



WALPOLE CROSS KEYS PARISH COUNCIL



Clerk: Mrs Caroline Boyden

Chair: Nick Dyble

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MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF WALPOLE CROSS KEYS PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17th FEBRUARY 2021 FROM 7.30PM ONLINE

PRESENT: Cllr Nick Dyble (ND) Chair), Cllr Hazel Dobson, Cllr Trevor Roberts (TR), Cllr G. Coates, Cllr Peter Brown (PB), Cllr Mark Day (MD), Cllr Rosie Dyble (RD), Cllr P Kunes (PK), Cllr Sandra Squire (SS) and Caroline Boyden (CB) Clerk.
One member of the public was in attendance.

Open Session for Parishioners Questions – none

1. **Welcome** – a formal welcome was given by the Chair, Cllr N Dyble.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr. G. Roberts due to IT issues - this was accepted and approved by the council.

3. **COUNCILLORS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – none**

4. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting on Wednesday 20th January 2021, having been previously distributed to all members, they were accepted as correct and signed. Proposed Cllr N Dyble, Seconded Cllr T Roberts. Unanimously accepted.

5. **MATTERS ARISING**

a. School Crossing/Speed restriction update - ND advised he had received an email advising a replacement crossing patrol person would be employed and a review to take place in a year's time. This person would also be in charge of switching on the crossing

b. Flooding – Cllr Kunes had organised an onsite meeting on the 11th of February including a landowner, Cllr Squires, a representative of the IDB and Cllr N Dyble. The drainage at Station Road and Sutton Road was reviewed and a possible ditch at the back of the houses on Station Road was discussed and suggested that it join the existing ditch. It was noted that the drain entrance to the Nursery was flooded as per information from Cllr G Roberts on several occasions. An estimate with David Scales for the cost of an open ditch and also a piped drain with inspection chambers will be requested to give an idea of the best way forward. An open ditch is preferred but reservations by the landowner regarding loss of land was mentioned and requires further discussions. The IDB may have grants available and Cllr Kunes to look into other available funding.

The recent rainfall has left 2 homeowners having to pump out flooded gardens on Sutton Road and illegal extensions across the dyke and lack of maintenance are not helping. It was noted that a drainage pipe beside Station Road North was at ground level and running up a hill making it useless and not correctly installed. Cllr Kunes to contact Stuart Ashworth at the Borough Planning on this issue along with the unbuild dyke which was thought to be on previous planning applications. It was mentioned that farmers/landowners are no longer maintaining the dykes & ditches on their land and although the County Council can force them to maintain them, they seemed not willing to do so. Cllr Squire mentioned the New Flood Alliance which has recently been set up and actions are promised – see her full report under item 8.

It was decided to set up a sub-committee/working party on flooding to consist of Cllrs N Dyble, G Roberts, T Roberts, S Squire and Paul Kunes. Proposed ND, seconded TR with all in favour.

c. New Dog Bin– As per the last meeting, the additional dog bin was discussed following the requirements received from BCKLWN and it was decided to go ahead with the process including map location & photographs. ACTION CB/ND

6. PLANNING MATTERS

a. New applications -

- Demolition of existing adjacent glasshouses, side extension and change of use from B1 to B2 discussed in detail which led to a proposal by Cllr Brown to object which was seconded by Cllr T Roberts and carried by 4:3, on the issue that the area was turning into a light industrial area and issues with HGV's on the small entrance lane causing the lane to disintegrate. Last week an HGV went into a ditch on the lane and had to be pulled out by a tractor.
- Extensions and alterations to Lion House, Low Road was discussed as it was a revised design and support was given, proposed by Cllr Brown, seconded by Cllr T Roberts and all in favour.
- Static Caravan at Christmas Cottage, Sutton Road was supported, proposed by Cllr N Dyble, seconded by Cllr R Dyble and all in favour.

b. It was noted, with disapproval, that the application for the storage unit at the Nursery on Station Road has been approved.

7. FINANCIAL MATTERS

To accept accounts:

- a. January 21 bank statements and bank reconciliation- acceptance proposed by Cllr R Dyble, seconded by Cllr T Roberts, and unanimously accepted.
- b. Financial Review for January including payments/receipts- acceptance proposed by Cllr. T Roberts, seconded by Cllr G Coates, and unanimously accepted.
- c. Payments for February were reviewed, and acceptance proposed by Cllr N Dyble, seconded By Cllr R Dyble, and unanimously accepted.

Glasdon (bins)	£1391.15
Clerk Jan Salary	£ 252.36
Clerk Jan expenses	£ 25.00
HMRC	£ 63.20
Scribe annual renewal	£ 154.80
Opus electric	£ 31.01
Zoom	£ 14.39

d. The CiL project is still awaiting delivery of the SAM unit but the bins have now been delivered.

8. COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILLORS REPORTS:

Cllr Sandra Squires reported as follows:

Norfolk Winter Covid Support Scheme – We continue to provide set up a special support scheme to help Norfolk residents get through winter. It's for anyone who is experiencing financial hardship as a result of COVID-19. Further details are available [here](#).

Covid cases – case numbers are dropping but are still higher than they were before the first lockdown, and higher than the England average. So there is still no room for complacency.

Bereavement Service – with Covid deaths in Norfolk having exceeded 1200 since the pandemic began, we would like to remind people that additional support is available to help bereaved families to make the necessary arrangements and to offer a listening ear. [Bereavement support - Norfolk County Council](#)

Food support for people who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) - There is now additional support available for residents who are clinically extremely vulnerable (who have been advised to shield). Norfolk County Council can offer food and other support to people who are CEV, complementing the existing services provided by food banks and other local support. The support can help anyone who is CEV to access food, including those who can afford to buy food but may have nobody to help with their shopping or can't access online delivery orders.

The support offered is tailored to meet a person's individual circumstances and can range from help to book a delivery slot, finding a volunteer to do their shopping and delivery, or an emergency food box if necessary. If you are know someone who is CEV and in need of immediate food support, please signpost them to Norfolk County Council on 0344 800 8020.

Council Service Updates

Schools – closed except for children of keyworkers and vulnerable children. Early Years Childcare remains open. Except in cases where they have been closed by the weather.

Libraries & Mobile Libraries – closed

Recycling Centres – Open but with social distancing measures in place. Reuse shops are closed

Museums – closed

Registration Office – no marriage ceremonies taking places except exceptional circumstances, births can still be registered by appointment only, registration of deaths is being conducted remotely by telephone.

Gritting etc – Obviously, crews are out gritting during this cold weather. Each gritting run takes a crew 3 hours to complete and across the County 2000 miles of road are gritted every time.

Scams: We are hearing of increasing incidents of Covid related scams across the County and would ask people to be aware. There are ones that offer so called home cleaning for “virus decontamination” and some offering vaccines for a cost. Please spread the word and make residents, particularly vulnerable ones aware. Only the NHS is doing Covid vaccinations, they won't turn up at your door unannounced or ask you to prove your identity. If anyone you know has been a victim of fraud, please report it to Action Fraud on their website or call 0300 123 2040.

Visit: <https://friendsagainstscams.org.uk> for more info on scams and how to avoid them.

Other news:

Trees – Due to the 1 Million Trees Project being somewhat delayed, I decided to offer each of the Parishes in my Division between 3-5 native trees myself (a bit bigger than saplings but not fully grown either!). On the proviso that the parish will take care of them and water them if required. This week I have ordered over 30 trees (works out about 4 per parish) from a bare root nursery, they vary in size from 80cm up to 150cm in height and are a mixture of English Oak, Beech, Silver Birch, Rowan & Copper Beech. They are due to arrive in the next couple of weeks. So, I'll update you when they're here.

Flooding – Wow. Where to start. I have been inundated with flooding reports and in truth chasing them up and tying down the Flood Team seemed to take up 90% of my time last week. Lots of areas across West Norfolk have struggled more than usual, with lots of properties being flooded. This has obviously caused a backlog with Highways and the Flood Team and they have had to prioritise their case load. Which is not easy to hear when it is your house that is flooded, but they are working and getting out to people as quickly as they can. The flooding is also caused by numerous factors and it can be complicated to establish the cause and therefore the fix. While it is very easy to blame Highways, it often isn't that simple. This past week I have found Highways to be very helpful and under a lot of pressure. Bearing in mind that it is also Highways staff who do the gritting runs, often with very little time off.

I find it most frustrating that there is no immediate support available for residents with flooding with them (and councillors) going round in circles between the various organisations involved with flooding. A couple of weeks ago I wrote to the Leader of NCC, stating I feel residents are being let down and more needs to be done to provide actual help rather than hold meetings.

He has responded to state that the newly created “Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance” chaired by Lord Dannatt will be looking at just those things. I have reminded him that residents do not want to hear about more meetings, they want action and the best things they could do is set up an emergency flood line and have equipment and staff available to provide practical help. I have written to Lord Dannatt expressing my concerns and he has assured me that actions will flow from his meeting, not just words.

Digital devices – NCC continues to contribute to the EDP's “Every Child Online campaign”. 1405 digital devices have been issued via IMT as at the end of January 2021, and approx. 200 are ready for delivery via Norfolk Assistance Scheme. Further Education colleges have also started taking delivery of DfE devices.

It is interesting though that the Labour Group suggested the council supported a campaign in a motion to council back in July 2020, about encouraging businesses to donate old IT to schools to help children get online when home schooling, which the Conservatives voted down saying it was not anything to do with them and would cost too much. Yet they can create a campaign themselves in conjunction with the EDP to do just that. 6 months has been lost and it has affected the learning of a vast number of children who have struggled to access remote learning.

Budget – On Monday I submitted a budget amendment for the NCC budget from the Independent Group ahead of the budget setting meeting next Monday (22nd). We have put forward 3 proposals:

The first and second items are related to off road cycleways, asking for feasibility studies for 2 areas, one in North Norfolk suggested by my colleague Cllr Ed Maxfield & one for the area south of King’s Lynn to include upgrading the Fen Rivers Way from a footpath to include a cycleway between Downham Market & King’s Lynn, put forward by myself.

We aim to see a network of off road cycleways round West Norfolk, but the Fen Rivers Way is probably the easiest starting place for that. We have also asked for £2000 to be removed from the proposed new amount for the Members Highways Budgets to be put into a “Hedge Fund” (no, not that type!) to allow hedging to be replanted where it has been lost or can be introduced, to be administered as part of the Parish Partnership Scheme.

Care Leavers – As the Chair of one of NCC’s Corporate Parenting sub groups I have been involved with setting up a new mentoring service for Norfolk Care Leavers by Councillors. We are working with other organisations who provide mentoring services, and it will be rolled out after the elections. We are also looking at attaining the Care Leavers Covenant, which will help provide items for Care Leavers moving into their own home. As an extension to this, last month I proposed to the Borough Council that the Care & Repair service could be extended to Care Leavers as they do not have a support network when they live independently and are more vulnerable to eviction. That will go through Cabinet successfully so we can be the first area of Norfolk to provide a practical support service for Care Leavers.

LGA Leadership Academy – At the end of last month, I was invited to take part in one of the LGA Leadership Academy courses, which runs until the end of March. The course is run by the LGA in conjunction with the Institute of Leadership & Management. It’s been fascinating so far talking to other councillors round the Country about how their councils work and what we feel could be done to improve both the Council and the relationships of those within it. The course allows us to choose our own leadership challenge, to develop throughout the period of the course. True to type, I’ve chosen myself a difficult one but one that I feel is desperately in need of change. Which I cannot reveal until I’ve made at least a little progress!

Judicial Review continued.

As reported last month, following a change to care charges in July 2019, and the controversial introduction of the Minimum Income Guarantee which left many severely disabled people in Norfolk in financial hardship, a Judicial Review in December decided that NCC had discriminated against those severely disabled people who were unable to work.

As a result, a new charging policy is to be developed in conjunction with those who receive care, all extra charges introduced the former policy are to be repaid. I am pleased to know the claimant in the Judicial Review and to have been able to provide some small level of support. This decision affects severely disabled people right across Norfolk and in other councils around the Country. I am now in discussions with NCC over the refunds as the plan was to make payment back to care accounts, which to my mind is more of a credit note than a refund. Discussions are ongoing, although it is looking increasingly likely that NCC will be taken back to court for further discrimination against disabled people.

Cllr Kunes reported that it had been announced today that a £2.8m grant had been received to de-carbonise all council buildings to move towards zero carbon.

Tree planting of 5,500 trees in King’s Lynn had been proposed and currently out to contract, with other projects being considered.

The crematorium is down to normal working but the water levels in some cemeteries was still a problem. The importance of the census in March was raised and all parishes are asked to promote where possible.

Cllr Kunes advised that the crematorium was busy and making additional cremations on behalf of Boston due to a fire at their crematorium. The Borough Council main budget had a large hole due to the lack of income from car parking fees and the situation was very concerning. Currently they have 2-3 years of reserves. The increase in electric cars has led to more charging points and a tree planting scheme will be announced shortly.

9. Correspondence/Communications

- a. Market Lane survey update – confirmation received from Highways that a 40mph limit would be put in place and the Clerk had requested a timeline asap. Cllr Squire advised that Highways should pay for the changes and Cllr Coates asked for confirmation .

The offer of trees from Cllr Squire was discussed and it was decided to request 2 Rowans as not too big. The removal of hedgerows was raised, and it was suggested that the Parish Council look at a hedgerow fund via the 50:50 partnership scheme for 22/23. As councillors know most of the landowners, it was agreed to contact them for their hedgerow policies. Planning to be checked for the Brown built houses regarding hedging at the rear of the properties. Wild flower seeds to be sown by the hedgerow on Station Road North.

- c. The Speedwatch scheme was discussed and a minimum of 6 volunteers are required to start. Cllrs Dobson, R Dyble agreed to volunteer and a notice to be put on the Facebook page by Cllr R Dyble. Clerk to put details on the website. ACTION RD/CB
- d. Triangle of land at junction with Sutton and Little Holme Road still has no official owner and it was agreed to grow some wildflowers on the site after it has been weeded. ACTION TR

10. Update on SAM: The SAM unit will be move next week and a report to follow

11. CRIME AND POLICE – The issue of prowlers in the area was raised and a report had been made to the police.

12. HIGHWAYS: The large pothole on Station Road North has been reported by Cllr R Dyble and the clerk but deemed of low priority by Highways. Cllr T Roberts raised the parking problems round Bimbo’s Ark during the flower harvesting. ND & TR to look into the ownership. ACTION ND/TR

13. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES: As discussed on 5b and 9b for flooding and trees. The illegal fly tipping was raised again, and Borough had advised “it was not reasonable to investigate”, even though we had evidence and photographs. Cllr Squires to take this further and all information to be sent to her asap. Cllr Kunes advised that fly tipping is in other local areas including dumping of oil tanks and astro turf.

14. GARDENS MAINTENANCE: The weeding of all the gardens is now urgently required and the clerk to ask Trevor Blackamore to contact Cllrs Coates and R Dyble to arrange a meeting for the weeding and planting to be discussed asap. Clerk to arrange. ACTION CB

15. REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS – Draft risk management and audit policies sent out for discussion at the March meeting.

16. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

- Flooding subcommittee update
- Administration – maps etc., of new dog waste bin to be discussed

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Wednesday 17th March 2021

The meeting closed at 9.30pm