

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF LEEDS PARISH COUNCIL
Held in Leeds Village Hall on Tuesday 10th December 2013 at 7.30pm.

Present: Mrs Fort
Mr China
Mr Gallihawk
Mr Govett
Mr Wallace
Mrs Young

In attendance: Mrs Sherrie Babington – Clerk, KCC Councillor Gary Cooke, KCC Officers and members of the public.

The meeting was chaired by Councillor Fort.

The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting, she stated that the agenda would be shortened in light of the recent highways problems in the parish to allow Kent County Council Officers to report on the current situation.

Highways Matters.

Councillor Fort introduced Katie Lewis from Kent County Council Highways to the meeting.

Katie Lewis gave a report on the situation regarding the closure of the B2163. She stated that on 9 November 2013 South East Water discovered a void in the road.

She stated that two cottages showed visible signs of damage and there was potential for further properties to be affected.

She reported that the site was currently manned 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The void at present was 1.5 to 2m deep with up to 16m of soft material in places, she stated that investigations were currently ongoing and would not conclude without a full investigation before the road was reopened.

She stated that KCC were working closely with the insurers of the properties to find a satisfactory conclusion.

She spoke regarding the two areas that were currently being worked on; the first being the property work and secondly the highways work. With regards to the properties affected, she stated that the contractor was due to drill under these to stabilise the ground of all four cottages and this was a 7 to 9 week program.

A written update was circulated to all present.

She spoke regarding the concerns raised regarding diversion routes currently in operation and stated that additional signage had been put up by KCC however they had no powers to enforce this. She stated that a bus service had been put in place on a temporary basis.

She informed members that culvert repair works were currently taking place at Broomfield Road and it was hoped that this road would be opened by Monday.

She stated that regular updates were being sent to the Parish Council by KCC in order to keep both the PC and residents informed of the progress.

The Chairman thanked KCC Officers for attending the meeting and opened it for questions from members of the public.

A resident of Forge Lane attended the meeting to raise concerns regarding the HGV's travelling along Forge Lane. He stated that the current signage was not sufficient or predominant enough to deter vehicles from travelling along the rural lanes.

Concerns are raised by other residents about the number of cars and HGVs travelling along Back Street. A resident stated it was becoming a health and safety issue.

Katie Lewis stated that she would look at the signage to ensure that this was adequately in place to try to keep vehicles using the approved diversion routes.

Cllr Cook confirmed that the approved diversion route was via Willington Street. He stated that Willington Street was classified a 'C' road not a 'B' road. He stated that an option would be for the B2163 to reduce the weight limit from a 17.5 tonne to a 7.5 tonne limit and he was seeking further advice from KCC Officers regarding this matter.

Cllr Cooke spoke regarding Lorry Watch Scheme and the weight limits.

A resident asked whether there were any other voids along the B2163, Katie Lewis stated that this was being investigated at present. She stated that at present KCC was unsure as to what had caused the void.

A resident of one of the cottages gave a statement regarding his personal position to the meeting. He spoke regarding the number of lorries that were still accessing the village, he concluded that the B2163 was not fit the purpose.

A general discussion took place regarding the temporary signage in place and the need for a more permanent solution to the HGV issues. KCC Officers confirmed that the road would not be reopened until it was safe to do so and that they were investigating all options involving HGVs.

Residents reported that the small triangle of green in Back Street had been destroyed due to the heavy traffic using this route and the salt been had been destroyed and was in need of replacing. Cllr Cook stated that this would be actioned as soon as possible.

Residents in attendance at the meeting raised general concerns that emergency services would not be up to reach properties in the event of an emergency as the rural lanes were becoming gridlocked to due to the volume of traffic using them.

A resident referred to a letter to KCC leader will Carter concerning the Bypass. He asked whether the KCC Leader was aware of the situation in Leeds.

Cllr Cooke spoke regarding this letter, he stated the Leader of the Council was aware of the problems with HGVs in Leeds and that KCC were objecting to the planning applications for the proposed development at Junction 8 for this very reason as they did not feel that the infrastructure would support the additional traffic on the roads in and around Leeds.

A general discussion took place regarding the proposed development at Junction 8 and the number of houses being put forward by MBC in the Local Plan.

Cllr Cooke stated the KCC would like to see a Bypass to junction 8, but the route needed to be from Junction 8 to Parkwood. He stated that the Parkwood area needed regenerating as it was only 50% utilised at present.

Cllr Cooke praised the work currently being undertaken by KCC Officers, he stated that the cost of the work is presently unknown.

Mr Amans stated that lessons should be learned from the situation in Upper Street, he suggested that KCC employ a Ground Mapping company to detect any other voids.

Cllr Cook stated that the investigation of the B2163 for its whole length was being considered.

Residents spoke regarding a previous void that had appeared in the road and stated that this had not been fully investigated.

KCC Officers stated that at present the primary concern was to investigate the void and undertake work to rectify this.

Cllr Cooke spoke regarding the declassification of the B2163 and the consequences of this. He reiterated that KCC Officers were looking to reduce the weight limit on the B2163 to 7.5 tonnes.

Cllr Fort thanked all for their attendance and closed the debate with KCC Officers. She invited Parish Cllr Govett to give a report on behalf of the Parish Council.

Cllr Govett spoke regarding the immediate issues of need for signage to ensure that traffic took the approved diverted route; he stated that following the works and reinstatement of the B2163 the Parish Council needed to consider the long-term options open to them.

He spoke regarding the Bypass for Leeds and stated that there was still a case for a Strategic Route however KCC's support was needed.

He spoke regarding the reduction of this the weight limit to 7.5 tonnes and stated that the Parish Council would work with KCC on this matter; however its support was also needed to enforce this as signage alone would not solve this problem.

Cllr Govett spoke regarding the option to declassify the road from a 'B' Road, not to a "C" road but to be "unclassified" all together. He stated that the Parish Council was going to undertake a scoping exercise to look at the options open to them; this would then gather credible evidence to enable the Parish Council to be proactive in their discussions with KCC.

He asked residents to assist the Parish Council and give options as to their view on possible solutions.

Residents spoke regarding the foreign lorries and the need to stop these from entering the village.

Cllr Govett stated that the Parish Council would engage with a professional body to assist with these options.

A resident stated that this was an opportunity to do something about the road; he suggested involving CPRE and English Heritage as a large number of properties within the parish were Listed.

Cllr Govett stated that KCC support was also needed for any options being considered, Cllr Cooke stated that he would support Leeds in their actions towards finding a solution to the B2163.

Cllr Govett spoke regarding the police; he stated that there were approximately 350 houses in the village and suggested that the parish could look at the options to finance a police officer to assist with enforcement.

Cllr Cooke spoke regarding a consultation by Ann Barnes and the £20 million cutbacks, he stated that the police were currently asking for the priorities regarding their budgets and urged residents to respond to this consultation.

Cllr Govett spoke about the possibility of the Parish Council having its own Special Constable.

The Highways discussions were concluded by members and the Chairman stated that the Parish Council would now consider with their normal agenda and thanked everybody in attendance for their time.

1. Apologies.

Apologies were received from Councillor Springford and the police.

2. Declaration of Interests.

No interests were declared.

3. Public Comments.

No further matters were raised.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting.

The minutes from the previous meeting were circulated to all present. These were proposed by Councillor Fort, seconded by Councillor Young and agreed by all present. These were then signed and dated by the Chairman of the meeting.

5. Matters Arising.

There were no matters arising.

6. Police Report.

The police were not present at the meeting.

7. Parish Council Website.

No matters were raised.

8. MBC Borough Councillor Report.

Cllr Parvin was not present at the meeting.

9. KCC Councillors Report.

Cllr Gary Cook raised no further matters.

10. Correspondence & Clerks Report.

1. Future of Local Audit: Draft Regulations Consultation

In May 2013, the Government introduced the Local Audit and Accountability Bill into Parliament. If enacted, to give effect to the new local audit arrangements many of the provisions contained in the Bill will require secondary legislation.

This consultation runs for a period of 4 weeks, with responses invited by 20 December 2013.

All contributions can be made via the e-portal at: <http://localaudit.readandcomment.com/>.

Through this portal, you will be able to comment on sections relating to specific regulations, their

associated questions and the actual draft regulations. The e-portal also has a dedicated message board, enabling interested parties to share their views.

Further details relating to the consultation can also be found on GOV.UK, where you also download an electronic version of the consultation document at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-of-local-audit-consultation-on-secondary-legislatio>

2. KCC Budget Consultation

KCC has published its Budget consultation. Further details are available from the KCC website at http://www.kent.gov.uk/your_council/council_spending/budget_consultation.aspx. It is not clear from the website what the deadline for this consultation is and I will forward details as soon as I hear back from KCC. The consultation paper says that they will need to find further savings of another £273m over the next 3 years if they don't increase council tax. KCC advise that savings of £91m have to be delivered next year and similar amounts in following years. They are consulting on their savings proposals of £81m and raising £10m of income through a council tax increase of 1.99%.

The deadline is 5 weeks from Friday 8th November to Friday 13th December.

3. Two Signature Rule.

DCLG has laid a Legislative Reform Order (LRO) in draft form in Parliament to abolish the 2 signature rule that currently prevents Local Councils from using electronic payment methods. The press release makes clear that new guidelines would allow Local Councils to use electronic payment methods provided robust anti-fraud measures are in place and that Councils have a sound and comprehensive system of internal control with checks before and after payment. Whilst the draft Order has been laid in Parliament it doesn't mean that local councils can start legally using electronic payments yet, as the LRO will now go through the process of being considered by parliamentary committees over the coming weeks. However, it is the beginning of the next stage and therefore a big step forward.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, delivered his Autumn Statement 2013 yesterday (5 December). NALC's helpful summary of the key announcements is attached. Further details are available at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/autumn-statement-2013>. The statement provides an update on the government's plans for the economy based on the latest forecasts from the Office for Budget Responsibility. These forecasts have been published alongside the Autumn Statement and are available on the following website <http://budgetresponsibility.independent.gov.uk/>

11. Planning Matters.

MA/12/2046 Ledian Farm, Upper Street, Leeds.

Hybrid planning application for the redevelopment of Ledian Farm to provide a continuing Care Retirement Community Scheme n(C2 Use Class) - detailed planning application.

MA/12/2047 Ledian Farm, Upper Street, Leeds.

Application for Listed Building Consent for partial demolition of existing ragstone boundary wall to Upper Street to provide pedestrian access and re-building and repair where required.

MA/12/2268 The Ten Bells, Upper Street, Leeds.

An application for conversation area consent for the demolition of existing extensions.

MA/13/0050 Waterside Park, M20 J8, Ashford Road, Hollingbourne

Scoping opinion sought in respect of an Environmental Statement to be submitted in relation to a proposed development being - 1 The creation of a new site access road off the existing A20/M20 link roundabout with associated works to the roundabout as required. 2 The re-grading of the site to create a level development platform (with the creation of new bunds and batters as required. 3 The creation of up to 60,000sqm of employment floor space to use classes B1 (light industrial/research and development/offices), B2 (general industrial) and B8 (storage and warehousing) and; 4 Internal drainage, road layouts, structural landscaping and diversion or the existing public right of way.

MC/13/0043 Brook House, Lower Street, Leeds.

Application for Listed Building Consent to replace conservatory.

MA/12/2267 The Ten Bells, Upper Street, Leeds.

Change of use and conversion of existing building to two dwellings and erection of three dwellings (resubmission of MA/12/1202)

12. Financial Matters.**a. Financial Statement.**

The financial statements for the Parish Council and Playing Field Accounts was presented to Councillors and approved. (Young/Wallace).

b. 2014/2015 Budget.

The Clerk circulated a draft budget to all members for consideration. This was discussed and members approved a precept of £26288 for 2014/2015. (Fort/Govett)

Action: Precept approved for £26288.00.

13. Parish Maintenance.

No matters were raised.

14. Playing Field.

No matters were raised.

15. Street Lighting.

No matters were raised.

16. Highway Matters.**a) General Matters.**

No further matters were raised.

b) Lorry Watch.

No further matters were raised.

17. Joint Parish Group & LDF.

No matters were raised.

18. Further questions from public.

No matters were raised.

19. Urgent Matters.

No matters were raised.

20. Date of next Parish Council Meeting.

Tuesday 14th January 2014 at Leeds Village Hall.

There being no further business the meeting was closed 9.55pm.

Signed _____

Dated _____