

**Minutes of the meeting of Alconbury Weston Parish Council
held on Monday 16 January 2017 in Alconbury Memorial Hall**

Present:

Councillors: J Baker, M Bryan, R Coulson, C McGregor, S Lomas (Chairman), ~~R Posen~~, R Powley (from item 3.0) & L York

Clerk: A Benfield

Others: CCC - Cllr P Ashcroft

1.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations made

2.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence given

3.0 CO-OPTION

The Clerk confirmed that Robert Powley had signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office prior to the meeting commencing

Resolved: 3.1 that Mr Robert Powley is co-opted Member of Alconbury Weston Parish Council with immediate effect

3.2 that his Declaration of Acceptance of Office had been signed was noted.

4.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

10 members of the public were in attendance and indicated that they were interested in the presentation to be given by Urban and Civic on the flood attenuation strategy on Alconbury Weald.

Karen Brine spoke about the difficulties that had been experienced by villages affected by last year's floods and requested to know what was now in place to mitigate the difficulties experience with the flood water rising so fast with limited notice.

Cllr Bryan provided an update to those present on what actions had taken place since the flooding. He gave a resume of the meeting held in June at which Jonathan Djanogly MP was present with representatives of all involved agencies (including Environment Agency (EA), HDC and Emergency Services). The outcome of the meeting was an acknowledgement that more could and should be done with the agencies going away to review their procedures. Another meeting with the EA is scheduled for the end of Feb and it is expected that this review will be reported back on with information being provided on what improvements have been made. He indicated that a local flood group is being formed and that they would be looking for funding to assist with minimising the risks in the future, but that this group was not to replace what the emergency services do. Finally, he stated that the EA had committed to make sure the brook south of the villages has been dredged and that the Fire Brigade locally is now equipped to deal with flooding of the nature experienced last year.

Another member of the public present indicated that the dredging as promised has not yet taken place and asked if there are any links between the work being done by the local group and statutory agencies and the A1/A14 road development. It was stated that the Council is aware that a group has been formed but there has been no contact to date. Hoping for a joint meeting with highways.

At this point, further comments were made by some of the members of the public in attendance about the perceived lack of progress made and requests that the Parish Council look to do something about it by taking to task those agencies responsible.

5.0 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 14 November 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

6.0 ALCONBURY WEALD

Rebecca Brittan, Communities and Partnership Officer, Urban and Civic and Paul James, Water Engineer working on behalf of Urban and Civic introduced themselves to those present. Rebecca indicated that they were attending to talk about the water management strategy for the whole of the Alconbury Weald Development in partnership with other organisations and would not be answering specific questions on local flooding in other villages/developments.

The strategy had been formed during the planning process and consists for 3-teirs with each one being amended and honed as the development progresses. It takes into account that the site is a former airfield and the existing challenges with the surface water runoff from the top of the field that was higher than the surrounding land. The overarching strategy is to hold water locally using 'green field' run off rates and this is being rolled out as buildings and development come on line.

Chairman's
Initials

It was stated that there was already drainage in place from the original site that was classified as a brownfield site and that the strategy in place respected the original catchment areas and EA agreeing what the runoff rates would be and how it would be dealt with. The discharge rates agreed were based on 'green field site' figures that were more stringent than those for 'brown field sites'. In addition, the strategy included the provision of attenuation ponds to hold the water longer and allow for a more controlled run off rate to be incorporated.

Following various questions at this point Rebecca and James commented that there are currently 12 ponds in use and the water that collects in these still discharges to the same areas as it would do naturally but that the rate at which it does is at a lower rate. They confirmed that the original calculations were based on rates of water flow before building started and are regularly reviewed as the development progresses. The pond capacity has been calculated on 1 in 100year flood levels, with consideration given also to 1 in 400years levels and also the impact of a pond outflow being blocked. Quarterly monitoring meetings are held with HDC and EA and all outcomes are monitored. U&C are currently ahead of where its legal responsibility states it should be. They also confirmed that should they not meet these legal requirements they would not be allowed to proceed with the development until they had addressed the shortfall. Comment was also made about other factors that U&C have responsibility for including responsibility as land owners and as part of the wider management for longevity. It was noted that landowners downstream of the site had equal responsibility for water management on their land and U&C could not be held responsible for this.

Discussion took place on the water management on site overall and the management of waste water. It was commented that EA were aware that the current foul water management would need to be amended and upgraded in the coming years as the development continues to grow.

Resolved: 6.1 that the presentation is received, noted and that the presenters were thanked for attending.

The Chairman gave a verbal report on the U&C Parish Liaison meeting he had attending with the Clerk on 12 Jan. He stated that work was commencing on the next 4 phases of the development. The EDGE training on site was now taking place in conjunction with Cambs Regional College and that the Watchtower conservation is underway.

He commented that U&C were about to submit planning applications linked to the section of the site they were intending to develop themselves and that this would include a request to open an additional site access. Although this access was intending to serve this section of the site only during the building process and would be a temporary access it was envisaged that it would be in use for at least 2 years.

Resolved: 6.2 that the report is received and content noted.

7.0 PARISH PATHS AND TREES

Cllr McGregor confirmed that Global Tree Solution had completed all the work they had been contracted to do and that the invoice should therefore be paid. In terms of the replacement tree for the village green Cllr McGregor reported on communication he had had with the HDC Tree Officer in which she had indicated that the only trees available from HDC were saplings and that this would not be appropriate in this instance. After discussion, it was agreed that Cllr McGregor should continue to liaise with the Tree Officer to find a suitable tree up to the value of £200 excluding any additional costs linked to planting and protection.

Resolved: 7.1 that up to £200 be spent on a replacement Oak Tree for the village green and that the advice of the HDC Tree Officer be sought on an appropriate supplier and that planting and protection costs be funded in addition.

Cllr McGregor informed the meeting of the content of an email received from a local resident. The individual was confirming that he had removed some of the wood out of the Elms next to the play area and was asking if the Council had any objections to him removing the rest of them. He had also stated that that he had seen an article in the Parish Pump asking for help to clear the footpaths and indicated that he was willing to assist.

Members noted that as the Elms were not on Council land it would have no objections to him removing them. In respect of the path clearing Members agreed that as they had not supported this initiative from CCC to get local people involved the article in the 'Pump' should be reviewed before a response was provided on this matter. The feeling of those present was that the resident should be directed to the Highways Authority to indicate his availability to assist. It was also agreed that permission should be granted for the resident to continue to clear rubbish and undergrowth from the brook surrounding the willow tree that had died.

Resolved: 7.2 that the Clerk confirm that the Council has no objections to the removal of the remaining Elm trees next to the play area as they are not on Council land and that approval is given for additional tidying up at the Brook.

No complaints have been received linked to the parish footpaths but it was noted that spray damage has been caused to Footpath 4 where it meets with the bridle path. The result is that the grass has all died and the footpath is now very muddy. Cllr Baker confirmed she would look into what had happened.

8.0 ALCONBURY WESTON FLOOD MANAGEMENT GROUP

Cllr Bryan updated those present of meetings that he had been having with residents about the formation of the 'Alconbury Weston Flood Management Group'. He indicated that himself, Cllr Pawley, Mr Burke and Mr Brine (village residents affected in flood situations) would be the representatives. The aims of the group locally were to provide local knowledge linked to vulnerable people, what properties are likely to flood and how to get out of the village in times of flood to residents and to assist the emergency services when they arrive on site.

He indicated that they have started to work on an Emergency Plan, based on a national template and are liaising with other villages that already have good plans in place. They acknowledge that a major challenge they face is to keep the plan rolling and to keep it alive and active when the risk of flood is not evident. The plan will contain short, medium and long terms actions: -

- Short – Improve warning
- Medium – mitigate damage by using barriers
- Long – Look at whole catchment area and investigate where water is coming from

As part of the short-term actions they are looking to get funding to install a monitoring webcam device on the brook to monitoring the levels as the current gauge does not work. The anticipated cost of this is likely to be around £5000 and the group were intending to request the Council to support its bid to either the Wooley Wind Farm Fund or the A1/A14 redevelopment fund for this money.

Although acknowledging the commitment of the group Members felt that they had insufficient information at the current time to support the group in its funding application. It was requested that Cllr Bryan bring back to the next meeting a more detailed report on what was planned, including details on how the webcam would be monitored etc. to allow them to consider the support further.

- Resolved:**
- 8.1 that an 'Alconbury Weston Flood Management Group' be formed and supported by the Council
 - 8.2 Cllr Bryan and Powley, along with Mr Burke and Mr Brine form the group and continue to work on an emergency plan based on national template and work with other local Flood Management Groups for the best outcome for all.
 - 8.3 that Cllr Bryan and the Clerk attend the liaison meeting with the Environment Agency and Alconbury Flood Management Group representatives on 23 February 2017.

9.0 PLAY AREA

To receive verbal update report on current state from Cllr Lomas

Cllr Lomas reported that he had inspected the play area on 30 November 2016, 4 December 2016, and 9 January 2017 and had noted no problems on those dates. Following a request, he indicated that he had received no further communication from the group who were requesting additional play equipment.

Resolved: that the verbal report is received and noted

10.0 PLANNING

Resolved: that the no observation comment provided to HDC in relation to Planning Application 16/02552/REM is ratified

11.0 ORDERS FOR PAYMENT

The following payments were noted as being required to be made:-

Mrs D Benham – November wages and expenses	£289.24
HMRC – PAYE/NI	£39.60
askIT Services – Laptop and printer/scanner	£410.10
askIT services – Microsoft Office, Anti-virus and set-up	£207.93
Mrs D Benham – December wages and expenses	£421.14
HMRC – PAYE/NI	£79.40
HDC – Grass cutting for 2016 season	£2913.98
Global Tree Solutions – work to Parish trees	£420.00

Resolved: that the above payments are made including ratification of those payments made between meetings.

12.0 BANK RECONCILIATION

Resolved: that the Bank Reconciliation up to 31 December is received and noted

13.0 BUDGET REPORT

Resolved: that the Budget Report up to 31 December is received and noted

Chairman's Initials

14.0 PURCHASE OF MICROSOFT OFFICE OUTLOOK

Resolved: that Microsoft Office Outlook is purchased for installation on Parish Council laptop at a cost of £109.99 inc VAT

15.0 POLICE MATTERS

The Clerk informed those present that she had not provided a report on this instance as she was unclear on what members required. It was agreed that she would register the Council email address on Ecops and provide a summary of any issues reported that relate to the village to future meetings

16.0 CORRESPONDANCE

The following correspondence was noted as having been received and circulated since last meeting:-

Members considered a letter received from a local Girl Guide requesting financial support. Although empathetic to the request it was noted that the Council had previously agreed to only support initiatives that had an impact on the local community and a trip to Romania did not meet this policy. Members also noted that under the law relating to s137 payments they could not provide grant funding to an individual. Can grant to the girl guide group if members so inclined. It was therefore requested that the Clerk inform the applicant that their request for funding had been declined but suggest that her guiding group apply to the Wolley Hill Farm Grant.

Resolved: 16.1 that the correspondence listed above is received and noted
16.2 that a response is sent to the Girl Guide declining to provide grant funding as the Council is not able to do so.

17.0 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS

The following verbal reports from District and County Councillors in attendance were received:-

HDC Cllr Baker – brought to the attention of the Council that the seat on Church Way that is owned by the Council requires some repair work to be carried out.

CCC Cllr Ashton – provided a brief verbal report to those present on the current state of the local Devolution process.

Parish Cllr Lomas – informed the meeting that the cycle ride would be taking place again this year on 4 June.

Resolved: 17.1 that the reports are received and noted
17.2 that the Clerk obtain quotes for the repair of the seat in Church Way

18.0 PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC

Resolved: that in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and by reason of the confidential nature of the remainder of the business, the Press and the Public be excluded from the Meeting

19.0 STAFFING MATTERS

The Chairman confirmed that Mrs A Benfield as Parish Clerk with effect from 3 January 2017 on SCP 23-25

The Clerk informed the meeting that she was pleased to have been offered the opportunity to work for the council and looked forward to finding out all about the village. She indicated that she was unlikely to claim an allowance for working from home but would be submitting mileage claims at the current rate.

Resolved: that the appointment of the Clerk on SCP23-25 is ratified and that her membership fees for the Society of Local Council Clerks as a cost of £68 is supported.

20.0 PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 RE-ADMITTANCE OF THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC

Resolved: that the confidential business having been concluded, the Press and Public be re-admitted to the meeting.