

**Minutes of the Mundford Parish Council Meeting
Held at The Old Coach House, Mundford
on Thursday 2nd September 2010**

Present:

Cllr. M Eyles, Chairman, Cllr S Eyres, Vice-Chairman, Cllr J Goad, Cllr C Weight, Cllr D Goodrham, Cllr J Marston, Cllr A Shepherd and Mrs F Brown (Clerk to the Council). The meeting was well attended by the public.

1. The Chairman's opening remarks

The Chairman welcomed those present and explained the procedure of the meeting. This included the procedure for item 14 on the Agenda, where the Council will be asked if they wish to exclude the public

2. Apologies of Absence

Cllr Fox due to a family member in hospital and Cllr Miles who was in hospital. These were accepted by the Council. County Cllr Ian Monson and District Cllr Ann Steward could not attend due to a budget meeting at Breckland.

3. To accept Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 1st July 2010

Cllr Goodrham stated that the hydrant that was reported last month was in fact SV4T20 and not SB4T20 as in the minutes. This was accepted by the Council and the Minutes were signed as a true record.

4. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Eyres declared an interest on Agenda item: Dandelion Spraying.

5. Meeting suspended for Public Participation

The Chairman expressed his pleasure in seeing so many public at the meeting again and asked for any comments.

A resident asked how the petition was going for the matter of the Swaffham Road speed limit. The clerk stated that the petitions have been placed in the Newsagents and the Post Office and will be collected at the end of the month. A true picture of how much support has been made will be clearer then. The clerk asked Mrs Edmunds if the door to door signatures had been successful. She advised that there had been one resident who was unhappy with the petition and had stated that he thought it was against the law. The clerk mentioned that the County Councillor and the Police Sergeant had not raised concerns when it was discussed. It was agreed that the petition should be collected at the end of the month and that details of this will be placed in the next connect.

Mrs Edmunds asked the Chairman about the Almshouses Trust that was discussed at the last meeting. She was unsure of a few matters and Dick Girling, a trustee of the Almshouses Trust in our area gave her reassurances. No-one has come forward yet to be a trustee for Mundford but it was noted that the connect had only been in circulation for a short while, so this will be discussed again at the next meeting. The matter of Swaffham Road and its associated problems were discussed and the clerk asked all residents that still had concerns over the condition of the road and drainage problems to write a letter detailing this and pass this onto her. These letters can then be sent to the authorities together to show that it is not just an isolated problem.

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Mary-Ann Turner explained her concerns over recent activity from Eon, who has dug up the public footpath in places to lay cables for the new Bennetts Development. It was noted that the area has now been put right. The Chairman mentioned that part of the footpath will be tarmaced with street lights put in place.

It was mentioned that the trees are overgrown and lilac trees need cutting back on the Brandon Road. The Chairman said this will be looked at and if it is possible the friends of the village may be contacted for this, if it is for Highways to sort out then it will be reported.

A resident mentioned that on the Agenda the Risk Assessment is to be discussed. She asked what procedure is put in place. The Chairman explained what was involved. She then expressed her displeasure over the children's chairs in the Primary School, and the bad acoustics. She much preferred coming to the Old Coach House and advised that more would come to the meetings if there were suitable seating. The Chairman explained that the Parish Council wanted to support the school.

6. Matters Arising

Outstanding Highway

Fir Close – Flooding Problems

After heavy rain this month, the clerk took pictures of the flooding on Fir Close so that Highways have a clear idea of the state of the problem. The Highways engineer has since contacted the clerk and asked if the Cricket Club would kindly let a digger and a dumper truck onto their land to clear the dyke instead of placing traffic lights on the busy A134 and reducing the traffic to single file. The clerk asked Cllr Marston if the Cricket Club would mind as he is on the committee, and he agreed that it would make sense to complete the work this way and to go ahead.

Safety concerns with vehicles turning onto St Leonards St from A134

An e-mail was sent to Highways asking for them to look into the zig zag lines outside the school to see if they could be extended. Information was received with guidelines on how far the lines can go. The clerk will ask the school for their input on this.

Pedestrian Crossing signage

Two signs have been ordered to warn vehicles of a pedestrian crossing ahead. There have been no updates from the Police on the near misses that were reported to them. The crossing lights were taken away for nearly a week for maintenance work and there were a few complaints from residents to the clerk.

No entry sign in Fir Close

The clerk sent an e-mail to Sergeant Atherton to report that a policeman was seen using the wrong exit. He apologised as he thought it was him who made the mistake! He promised to look into the issue and will update the Council before the next meeting.

20mph limit around village

The Chairman pointed out that this was not a full council decision to look into this matter; however it was placed in the newsletter to ask for the opinion of residents. If

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a good majority of residents want a 20mph limit, then the council will discuss the prospect of asking highways to complete a feasibility study on the matter.

Speeding on A1065 Swaffham Road

This was discussed at public participation, but the clerk read out an e-mail from Sergeant Atherton with an update of the speeding situation. The clerk then read out an e-mail that had been sent to Norfolk County Council from Cllr Monson stating that a petition is under way and will be given in soon. The e-mail also highlighted the resident's plight and Cllr Monson's total support for the cause. Those present were extremely pleased with this and hope now for a positive response.

Sewer main on A1065

A letter was sent to Anglian Water asking for them to look at increasing the size of the sewer main whilst they are digging up the road to replace the water main. The sewer main at present is not felt to be adequate for the amount of properties it is serving. The hydrant in Wissey View was also reported at the same time. Anglian Water left a phone message for the clerk to report that they had received the letter and the different aspects will be sent to the relevant departments. The water main is programmed to be replaced by the end of the year. The message also advised that the hydrant will be looked at shortly along with all the other hydrants in the village.

Changes to Highways

There is no news yet on who our area engineer is at this stage. However the Council have been told that budgets have been substantially cut and there will be no more funds for larger projects until the end of the financial year.

Lady Ashburton's Ickburgh Almshouses Trust

As discussed earlier in the meeting, no-one has come forward as yet to be a trustee, however the newsletter has only just gone into circulation so a decision can be made next month.

Standing Orders

Due to Councillor commitments a meeting could not go ahead prior to the meeting. The clerk suggested that she will send an e-mail to all Councillors asking for suggestions of dates.

Community Car Scheme

The Chairman, the clerk and Cllr Shepherd met with Laura-Apps Green from Breckland to discuss the changes within the scheme. Questions were asked and the contract was signed. It was discussed that the clerk will look into costs for medicals and the issue of the drivers being covered on the council's public liability and any information will be given to Cllr Shepherd in the first instance. Updates will be discussed at the next meeting. Notes from the meeting were drafted by the clerk and sent to councillors prior to the meeting.

Training

The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and the clerk attended training in Weeting that was headed by Sue Lake, the advisor for the Local Association of Local Councils. The

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training was very informative and the Clerk has advised that she intends to attend training in November for the Local Elections which will take place next year.

7. Correspondence

An e-mail was sent to the clerk from Rosemary Godfrey who is on the Village Hall committee advising that the website for the hall will be going live in October and wanting to arrange a meeting with Karen Boxall from the connect and the clerk, given the council are planning a website. The clerk will contact Rosemary with a suitable date to meet.

8. Finance

The following payments were authorised at the meeting, 2nd September, 2010 by the Parish Council and cheques signed by Cllrs M Eyles and S Eyres.

Cheque	Description	Total
101180	Mrs A Shepherd (Community Car Scheme)	£ 300.00
101181	J Hubble (Litter Warden)	£ 65.00
101182	Mr M Eyles (Gardener)	£ 91.00
101183	Mrs F Brown (Sal/Sundries/Post/Tel/5wks)	£ 769.23
101184	Denman's Travel (Bus Contract)	£ 120.00
101185	MHB Street Light Contract	£ 146.01
101186	E.on Parish Office	£ 47.42
101187	Mazars Audit	£ 334.88

It was noted that Cllr Shepherd had asked for a higher amount of £300 instead of the usual £250 for the community car scheme. The scheme has been used a great deal more recently which is good, but there will also be more funds needed soon to help with the changes of the scheme and this will be discussed at the next meeting.

8.1 Audit 2009/10

The audit has now been returned and has been approved. The comments were read out to the Council.

8.2 Internal Control

The comments read out from Mazars Audit stated that no internal audit work was undertaken in relation to the 2009/10 financial year. Council members should ensure that they have sufficient evidence to support the assertion that the council has "maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit". The clerk suggested to the Chairman prior to the meeting that internal checks should be in place and suggested a few options. The Chairman suggested to the Council that every quarter the bank statements and reconciliations should be checked by a member of the Council or the internal auditor herself to ensure that the accounts are being operated responsibly. This is to protect the clerk as well as the Parish Council. The Chairman asked for a show of hands on this suggestion and it was unanimous that internal controls should be put in place. The clerk will arrange for the first checks to be made this month and report at the next meeting.

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8.3 Risk Assessment

The Chairman stated that the next annual risk assessment was due in September. No date was mentioned so the clerk advised she will contact the council members interested in taking part when a date was suggested. The report will then be sent round the Council with the Agenda prior to the meeting.

8.4 Bulb Planting

It was discussed that this should be arranged for mid October. It was agreed that £100 of crocuses and £100 daffodils were to be brought and requests for donations be placed in the newsletter.

8.5 Village Green Roses

Mrs Whiting who looks after the roses was happy for new roses to be bought. It was agreed that new roses should be bought with a value of under £50.

8.6 Dandelion Spraying

The Chairman advised that it is usual that three quotes are sought before a decision is made. However, Wil Smith, the Council's current Gardener has not come back to the clerk as promised in time for the meeting. The Clerk mentioned that due to the fact that certain qualifications were needed to handle the use of pesticides, it was extremely difficult to retain quotes. The Council agreed that two quotes on this occasion will suffice. The Chairman read out the quotes, one being from Cllr Eyres. Cllr Eyres quotation was the higher of the two but he advised that the Council should go with the cheaper quotation. Cllr Shepherd stated that in the past it has not always been the best idea to go with the cheapest quote, and mentioned the work completed on the Cricket Club Dyke. She proposed that Cllr Eyres undertake the work due to his proven track record and the fact that he is completely aware of the problems with the dandelions in Mundford. This was seconded by Cllr Goad. Cllr Eyres advised he will complete the work within the month.

9. Planning Applications

3PL/2010/0591/F Brown's Garage – C/U of car salesroom to Farm Shop and retention of decking. GRANTED

3PL/2010/0592/F Brown's Garage – 3 Fascia signs to be erected. GRANTED

3PL/2010/0593/F Brown's Garage – Catering Trailer and decking/raised seating area. GRANTED

3PL/2010/0594/CU Brown's Garage – Change of use of part of Brown's Car Sales to monthly farmers market. WITHDRAWN

3PL/2010/0643/D 5, Swaffham Road – Erection of a 2 storey dwelling & detached garage. Objection sent

3PL/2010/0634/F 70, Malsters Close – Demolish porch and erection of rear single storey extension. GRANTED

3PL/2010/0877/F 26, Adeane Meadow. Proposed single storey rear extension, double storey side extension detached garage and front porch. This is currently being circulated to the council.

A letter was received from Norfolk County Council stating that they are planning for their planning applications to be sent by e-mail in future. This scheme will be rolled

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out over the next few months. The Clerk has sent an e-mail to them advising that not all the Councillors are on e-mail. This decision at NCC has no impact on the way the council receives applications from Breckland, this will stay the same for the near future.

10. Street Lighting

The clerk advised that there had been a lot of reports this month.

11. Reports

There was no report from Cllr Monson as he sent the e-mail to be read out regarding the Swaffham Road issue.

Councillor Steward sent a report that was read out by the Chairman, copies were made available. She advised that she will make arrangements to attend the next meeting.

The Clerk advised that she had been in talks with Breckland with regards to their summer rural activities programme. The children in Mundford have been offered little activities in the summer due to the village hall being shut for the re-surfacing of the floor. The clerk contacted the village hall and Breckland and arranged for two extra dates to be added to their programme. After contacting mums through various sources, 17 children turned up to both events. The clerk has now asked for promotional material to be sent to the Council so that it can be given to the school for future events.

12. Members' Matters

Cllr Weight advised that weeds in kerbs and verges have been bad. It was noted that Breckland do have a programme in place to spray the weeds, but the clerk mentioned that she will report it to Breckland to see if they will come out any earlier.

The Chairman pointed out that the Cricket Club Dyke is cut twice a year and when the contract is renewed it should be suggested that extra cuts are needed.

Cllr Eyres had consulted his diary and suggested Sunday 17th October for the bulb planting. This was agreed by the Council and to be mentioned in the connect.

He also stressed the point that residents should send in letters to the council over the issues of Swaffham Road so that these can all be gathered together and send with the petition.

He also asked if the strimmer had been used recently. The Chairman advised that he had used it only recently to clear Pig Sty Lane and it was in good working order.

Cllr Goodrham mentioned that cars for sale on verges had been noticed. Breckland Council monitor this. Cllr Eyres stated that signs for yards sales and other local events need to be taken down shortly after the event and not left for weeks on end like one from Cherry Tree Close recently.

13. Nick Howe – Chairman of Mundford Village Hall and Lucinda from the Norfolk Rural Community Council

The Chairman mentioned that due to the confidential nature of the situation at the Village Hall there are grounds to exclude the public and press as it could be prejudicial to the public interest. However, this needs to be a Council decision and the Chairman asked for a proposal to exclude the public. Cllr Shepherd proposed to exclude the public, but this was not seconded. The Chairman then asked for a show

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of hands and only one Cllr raised their hand to exclude the public. Therefore it was agreed that the meeting remain open to the public and press.

The Chairman invited Mr Howe to speak. Mr Howe thanked the Council for his invitation to attend and speak at the meeting. He began with a short background into the reason why he wanted to become Chairman. He has held the post since May and has come across stiff opposition from some of the Village Hall committee and feels that without some help he will not be able to carry on his current status. He wanted to ask the Parish Council for their advice and support to help the Village Hall move forward. He expressed that without support the Village Hall will become insolvent in its current state. He stated that the Treasurer has only shown a snap shot of the accounts to the committee as well as himself and this shows that the Village Hall is exceeding expenditure over income. This has been brought up at every meeting since being Chairman and he has experienced some volatile behaviour from some of the committee and some public. He commented that he has raised the issue of serious discrepancies in the accounts and that checks should be made but he has come up against a lack of support. He felt he had no option but to seek further help and therefore contacted Lucinda from the Norfolk Rural Community Council as the Village Hall is a valuable asset to the Village.

Lucinda introduced herself and gave a background into her experience supporting charities like Village Hall's as well as Parish Councils. She commenced by advising that the Village Hall should approach the Charity Commissioners as a first point of call. This will help when the Village Hall want to apply for grants etc as the accounts need to be in order. She advised that she would be happy to work with the committee and any problems that may relate to internal issues. She went on to advise that individual committee members could potentially be liable if the Village Hall was to go in the red unless they can prove they have been actively trying to run the accounts responsibly.

The Chairman asked a number of questions relating to the welfare of the Hall and these were answered. The main concern was the fact that originally the caretaker was due to work 3 hours a day 3 times a week and now the salary is over £10k per annum. This is causing the Hall to be overspending quite considerably, yet the committee are split in the middle on whether the caretaker's hours should be reduced to help the financial situation.

The Chairman also pointed out that the Parish Council are currently giving £2500 a year to help maintain the hall. This is not to be spent purely on the caretakers' wages, and could be construed as misappropriation of funds. It was discussed that a letter may need drafting to the Village Hall to confirm where the money has been spent.

The Chairman asked Lucinda if a full audit should be done, and she advised that this is generally only needed on charities that are a great deal larger. In her view the hall cannot sustain the caretaker on his current salary and procedures should be put in place to help the situation. She went on to state that this can be done by getting free legal advice, which due to the charity status the committee can apply for. It was also noted that the caretaker had no current contract. He is not employed by the hall, as he operates on a self employed basis, but at present does not give an invoice for the work he has done, only a timesheet. Lucinda commented that if the caretaker is sub-contracted then his responsibilities need to be defined and discussed by committee.

The Chairman asked if the Police would get involved and Lucinda replied to say that the Police would probably not get involved as it is a small charity and they are short

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staffed as it is. They are the official regulators, and they can be called in desperation, but it is being very optimistic.

The Chairman stated that the financial situation must be rectified and that the Village Hall did have the Parish Council's support with this matter as it is an asset to the village, and after all common sense must prevail.

Mr Howe wanted to advise the Council that there were some very positive things developing at the hall like the commencement of a website which is hopeful to go live in October. There is also a new youth club, there are rural activity programmes in place for school holidays and there is also a dedicated fund raising committee.

Mr Howe invited the Clerk and the Chairman to attend the next meeting so they could see for themselves the opposition he is up against and also to help support any future initiatives. Cllr Goodrham pointed out that the Chairman must not attend as a representative of the Parish Council, unless it was agreed by Council.

Cllr Goodrham asked what the current balances were on the accounts. Mr Howe was embarrassed to say that he was unaware of the exact balances due to the Treasurer not being forthcoming with this information. The secretary, Mrs Christine Winter stated that she has a figure of £3838 in the current account at the present time. The outgoings are superseding the income and will equate to a £4k loss. There is another account for play area donations and maintenance, but she was unaware of that balance. At present there are only two signatories for cheque signing, the Treasurer being one of those. Mr Howe commented that he had only signed approximately 5 cheques since his appointment, and cheque stubs had been removed on some cheques. It was also made apparent that cheques had been paid before agreement at meetings and he was unaware of some of those payments completely. A donation was given to the Village Hall recently and no receipt was given and it has not been accounted for in the accounts.

The Chairman pointed out that from the information given all committee members may be liable not just the treasurer, so this must be discussed at their next Village Hall committee and clear up the confusion over responsibilities.

The next Village Hall meeting is scheduled for Thursday 9th September at 7.30pm.

The final question from the Chairman was, if the Village Hall Trust goes insolvent will it be the Parish Council's responsibility? Lucinda read out an issue in the constitution that the Parish Council was not responsible.

The Chairman thanked both Mr Howe and Lucinda for attending

The meeting closed at 8.53pm

Chairman: _____ Date: _____

Clerk: _____ Date: _____