

Minutes of Great Melton's Annual Parish Council Meeting

Tuesday 9 May 2023 at 7.30 pm held at Great Melton Village Hall

Parish Councillors present: Rob Richardson (outgoing Chairman), Bruce Fleming (newly-elected Chairman), Mary Barnard, Michelle Collins, Peter Markham, Liesl Richardson and Ian Sears (newly-elected Vice-Chairman). Also present: Luisa Cantera (Parish Clerk), Margaret Dewsbury (District and County Councillor) and 2 members of the public.

All councillors signed their declarations of acceptance of office prior to the start of the meeting.

1 Election of Chairman for the coming year

Cllr R Richardson opened the meeting and invited nominations for the office of Chairman. Cllr Fleming was nominated by Cllr Markham and seconded by Cllr L Richardson. With no further nominations, all councillors agreed to elect Cllr Fleming to serve as Chairman for the coming twelve months. He signed a declaration of acceptance of office and took the chair.

2 Election of Vice-Chairman for the coming year

The Chairman invited nominations for the office of Vice-Chairman. Cllr Sears was nominated by Cllr R Richardson and seconded by Cllr Markham. With no further nominations, all councillors agreed to elect Cllr Sears to serve as Vice-Chairman for the coming twelve months.

3 Apologies for absence

All councillors were present at the meeting.

4 Members' declarations of interest in items on the agenda

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2023

The minutes were amended with two minor corrections. The minutes were approved including the corrections and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

6 Clerk's report

The Clerk gave a summary of her report.

7 Open forum for public participation

Two members of the public spoke about the planning application at item 11 on the agenda. They expressed their concerns about the proposals, which included times of day the field would be in use, noise disruption from visitors with their dogs to the field and their vehicle movements.

The chairman decided to take item 11 next in the proceedings.

11 Planning

11.1 Land west of Burdock Lane, Wramplingham (2202/2419)

Signed:

14

Dated: 11th September 2023

Change of use from agricultural land to dog exercise field - The Parish Council (GMPC) agreed to object to the application and sent the following response to the District Council:

1. Councillors share the concerns of neighbouring Great Melton residents whose properties overlook the site of the proposed dog exercise field on Burdock Lane. These residents have chosen to live in a quiet rural location and the impact of noise on this environment will have a significantly adverse impact on the conduct of their daily lives, especially as many work from home. The suggested mitigations for noise and anti-social behaviour provide little reassurance given the predictable operating conditions of the proposed facility.
2. It is the contention of GMPC that the ancient hedgerow at this site is protected as it forms part of the boundary of the parish of Great Melton, a situation which pre-dates 1850. Along with its age of more than 30 years, it is regarded as 'important' and GMPC therefore strongly objects to its proposed further removal to facilitate access to the field.
3. GMPC also has significant concerns regarding any proposed access to the site from Burdock Lane in circumstances of a narrow rural lane, with limited visibility, given the S-band configuration and its close proximity to the junction with an increasingly busy B1108 (Watton Road). Burdock Lane (wholly within Great Melton) has become increasingly busy as a thoroughfare to Hethersett and Wymondham and further increases in the volume of traffic will only add to this burden and the risk to walkers, joggers, cyclists and the many local horse riders, with Great Melton serving as host to three liveryies.
4. GMPC has raised its significant concerns with Highways, Norfolk County Council, in respect of the junction between Burdock Lane and Pockthorpe Road/Landlow Lane. The visibility to the south along Pockthorpe Road from this junction is particularly restricted, and the emergence of vehicles approaching from the west along Burdock Lane at this point, is particularly hazardous. It has been the site of several accidents and the inevitable increased burden of traffic associated with this proposal would only add to the danger.
5. GMPC notes the availability of several alternative similar and accessible facilities for the purpose of dog exercise within the local, neighbouring district.

8 Confirmation of eligibility and re-adoption of the General Power of Competence

The Clerk explained that it would be useful for the Council to re-adopt the General Power of Competence. The Council is eligible because it has a qualified clerk and two thirds of councillors were elected (unopposed) at the last election. The Council **RESOLVED** to adopt the General Power of Competence.

9 Appointment of councillors to committees and other bodies

The Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllrs Markham, Fleming and Sears onto the Highways Working Group, and Cllr Sears onto the Village Hall Management Committee with Cllr Barnard to deputise when necessary.

10 Consideration of bank signatories

The Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllrs Barnard, Fleming and Sears as bank signatories.

12 Report from Cllr Sears from the Village Hall Management Committee Meeting

Cllr Sears gave a brief report from the April village hall meeting. The refurbishment of the building is almost complete. The committee thanked the parish council for contributing towards the new flooring. The committee debated how to display the substantial historical village archive; it is likely that some of the information will be displayed in the village hall. Hire charges were discussed but no decision was made. The next meeting will be held on 8 November.

13 Update from councillors

13.1 Update on Sheringham Shoal Extension and Dudgeon Extension Project

Last month the Clerk returned the Heads of Terms to Birketts, the solicitors representing the land owners affected by proposed the wind farm cable route. The planning application is being considered by The Planning Inspectorate.

13.2 Updates from recent meetings attended and March litter pick

Cllr Barnard reported that the litter pick event was very successful.

Cllr Fleming attended the Town and Parish Council Forum in March. Topics included elections, mindful towns and villages (mental health champions), and food waste collections.

14 Finance

14.1 Review of the asset register for 2022-23

The Clerk confirmed that there were no changes to the asset register during the past financial year. Cllr Sears said that he will speak with David Gregory about the maintenance of the war memorial and will report back at the next meeting.

14.2 Review the annual risk assessment document

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the risk assessment without amendment. The document will be reviewed in May 2024.

14.3 Internal Auditor's report and consideration of recommendations

The internal audit took place on 28 April 2023. Mr Gorham, the internal auditor, completed the form on the Annual Return (AGAR) and provided an additional written report. He made no formal recommendations as he reported that he believes the governance procedures and accountancy records are of a very high standard.

14.4 Agreement of the accounts for the year ending 31 March 2023

The Council **RESOLVED** to adopt the accounts as presented by the Clerk.

14.5 Approval of the 2022-23 Annual Governance Statement

The Chairman read out the statements in the Annual Governance section of the AGAR requiring councillors to respond to each statement. The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Annual Governance Statement.

14.6 Approval of the 2022-23 Annual Statement of Accounts

The Clerk read out the figures in the Accounting Statement. The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Statement of Accounts. The Chairman and Clerk signed the AGAR form on behalf of the Council.

14.7 Exemption from external audit

It was noted that as income and expenditure for the year was under £25,000, the Council could exempt itself from external audit. The Council **RESOLVED** to exempt itself from external audit and the Clerk and Chairman were authorised to sign the form.

14.8 Consideration of any grant requests

Great Melton Parochial Church Council (PCC) requested a grant towards the cost of churchyard maintenance. The PCC requested an increase in the grant but the Council was unable to justify increasing the precept in order to give a higher grant. The Council **RESOLVED** to grant £400 to Great Melton PCC.

14.9 The following payments were approved by the Council:

BHIB	Annual insurance	£400.70
Broadland Flooring	Flooring for village hall refurbishment	£3,600.00
Great Melton PCC	Donation to church for churchyard maintenance	£400.00
Robin Goreham	Internal audit fee	£30.00
L Cantera	Final salary and related expenses*	to be confirmed

*relates to the period 1 April to 31 May 2023 and will be confirmed close to finish date

15 Response from Highways regarding the reduction in speed limit report

The report was acknowledged by the Highways Engineer who is supportive of the proposal to reduce the speed limit in parts of the village. The Network Safety and Analysis Team will look to initiate a speed limit assessment to collate data of traffic counts, speeds, behaviour, etc, to present this information ahead of a November deadline. The Clerk will forward the response from Highways to all councillors and the Chairman will follow up with Highways.

16 Correspondence

The Chairman summarised the correspondence which included a request to buy allotment land, living in fuel poverty support information, A11 roadworks, and the Norfolk Biodiversity Awards. Cllr Collins agreed to look into whether there are any conditions of use (and sale) of the allotment land.

17 Date of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday 11 September 2023.

18 The Council RESOLVED to exclude members of the public and press (under the Public Admission to Meetings Act 1960) for the following confidential items:

18.1 To acknowledge the Clerk's resignation and agree a leave date

The Council acknowledged the Clerk's resignation and agreed a leave date of 31 May 2023.

18.2 To agree the appointment of a new Clerk

Cllrs Fleming, R Richardson and Barnard met with Anita Rose. They were happy to recommend her appointment as Clerk to the Council. The Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Anita Rose as the new Clerk with effect from 1 June 2023.

18.3 To continue discussion on rental of allotment land

The Council agreed a rent of £40 to the existing tenant providing that it is maintained throughout the year and used for grazing for part of the year. The land will be inspected by councillors and will be discussed at the September meeting.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 10.05 pm.