

Great Ellingham Parish Council
Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council
held at the recreation centre on Wednesday 20 January 2016 at 7.30pm

In Attendance: Cllr T Betts (Chairman) Cllr T Getley, Cllr S Banks, Cllr D Howe-Li-Rocchi, Cllr J May, Cllr S Mellor, Cllr N Perkins, Cllr D Simpson, Cllr G Snelling

Locum Clerk Anne Rayner
5 members of the public

1. Open Forum – An opportunity for any parishioner to speak on parish matters and to hear reports from District and County Councillors –

A member of the public raised concerns over the forthcoming road closure of Hingham Rd for six weeks during the summer holidays. It was felt unlikely that the proposed diversion would be used, with people preferring to take the shorter option of using Bow Street. This road is considered to be too narrow, with unstable verges and ditches. The resident asked if a temporary 30mph speed restriction could be in place for the duration of the works on Hingham Rd or another suggestion would be to close Bow St at one end, making a cut through impossible. Another concern is that the plans for this work should include no tactile paving in the direction of the proposed Orbit Homes development. The Chair will speak to the highways engineer responsible. **Action TB.**

Another resident raised concerns over the poor condition of the roads in the village. The large amount of lorries using inappropriate country roads is a contributing factor and the resident did not feel that the highways response of not having the funds to carry out the repairs was satisfactory. The same resident expressed his disappointment that neither the District or County Councillor, as elected representatives, were present at the meeting. The Chair confirmed he will pass this on.

Action TB.

The issue of unofficial signs on verges was also raised. Whilst it was acknowledged that planning permission is needed for advertising signs, Councillors expressed some sympathy for the services in the village trying to attract business. A query relating to light pollution was also raised. Whilst it was felt that, due to the dark sky discovery status of the observatory, most planning applications were asked to work within CPRE lighting guidelines, the resident felt that some specific properties and the Church were not adhering. It was advised that the Church was lit in line with the religious season and this will finish on 2nd February. The Chair will look into the property lighting issue.

Action TB.

Another member of the public advised that she had attended one of the public consultations regarding the Breckland Local Development Plan and had left feeling extremely disappointed. She felt those present were unable to answer questions. Certain information stands out in the plans, for example, Great Ellingham are proposed to have 179 new properties but Old Buckenham has been allocated none. Information relating to the consultation will be placed on noticeboards and on the website. **Action AR.**

Another member of the public asked about the dangerous situation on Long Street, especially relating to children walking to and from school. There is no pavement or footpath available and drivers seem to be frequently speeding, with lorries also using the road although there is a 7.5 tonne restriction in place. The Chair advised that following the revision to their travel plan, no Kerry Foods lorries should be using Long Street. Cllr May suggested residents follow advice given at a SNAP meeting, if lorries are seen on roads with these restrictions, take a photograph and e-mail it to the police, where it will be followed up.

2. To consider apologies for absence – District Councillor Bill Smith sent his apologies.

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3. **To receive any declarations of interest in any item on the agenda** – None to declare.
4. **To confirm the minutes of the meeting of 16 December 2015** – The minutes were approved without alteration and signed as correct by the Chairman.
5. **To report matters arising not on the agenda and hear the Chairman's report** – The Chair reported that the Kerry Foods application had been withdrawn and that Highways and Breckland Council seem to be working together in relation to this case. Two applications have been approved at planning committee at Breckland, for nine properties on the land behind the Crown pub and also for the crematorium at Scoulton.
Notification has been received that the Post Office & Stores have been declared a community asset, with effect from 16 January 2016. Some further information was received relating to this, so before any further action is taken the Chair will speak to the current owner. The deadline of 25 February 2016 needs to be considered. **Action TB.**
6. **To consider planning applications, including:**
- a) **3PL/2015/1475/F – Brick Kiln Farm, Hingham Rd – Change of use of barns to dwelling** – The plans were circulated prior to the meeting and Councillors, having given due consideration, had no objections.
 - b) **3PL/2015/1500/F - 68 Long Street & land to the south – Four detached houses** - The plans were circulated prior to the meeting and Councillors, having given due consideration, had no objections.
7. **To receive the financial report and consider the following payments:**
The financial report, circulated prior to the meeting, was approved. The following payments were also unanimously approved.

Chq no	Amount	Payee	Notes
100466	£151.19	A Rayner	January 2016 salary
100467	£256.50	Recreation Centre	Hall Hire 2015

8. **To consider and note correspondence received, including:**
- a) **Review of Wayland Flexibus journeys** – Norfolk County Council are considering expanding the flexibus service. A member of the public using the service said feedback for additional routes from regular users of the service included destinations of Dereham, Thetford or Norwich. The clerk will pass this information on to NCC and also ask if any posters are available to advertise the service further. **Action AR.**
 - b) **51 Petanque Club** – Although a letter has been received asking for a grant, no amount has been specified. The Chair will contact the applicant for the omitted information and Cllr May will look into whether different weight sets are required and also the cost of sets for beginners. **Action TB and JM.**
 - c) **Queen's birthday beacons** – The Queen's 90th birthday celebrations will include beacon lighting ceremonies throughout the country. Villages are being asked to register, if they would like to

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participate. Councillors felt this was more appropriate for consideration by the recreation committee and Cllr Snelling was asked to pass this on accordingly. **Action GS.**

9. **To consider adopting Financial Regulations** – The proposed financial regulations, circulated prior to the meeting, were reviewed. Some alterations were made, which the clerk will implement. A copy of the finished document will be circulated and the financial regulations were formally adopted. **Action AR.**
10. **To consider adopting a training policy** – Two examples of other parish council's training policies were considered. It was decided to base the policy on the wording used by Acle Parish Council, with some amendments. The clerk will circulate the finished document. The training policy was adopted. The policy highlighted a suggestion that all new councillors attend the initial training provided by Norfolk ALC. Cllrs Howe-Li-Rocchi, Simpson, Snelling and Banks all expressed an interest in attending. The clerk will forward details of available courses. **Action AR.**
11. **To review the parish council's banking provision** – Following the decision by HSBC to close their branch in Attleborough, Councillors expressed a wish to move bank accounts to someone still with a presence in the town. Due to the nature of accounts suitable for parish councils the clerk advised that this would only leave Barclays and Lloyds as potential providers. Barclays are already reducing their opening hours. The Chair will go into Lloyds to try to ascertain if there is any commitment to retaining a branch in the town. **Action TB.**
12. **To begin to consider an appropriate response to the BDC Local Plan and establish a working party to consider ongoing issues** – A working party team of Cllrs Betts, Howe-Li-Rocchi, Perkins and May was agreed. This working party will meet to review the information provided and feedback to the next parish council meeting on 17 February. As much information as possible will be placed on the website and it was suggested an extraordinary meeting be held to discuss this matter. Councillors felt it imperative that both District and County Councillors be present at this meeting. The clerk will check availability. Cllr Mellor indicated one observation he would like to initially make in that he felt very strongly that any development line should encompass existing development. **Action AR and the working party.**
13. **To review the Pyghtle Health & Safety report** – Cllrs indicated they would like their thanks recorded to Cllr Mellor for the provision of this report, with no cost to the parish council. This thorough assessment of the pyghtle suggested two potential resolutions to the safety concerns. It was suggested that either the area be fenced off or filled in. Cllrs had reservations regarding the fencing of the area and, following discussion, it was agreed that the preferable option would be to fill the area in. All aspects would need to be considered before this action is taken, cost implications and also agreement from Highways relating to the piping of the water. **Action AR and TB.**
14. **To review the budget and agree the precept for 2016/17** – Further to previous discussions relating to the budget, the clerk advised that the "administration" budget line had been split to show "administration" and "maintenance" separately. The training budget was also increased to £300. These amendments were approved and it was also resolved to proceed with an increase to the

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precept of 2% taking the precept to £6630. This is an increase of £130 for the year. The clerk will submit the precept request to Breckland District Council. **Action AR.**

- 15. To consider external audit requirements for smaller authorities** – The clerk reported that, although the new transparency regulations had initially indicated there would be no requirement for an external audit, the need for an approved external auditor to be in place has been deemed necessary, in the event of a parishioner raising any queries with the financial transactions of the parish council. The National Association of Local Councils and the Department of Communities and Local Government have been working together to establish a sector led body to procure audit for small authorities from 2017/18 onwards. There will be a “small fee” to cover the whole initial five year period provision and anyone not wishing to participate needs to opt out of the arrangement by 31 March 2016. The next opportunity to opt out will be in five years time. Advice from NALC suggests that “smaller authorities may opt out but will still have to appoint auditors and meet the requirements set out and it is highly likely this will be a far more expensive option”. Councillors agreed they would prefer to take up this option but felt more specific information is needed relating to the cost for the five year period. The clerk will ask for further information. **Action AR.**
- 16. To discuss the creation of a Village Green & Wildlife Group** – The Chair advised that, with a few areas of land in the village owned by the parish council and potentially with more to come, it may be appropriate to establish a Village Green and Wildlife group, to work to maintain the areas, with specific ideas relating to each pocket of land. Without such a group it would be easy to let the areas in question remain unattended and become overgrown and unmanageable. A name was suggested of a parishioner who may be interested in establishing such a group and it was agreed that the Chairman would speak to the person in question before this proceeds any further. In principle, the idea of a group being established was supported by the parish council.
- 17. To consider items from Councillors:**
- a) **Feedback from SNAP meeting** – Cllr May reported that feedback from within the police suggested that beat managers were spending too much time completing paperwork in offices, rather than being a visible presence on the streets. However, beat managers are needed to supervise PCSOs which requires office based time, so there does not appear to be an easy solution. Also, teams of two PCSOs are needed to man speed checks, which worked well when there were four locally based PCSOs but does not work so well now that this figure has been cut to three. Success stories were also reported at the meeting, including a PCSO initiative resulting in stolen flint walls being recovered.
- 18. To hear and report Highways issues, including:**
- a) **Issues relating to raised manhole covers** – The Chair reported that a resident had tripped over a raised manhole cover on Chequers Lane, resulting in quite nasty injuries. This has been reported to highways who have visited the site and advised that it is not raised enough to be classed as dangerous, however, action will be taken to patch the areas around both manholes in the vicinity in order that there is a sloped approach to them.
- The Chair also reported on a letter received from a resident relating to speeding on Hingham Road. Whilst Councillors acknowledge this problem, it has been investigated before and the parish council have been advised there is no opportunity to reduce the speed limit in this area, due to lack of housing density.

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Cllr Mellor reported that the flashing school 20mph sign as the road travels to Watton, is leaning. The clerk will report this to Highways. **Action AR.**

19. To confirm the date of the next meeting as Wednesday 17 February 2016 to be held at the Recreation Centre, commencing at 7.30pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.50pm.