

LITTLE MELTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
at the VILLAGE HALL, MILL ROAD, LITTLE MELTON
TUESDAY 15 JANUARY 2008

PRESENT	Stewart Cable (Chairman), Tony Berry (Vice-Chairman), John Heaser, Graham Tomlin, Joan Wheatley, and from 7.40 pm, Duncan Frazer. County Councillor Judith Virgo and District Councillor Garry Wheatley were also present.
APOLOGIES	Apologies for absence were received from Wilf Chamberlain and District Councillor Christopher Kemp.
DECLARATIONS	<p>The Chairman asked if any members wished to declare an interest in an item, or items, on the agenda. No declarations of interest were forthcoming.</p> <p>Secondly under this item the Clerk referred to recent advice from the Norfolk County Association of Parish and Town Councils, following the introduction of the Revised Code of Conduct, which clarified the matter regarding (parish) councillors with prejudicial interests addressing full council and how this must be recorded in the minutes.</p> <p>In summary the changes are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *minutes have to be made of any public session even though the council is not in session, *verbatim records are not required; only enough detail to give sense to the wording, *councillors speaking at this time should have their comments recorded, and *councillors with prejudicial interests should leave the room during the following debate. <p>Good practice is (and continues to be) that when a member of the public addresses the whole council the Chairman responds by thanking the person for their contribution and notes the topic as a potential agenda item.</p> <p>However, contrary to earlier advice which said that as the public participation section of any meeting is held whilst the meeting is adjourned and full minutes were not required, the Parish Council is now recommended to make some formal record of this section of the meeting especially indicating what a prejudicial councillor comments.</p> <p>The councillor is therefore given the same rights as any member of the public but they do have to leave the room whilst the item is debated by the council.</p> <p>In conclusion the Clerk of the Council was instructed to draft a Standing Order to formalise this process.</p>
MINUTES	The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 4 December 2007 were, on a proposal by Tony Berry which was seconded by Joan Wheatley, accepted as a true record of the business conducted.
PUBLIC, DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR	<p>The Chairman invited comment and discussion on any matters not included on the agenda.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Tony Berry said that the parking of motor vehicles on and

<p>PARTICIPATION</p>	<p>obstructing footways was again causing problems and, following discussion, the Parish Council agreed that the Clerk should include a request in the next issue of the Good News Magazine (March edition) that the inconsiderate parking cease as it prevented proper and safe use of the highway, especially for the disabled and mothers etc with small children in pushchairs.</p> <p>The Chairman added that he would include a similar item in the Little Melton Parish Council's quarterly magazine – the next edition of which would be published in early April.</p> <p>*District Councillor Garry Wheatley reported that there was no further news of consequence regarding Local Government Reorganisation but there was a statement expected, from the Secretary of State, towards the end of the month and a report would be issued, by South Norfolk Council, towards the end of February.</p> <p>*District Councillor Garry Wheatley also referred to the District Council's Cabinet briefing last Monday in respect of the expansion of the Norwich Research Park and said that some progress had been made with the rewriting of the brief so there was far more focus on the principal components of the Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital and the area in and around the University.</p>
<p>PARISH AMENITIES</p>	<p>MILLENNIUM GARDEN FENCING</p> <p>The Clerk confirmed that in accordance with the instructions from the Parish Council meeting on 4 December he had written to G & G Fencing asking them to go ahead with the replacement of the existing old broken/poor condition low level timber fencing with 1.00m high bow topped solid galvanized steel fencing at a cost of £2,243.25 excluding VAT.</p> <p>This work was proceeding in agreement with the Village Hall Committee with the Committee making a donation to cover the whole of the net cost of this provision.</p> <p>The Clerk had subsequently been informed by G & G Fencing that the replacement would commence Monday 28 January and in consequence Jean Chamberlain, Village Hall Hirings Secretary, and Richard Smith, Trustee and Chairman of the Village Hall Committee, had been informed accordingly.</p> <p>The Clerk also confirmed that – with regard to existing provision (to the south of the car park) – following the annual safety inspection of the young children's play equipment, by ROSPA, he had also asked G & G Fencing to ensure that a spacing of at least 12mm throughout the range of each (pedestrian) gate was in order to prevent finger entrapment.</p> <p>DOG WASTE BIN</p> <p>It was reported that the erection of the dog waste bin along the cul de sac section of School Lane had yet to be undertaken. The Clerk and the Chairman confirmed that this would be undertaken soon but it was thought best to delay the work in case of problems with the large contractors lorries etc accessing and egressing the nearby field, from this road, whilst the Anglian Water project works were in progress.</p> <p>PLAY EQUIPMENT REPAIR/MAINTENANCE</p>

The ongoing necessary remedial work was noted, as was the estimate provided by John Symonds of £110-00 (materials and labour) for the replacement parts to (a) the damaged vertical board to the train, and (b) the seat of the springy tractor. It was appreciated that the estimated cost was a little higher than expected due to the fact that it would be necessary for Mr. Symonds to purchase a whole sheet of 18mm MDF board measuring 1200 x 2400 and that the surplus board would be retained for future use.

As the estimated cost was felt to be reasonable the Parish Council, on a proposal by Duncan Frazer which was seconded by Tony Berry, unanimously approved the acceptance of £110-00 and therefore authorised the Clerk to formally instruct John Symonds to proceed with the work as soon as possible.

RECYCLING CENTRE

The Clerk reported that he had (again) enquired with SNC Environmental Services regarding when a glass bank would be provided on the car park of the Village Inn and been informed that this was being progressed but that currently there was a backlog, with provision, at the District Council.

In addition the Parish Council was being asked if Little Melton would be interested in other (recycling) facilities as SNC may be able to provide a textile/shoe bank. The Parish Council was of the opinion that it would be beneficial to have this further recycling facility and the Clerk was therefore requested to reply accordingly.

VPF MAINTENANCE SPECIFICATION 2008

The proposed specification – as amended to include a further cutting of the hedging along the eastern and southern boundaries in early August – was agreed and on this basis the Clerk was instructed to seek competitive quotations for the undertaking of the maintenance contract for the season 2008. It was noted that the Clerk would request the receipt of quotations so that these could be reported to the next meeting of the Parish Council on 19 February.

WORKING PARTY

The Chairman referred to the desirability of the setting up of a working party to carry out some of the less specialised work, including safety surfaces, arising from the outcome of the ROSPA annual inspection of the young children's play equipment. Volunteers were therefore sought and, in addition to the Chairman and Clerk, Graham Tomlin and John Heaser offered to assist and it was also understood that Wilf Chamberlain would help with the remedial work.

It was agreed that the working party would convene on Saturday 16 February at 9.00 am on the village playing field and prior to this the Clerk would seek to determine and obtain the adhesive appropriate for sticking down and filling the gaps between the tiling.

TENNIS COURT NET

It was mentioned that recently the end of the supporting wire holding the top of the net had sagged as a consequence of slipping off the mechanism near the top of the straining post.

	<p>Stewart Cable, reported that he had resolved this problem after spending approximately two and half hours work freeing the wire etc., which had jammed.</p> <p>The Parish Council expressed its appreciation of this remedial work by the Chairman.</p>
<p>IT</p>	<p>YAHOO EMAIL GROUP</p> <p>John Heaser introduced this item and briefly explained the benefits for the Parish Council and how it would operate. As all Parish Councillors, in addition to the Clerk, now had access to a computer it was agreed that John would shortly make the necessary arrangements so that the group would become operative shortly.</p> <p>COMPUTER MEMORY UPGRADE</p> <p>John Heaser said he had investigated the options for increasing the memory of the Clerk's (Parish Council's) computer as currently only an insufficient 256MB was available.</p> <p>The best option, John suggested, was to replace one of the two (each of 128MB) memory boards with a new 512MB board at a cost of around £50-00. This would mean an upgrading of the memory to 640MB which would be more than enough for the anticipated Parish Council use for the foreseeable future.</p> <p>As the Parish Council was not presently in a position financially to authorise the purchase of a new computer for the Clerk it was proposed and agreed – on a proposal by Graham Tomlin, seconded by Duncan Frazer – that John Heaser would arrange for the purchase and fitting of a new 512MB memory board on the understanding that the cost would be in the region of £50-00.</p> <p>ANTI VIRUS SUBSCRIPTION</p> <p>It was reported by the Clerk that the existing anti virus subscription for the Parish Council expired on 19 February 2008 and that the cost for the (past) year had been £42.35 including VAT.</p> <p>John Heaser recommended that it would be better if this anti virus subscription was not renewed and instead the Parish Council signed up to a more appropriate anti virus package such as AVG as this would be far more suitable and was free of charge.</p> <p>The Parish Council unanimously agreed with this course of action and therefore instructed the Clerk, advised by John Heaser, to arrange for the introduction of the AVG anti virus package w.e.f. 19 February 2008.</p>
<p>INTERNAL VERIFICATION (AUDIT) REPORT</p>	<p>In accordance with the requirements – recently introduced by the External Auditor – Duncan Frazer, as the Parish Council's internal verifier for the period mid September to mid December 2007 verbally reported on his verification undertaken on 4 January. No anomalies, errors or discrepancies had been found apart from the slight discrepancy in the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 30 October 2007 which had recorded that the sum of £53.33 had been paid to the Clerk for expenses for the period 1/7 – 30/9/07 instead of the correct figure of £53.23.</p> <p>The Clerk confirmed he would amend the minutes accordingly.</p>

	<p>Secondly it was proposed by Duncan Frazer and agreed that in future each payment in the minutes would include the individual cheque number as this made it easier and quicker to identify every payment for verification purposes etc.</p> <p>Finally nominations for a verifier for the period mid December 2007 to mid March 2008 were sought and as Duncan was willing to continue in this role it was agreed he would remain the internal verifier at least until mid March.</p> <p>It was noted that the verification process, undertaken by Dincan Frazer with the Clerk, including the checking of bank statements, cheque books and minutes had only taken approximately 30 minutes.</p>
<p>HIGHWAYS</p>	<p>NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO PARISH COUNCIL'S PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS</p> <p>The Clerk confirmed the NCC Planning & Transportation (South Area Office) Department's response of 27 December to the Parish Council's request letter of 10 December and explained that of the eleven requested improvements four proposals (Braymeadow Lane, School Lane, Ringwood Close and Mill Road) had received positive comments. The Clerk also made the point that the positives were sometimes tempered by the comment that progress/implementation was on the assumption that there will be no reduction in the level of funding.</p> <p>John Heaser said that the Local Highways Authority was saying that on the one hand more cycling and walking should be seriously encouraged but on the other hand it was responding negatively to such proposals. It was agreed that John Heaser would draft an appropriate form of words for the Clerk to include in a response to NCC.</p> <p>POSSIBLE VOLUNTEER SPEED WATCH SCHEME</p> <p>In noting that a few parishes throughout the county were undertaking – for the Police – monitoring of the speeds that motor vehicles travel through their villages the Chairman asked if any Parish Councillors thought – should Little Melton be asked to provide local people to carry out such voluntary work – they would be prepared to volunteer.</p> <p>On being put to the vote the Parish Council, on a split vote, opted not to undertake such duties, one of the reasons being that it was felt that such work was what the Police Authority should undertake themselves. Furthermore it was noted that the resultant action (initial offence) would only be in the form of an advisory letter to the offending drivers.</p> <p>GREEN LANE TEMPORARY CLOSURE</p> <p>The Clerk confirmed the recent receipt of an email from Norfolk County Council (Highways) giving advance notice that Green Lane will – owing to urgent work for safety to replace BT overhead cables currently in contact with electricity cables – be closed to use by vehicles from its junction with the B1108/Watton Road southwards for approximately 650 metres to its junction with the C169 School Lane from 20 January for a maximum period of five days.</p> <p>The Clerk confirmed he had displayed public notices to this effect and it was also observed that in the past few days the</p>

	<p>Local Highway Authority had erected some temporary roadside signage giving warning of the impending temporary closure.</p> <p>GRITTING ROUTES</p> <p>Finally under this item the Clerk reported that he had recently received a copy of the Norfolk County Council's Gritting Routes leaflet for 2007/2008 together with a schedule of route amendments. The Clerk added that there were no changes in respect of Little Melton.</p>
<p>PLANNING</p>	<p>1. The Clerk reported that the proposal – by Mr A Drury – to extend 4 Church Farm Barns remained outstanding; no notification of a result having as yet been received by the Parish Council.</p> <p>2. Attention was drawn to the introduction in April 2008, by Central Government, of a national standard planning application form and the statement that planning applications will not, from that date, be accepted unless they are submitted on the new forms.</p> <p>The new system will specify the national requirements regarding what documents, plans and information must be submitted with each of the various types of application. A matrix has also been received setting out when and what supporting information is required to accompany a particular application.</p> <p>In addition it was said that a comprehensive set of guidance notes is being produced to assist applicants and agents and these are to be made available in advance of the introduction of the new application forms, in April.</p> <p>The Clerk concluded by emphasising that any comments, on the information received to date, had to be made to the Head of Planning Services at SNC by 15 February.</p> <p>Stewart Cable posed the question as to whether, following the introduction of the new system in April, the Parish Council would – when commenting on applications – be making comments with local knowledge too late in the process.</p> <p>District Councillor Garry Wheatley thought that this would not be an issue and the Parish Council should continue to make recommendations for investigations, surveys etc to the District Council, when responding as part of local consultation process.</p> <p>3. The Clerk mentioned that – in respect of the planning application for 66 School Lane (proposed shop extension and erection of a two bed cottage by Mr & Mrs J and B MacDonald) - he had, on 10 January, as no further communication had been received from SNC since 8 November, sent another email to the Case Officer at SNC who had responded that consideration of the implications relating to access and parking remained outstanding.</p> <p>4. Also it was reported that the owner of the local shop, John McDonald, had on 10 January verbally informed the Clerk that the Post Office was apparently likely to no longer allow the post lady/person to collect parcels and letters from inside his shop – this potential change having arisen, according to John McDonald, via a Post Office “time and motion” type study. He had informed the Clerk that he was awaiting formal confirmation</p>

	<p>– from the Post Office - of this change and that if this definitely was to be the case then he would not allow the Post Office to have a post box outside his shop on his premises, i.e. on the ranch type fence between the shop and the garage!</p>
<p>CLERK OF THE COUNCILS CORRESPONDENCE</p>	<p>The schedule of the Clerk of the Council’s correspondence – as provided to each Parish Councillor with the agenda, together with the late additions received since 9 January – was noted. Particular attention was drawn to information concerning:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Email of 2 January from Chris Claydon, Safer Neighbourhood Team Sergeant (Wymondham & Hethersett/ Mulbarton) which, as well as wishing all a very happy and peaceful New Year, reported that the Police are more than achieving their set of annual targets of “all crime and detections” despite significant year on year improvements in these areas for at least the past five years. *The upcoming Community Sentencing public meeting to be held at the Village Hall on Wednesday 23 January. *The letter of 9 January from Mrs Botwood of 95 School Lane regarding the leaving of refuse bins, all the while, in the mouth of the vehicular access into Manor Farm Barns. Mrs Botwood was particularly complaining of the visual impact of the “permanent” leaving of the refuse bins when viewed from her property on the opposite side of the road. The Clerk explained that he had monitored the situation and met a man from SNC Environmental Services on Monday 14 January when he had been informed that the District Council was not unhappy with the existing situation of the bins, as there was no rule against such a location. Taking into account the view from SNC the Parish Council agreed the Clerk should provide Mrs Botwood with an appropriate letter of response. *Mobile Police Office visit Monday 4 February. *NCC letter of notification of 11 January regarding Norfolk Minerals & Waste LDF (Issues and Options Stage) Consultation. It appeared that no sites were known/ anticipated in or near Little Melton. *The Parish Council’s response to the Norfolk Rural Community Council’s request for a copy of the Parish Plan and also a Statement of the Expenditure. The Clerk explained that the Parish Council had banked the NRCC grant amounting to £1,500 in December 2005 but that strictly speaking the maximum grant to the Parish Council – excluding the substantial voluntary local labour work undertaken by Parish Councillors, and Stewart Cable in particular, was a maximum of 50% of the total cost. As the expenditure incurred had amounted to £1,610.06 it could be that the NRCC would seek a refund of some of the grant awarded to the Parish Council. The Clerk added that the Parish Council had in excess of the maximum possible refund of grant in hand in balances.
<p>BILLS/RECEIPTS</p>	<p>On a proposal by Tony Berry, seconded by Duncan Frazer, the undermentioned invoices were authorised for payment:- Inland Revenue – Income tax payable on Clerk’s salary</p>

