

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF LEEDS PARISH COUNCIL
Held in the Playing Field Pavillion on Tuesday 12th November 2013 at 7.30pm.

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

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

The meeting was chaired by Councillor Fort.

1. Apologies.

Apologies were received from the police.

2. Declaration of Interests.

No interests were declared.

3. Public Comments.

Simon Amans attended the meeting, he had a prepared statement and asked if he could read this and stated that he would like this placed in the minutes as quoted. This statement is attached as an appendix to these minutes.

He informed the meeting that on Saturday 9 November, the B2163 in the Upper Street collapsed outside his property.

He stated that he had been in contact with Kent highways and the police regarding the road closure.

He passed a prepared a written statement to Parish Councillors for record, he stated that he had not heard from the parish council regarding the road since it had been closed.

He spoke regarding the seriousness of this incident, he stated that the hole was exposed due to the water company trying to fix a leak in the road and as a result it was closed at 7pm on Saturday night.

Mr Amans stressed that the road should not be reopened until the reasons for the void had been investigated.

Councillor Cooke attended the meeting; he stated that the closure of the B2163 had been agreed as a temporary closure for a total of 16 days so far.

He stated that the latest update from Kent County Council was that there was currently a continuing investigation involving South East and Southern water. He confirmed that the road would remain closed until a full investigation was complete, and an extension to the given 16 day closure notice would be granted for continuing works should this be necessary.

Mr Amans reiterated the seriousness of the incident and informed members that they could have been a gas explosion.

Cllr Govett spoke regarding the situation, he expressed his concerns regarding the situation and asked what was happening under the road at Upper Street, he questioned whether there was another disaster waiting to happen.

Members suggested that the level of traffic travelling along the B2163 would have had an impact on the road. Councillor Cooke stated that the problem had likely been caused by a water leak.

Cllr Govett asked the Parish Council to consider its view and at what point it would seek a professional assessment to ascertain the situation.

A resident spoke regarding the lorries that travel along the B2163, he stated that in his view lorries were the main cause of the problems, he said that he had spoken to KCC and the police regarding the lack of signage for HGV lorries. He stated that in his view the only solution was a bypass.

Cllr Govett stated that Kent County Council does not have any choice but to let HGVs through the village, as it was a classified A Road. He suggested that declassification of the road would be an option as a bypass was financially out of reach.

He suggested that the Parish Council should try to get the B2163 declassified through Leeds and he stated that the Parish Council would need to seek legal advice regarding this.

Councillor Cooke informed the meeting that he was seeking daily updates from Kent County Council Highways and he would forward these onto the Parish Council.

Mr Amans asked all Parish Councillors to take the time to visit the site and to see the whole and the magnitude of this. He then left the meeting.

Councillor Cooke stated that so far it looks to be a cracked mains water main and the water pressure had created the hole.

Cllr Govett once again suggested that the Parish Council use this as an opportunity to seek legal advice and assessment of the B2163.

A general discussion took place regarding the benefits of having the B2163 declassified.

It was agreed that the Parish Council would look into appointing an engineer to look into the condition of the road and Councillor Govett stated that he would liaise with a Structural Engineer to discuss this further.

Cllr Fort stated that she would seek legal advice from a solicitor.

It was agreed that regular updates and information would be placed in the magazine and on the website to keep residents informed of the situation.

Action: Councillor Fort to liaise with solicitor

Action: Clerk to pass Structural Engineer details onto Councillor Govett.

Action: Councillor Govett to liaise with Structural Engineer.

Cllr China suggested that the Parish Council send a letter to the Police Commissioner Ann Barnes to explain the problems regarding the B2163 regarding the hole and the consequences of the lorries travelling through the village.

Cllr Springford stated that the police were not following up the information passed on from Lorry Watch and this should also be raised with Ann Barnes.

Mr Brace spoke regarding the Lorry Watch Scheme and the problem with this.

Action: Councillor Fort to write letter to Ann Barnes.

A resident spoke regarding her property and asked for site meeting with Gary Cooke, he stated that he would liaise with her in due course.

Chris Brace spoke regarding a letter to Paul Carter regarding the bypass, he stated that a response had been received and this was circulated to the Parish Council, this stated that there were no plans for a bypass in the immediate future.

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.

Councillor Govett reported on the website.

8. MBC Borough Councillor Report.

Borough Councillor Peter Parvin gave his report to the meeting.

He spoke regarding scrap metal collectors and informed the meeting that they now needed a license to operate.

He stated that Maidstone Borough Council what undertaking joint ventures with neighbouring authorities in order to save money.

He reported on the Remembrance Service in Maidstone on Sunday and the progress of the Local Development Framework, stating that the final draft of the Local Plan should be out for consultation in the New Year.

9. KCC Councillors Report.

Cllr Gary Cook attended the meeting; he stated that KCC needed to find a 10% reduction in its budget for the year 14/15.

He spoke regarding the proposed development at Junction 8, for a distribution and warehousing site, and stated that Kent County Council was organising a public meeting in the near future to discuss this. He confirmed that KCC was raising strong objections to this application.

Cllr Parvin stated that not everyone was against this development. He reported that the Joint Parish Group did try to have the application heard before the Full Council of Maidstone Borough Council; however he confirmed that it would be determined by the Planning Committee in due course.

Cllr Fort asked to Councillor Parvin if he was objecting to the application and supporting the Parish Council and the residents of Leeds in opposing this.

Cllr Cook stated that he felt that all proposals to Junction 8 should be strongly objected to; he stated that he and his County Members were opposed to this development.

10. Correspondence & Clerks Report.

1. Sustainable Communities Act

You may have seen the article in the latest edition of our Parish News regarding the Sustainable Communities Act and the new right for Parish Councils to put forward proposals direct to the Secretary of State at DCLG.

A letter from Stephen Williams MP, (new DCLG Minister replacing Don Foster MP) to Parish and Town Councils encourages parishes to make direct proposals under the Sustainable Communities Act, 2007 to the Department for Communities and Local Government.

Member Councils should read all of the documents and text on the NALC website before submitting proposals to DCLG (see http://www.nalc.gov.uk/About_NALC/SustainableCommunitiesAct2007.aspx).

2. Electoral Commission Consultation - Standing for Election in the UK

The Electoral Commission has issued a Consultation paper on "Standing for Election in the UK". The full consultation document is attached and can also be found by using the following weblink: http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/162659/Standing-for-election-consultation-paper.pdf.

The deadline for comments 18 December.

11. Planning Matters.

New Applications Received

TA/0153/13 Briar House, Upper Street, Leeds.

Conservation area notification: Leeds conservation area notification of intention to pollard one goat willow and carry out works to one cedar, being crown lift to 2.5m above ground(remove branches below this) cut back branches overhanging Briar House in line with rear bay of house and reduce height by 3m.

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).

The future banking arrangements for the Parish Council was discussed. It was agreed that the Clerk should look at the account options available for the PC.

Action: Clerk to action.

b. 2013/2014 Audit Clearance.

The Clerk informed members that the Audit Clearance notice had been received from Littlejohn and this had therefore been concluded.

c. 2014/2015 Budget.

The Clerk circulated a draft budget to all members for consideration. She informed them that this was in draft in preparation for the Budget Open Morning held in December. It was agreed that this would be placed on the next agenda for consideration.

Action: Place Budget on next agenda.

13. Parish Maintenance.

No matters were raised.

14. Playing Field.

Members discussed the hire of the playing field for football and Councillor Wallace questioned why the PC was hiring this when it was costing more than it was making and he asked if the PC still wished to hire out the playing field.

It was agreed that this was a discussion for a future time.

Councillor China reported on a meeting that he had held with Steven Waring regarding the maintenance of the Playing Field.

It was agreed that the suggested maintenance of the tennis courts should be undertaken and the Clerk was asked to liaise with Steven Waring regarding this.

Action: Clerk to action.

It was agreed that the Clerk should contact Yeoman Glass to arrange for the windows in the pavilion to be repaired.

Action: Clerk to action.

15. Street Lighting.

The Chairman suggested that the review of the street lighting should be discussed at a separate meeting at some point in the future.

This was agreed by all present.

16. Highway Matters.a) General Matters.

No further matters were raised.

b) Lorry Watch.

No further matters were raised.

17. Joint Parish Group & LDF.

Councillor Fort updated members on this matter.

18. Further questions from public.

No matters were raised.

19. Urgent Matters.

No matters were raised.

20. Date of next Parish Council Meeting.

Tuesday 10th November 2013 at Leeds Pavillion.

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

Signed _____

Dated _____