Report. The chairman read the report that is filed hereafter as Appendix No. 1. The email from Rebecca Avery was read out in response to the council's request for the village to be referred to the Problem Solving Team. She had forwarded a response from Sergeant Thorne listing the crimes in the village towards the end of 2015 which did not appear to warrant the Problem Solving Team coming into the village.

8. Financial Statement for March 2016. The sheet filed as Appendix No.2 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 2016 which had been circulated. Jeff Gorton asked about playing field spending. £3,000 of council's reserves had been used towards the cost of safety surfacing.

9. Cheques for approval. Councillors approved for payment the following invoices:

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| Peter T Round for Sportsfield grass cutting (March) | £225.00 |
| Clerk's salary for March 2016 | £470.81 |
| Clerk's office expenses for March (incl 6 months telephone expenses) | £42.03 |
| Clerk for computer repair (Biggleswade Computer Repairs) | £150.00 |
| Mrs Stephanie Beaumont for stationery | £23.00 |
| HDC for village tennis court rates | £290.40 |
| Balfour Beatty for street light maintenance 2015/16 | £483.62 |

Cheques for approval – continued:

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| PCC for churchyard maintenance (agreed on 13 th April 2015) | £1,400.00 |
| Mr Sewell for old chapel graveyard maintenance (agreed 13 th April 2015) | £110.00 |
| Roundabout for newsletter (S.137) (agreed on 13 th April 2015) | £100.00 |
| Pilot Heating & Plumbing Solutions Ltd for Reading Room Cottage repairs | £299.88 |

10. Parish Council Computer. A replacement computer is needed as the existing one is beyond repair. A grant from the Transparency Fund is not available as Great Gransden is not classed as a small council. It was proposed by Ann Cosgrave, seconded by George Craze and carried unanimously that the clerk purchases a replacement including software at a cost not exceeding £500.

11. Review of Cemetery Charges. These were last increased in 2013. It was proposed by Andrew Pett, seconded by Jeff Gorton and carried unanimously to increase the charges:-

Purchase of grave space for burial from £60 to £65

Purchase of grave space for cremation from £60 to £65

Purchase of cremated remains space from £25 to £27

Interment of still born child from £22 to £23

Interment of a body more than 1 month old from £38 to £40

Interment of cremated remains from £25 to £30

Approval of headstone and inscription remains at £40

Approval of inscription on tablet in ashes area remains at £25

Approval of an additional inscription remains at £21

Searching burial records a minimum charge increased from £12 to £15 plus £15 per hour of clerk's time over 1 hour. Charges to be increased by 100% for residents outside the village.

Councillors also agreed the following:

Pay for Gardeners. No gardeners are presently employed. Stuart Hildyard currently undertakes the cemetery grass cutting at a cost of £120 per cut. He has not tendered a higher price so the cost remains fixed at £120 per cut. Councillors considered that the cost continued to provide value for money.

Payment for Churchyard Maintenance. It was unanimously agreed that the payments for the churchyard increase by £100 to £1,500 pa and by £10 to £110 for the old chapel graveyard.

Fees for Bowls Club, Tennis Court and Allotments. The rent is presently £1pa. The Bowls club rent is due for review on 1st September 2016.

Contribution to Roundabout Costs. £100 has been paid for the past three years. Councillors unanimously agreed that the contribution should be increased to £125.

Review of Clerk's Core Hours. Councillors agreed clerk's hours to remain the same.

12. 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.

12.2. Annual Governance Statement. Councillors also considered the Annual Governance Statement in Section 1 of the Annual Return 2015/16. Councillors unanimously approved each of the eight statements numbered 1-8 answering yes and also confirmed that the Parish Council had met all of its responsibilities as sole trustee for two trust funds. Proposed by Jeff Gorton and seconded by Ann Cosgrave.

13. Parish Council Communications and use of Touchbase. A note had been put on Touchbase advising that no further parish council communications would be made using this forum. All decisions must be of the council as a whole. The proposal for finding a suitable discussion forum would be considered at the next meeting.

14. Highways. Alan Rowbotham reported the verge on the corner of Fox Street which has been churned up again. The parish council had raised this previously but Highways took no action.

Ian Selkirk reported that during the high winds a dead tree fell across the road. There is another adjacent tree in poor condition.

Michael Capps reported a villager's concern about the tree near the village sign. He agreed to speak to the resident and contact HDC.

Stephanie Beaumont spoke about the letter from Caxton Parish Council requesting support to implement a reduction of the speed limit between Caxton and Great Gransden. Councillors agreed to support Caxton's efforts in particular for a 40mph buffer zone.

15. CORRESPONDENCE. 15.1. Capalc had provided information on handling complaints. Councillors did not wish to set up a prescriptive procedure, with specific forms to be completed. Councillors agreed all complaints to be put in writing to the clerk, who will acknowledge receipt before passing onto the parish council.

15.2. The date of the next Joint Local Forum will be 24th May. Stephanie Beaumont agreed to attend.

15.3. Letters from Magpas and EACH requesting financial assistance. The parish council receives many requests and is unable to assist.

16. Planning. 1. 16/00525/FUL Change of use to B1 light industrial from existing agricultural grain store. Grain Store, North Farm, Potton Road. Ann Cosgrave proposed 'Approval' on the ground that it is an appropriate change of use in close proximity to the industry concerned. Seconded by Debi Pearce and carried unanimously.

2. Marquee, Kingspan Potton. The chairman had spoken against the proposal at the panel meeting but the application was approved. Nearby residents have been advised to notify HDC of any noise complaints as in the past not all complaints have been responded to by Kingspan.

3. 15 Crow Tree Street. The application to convert an existing garage was refused on appeal.

4. Planning Forum. The chairman and vice chairman had attended a planning forum highlighting the change in the planning system with HDC operating a paperless system from 1st April.

5. Land at Sand Road. The enforcement officer had visited the site, indicating the owners intend growing organic vegetables. The officer had made no comment about the horsebox on the site.

The Next Meeting has been arranged for Monday 9th May 2016

This meeting closed at 9.32pm