

Witham Friary Parish Council Meeting

Minutes of the remote meeting held on: Tuesday 9th March, 2021 @ 7.30pm

Present: Hugo Brooke (Chairman) (HB), Will Sheppard (Vice Chairman) (WS) Colin Horstmann (CH), John Knowles (JK), Marcus Powell (MP), Fred Nicholls (FN), Michael Gay (MG), Donna Featherstone (DF)

In attendance: Network Rail: Claire McGine – Communications Manager
Joe Hill – Community Relations Executive
Ed John – Project Manager

Parishioners:
Guy Maynard-Griffin (CMG)
Jim Rosser (JR)
Roy Featherstone (RF)
Chris Featherstone (CF)
Ann Howard

03/21/01 Apologies: None

03/21/02 Disclosure of Interest: None

03/21/03 Minutes of the Last Meeting:

The minutes of the meeting on 9th February 2021 were approved as an accurate record.

03/21/03.1 Matters referred to the Chair

GMG stated that a litter pick had been organised for this weekend. He requested £20 to buy fluorescent vests as they are no longer supplied due to Covid. Unanimous approval.

GMG also stated that the Parish would be tidy for Network Rail and hopefully they would leave it the same way.

CM from Network Rail presented a power point regarding their work. Details included:

- Work carried out at Easter due to least impact on passengers. Railway closed for short a time as possible so they work around the clock.
- May be able to cancel some trips due to finishing early.
- Horns will have to be used for safety
- 60 people out on track at any one time. All briefed on working behaviour and being considerate.
- Littering should not be happening. 03457 114141 – 24 hr helpline to log problems. These will be investigated. Take photographs and registration numbers.
- Cars for work will be parked outside village at West Woodlands and workers will take a minibus to the village
- Commuters should check trains are running before making a journey.

Questions were asked as follows:

HB asked whether any compensation would be given to residents?

No, not for noise and disruption.

HB: Why do they work over Easter ?

This decision is not taken lightly. Items have to be booked far in advance. They tried to move it but have contractual arrangements and obligations with GWR re timetabling. Therefore they are unable to bring it forward from the bank holiday.

MP: Can you guarantee heavy vehicles will come in from Private Drive direction?

EJ: Yes, the supply chain follow the traffic management plan. 1 or 2 might follow their sat nav but instructions are to come in via Private Drive.

CF: There should be a safety notice on gate to the yard with emergency contact number on it and it has never been filled in. Other emergency notice is lying on the ground inside the gate. Also, a lorry took the bank down and left mud all over the road and they couldn't get hold of anyone. This is unacceptable as it forces villagers to go into the yard.

EJ: Will look into this and ensure number is put in place.

CF: Why is so much more work being carried out on this particular track than has ever been done in the past?

EJ: The steel wears out and ballast gets dirty so it needs renewing. It has expired and now needs to be made effective and safe. It requires large engineering works. There is a lot of freight movement so they couldn't do the entire junction in one visit.

CF: Has Network Rail ever applied for planning permission? Is that a requirement? It is now being used on a daily basis which was not the case 10 years ago. What has changed?

EJ: This is heavy maintenance which shouldn't need to be carried out again for another 20-25 years. There will be other small projects, including power and embankment stability. They follow CDM regulations.

CF: Equipment is not being brought in by rail as promised. Why?

EJ: Where possible they use the railway but they do have to bring some construction materials by road. They have tried to limit this and to avoid going through the village. He will raise the issue with the site team and ensure drivers are briefed. They should also have banksmen. CF replied that they don't have banksmen. Ed will look into this.

A report was received from the landlord of the pub that a lorry parked in the pub car park as his taco had run out. Also several cars had parked under his bedroom window at the front of the pub and woke him up with considerable noise in the middle of the night.

EJ They don't tolerate bad behaviour or parking on private property. He asked for the details and that they take this very seriously. Who to provide? Parking at the show ground should minimise this.

MG reported that regarding the planning, the yard had been in place a long time so status is industrial for Network Rail to use. There has been variability in the use but it doesn't change the use. Regarding the environmental health impact he asked whether Network Rail can demonstrate that what they do in actuality can be shown to be within environmental requirements. Regulations have got tighter for railways but Network Rail need to demonstrate that they have good control of environmental health factors. Michael said he could look back at rights of yard.

EJ: It is a designated access point within the railway and there aren't that many in this vicinity. Hopefully future works will move further away from the village. Network Rail recognises that the area is sensitive and is taking this seriously. There are no aspirations to expand the yard.

HB: Under what authority do you draw water from our hydrants? Toilets were topped up from outside the pub.

JH: He is waiting for the report to see what happened and will follow that up. It is not part of the process.

HB stated it was a large tanker which was then unloaded into the toilet facilities.

EJ: They hire the toilet cabins which includes water deliveries. HB to provide more information on this incident if possible.

WS: The same happened last summer with tankers using the water. This needs to be investigated.

Network Rail left the meeting.

Annual Parish Meeting

MG stated that his report had been circulated by DF.

He said that the Annual Parish meeting usually happens in May or June but that they don't know at present because of the virtual meeting instruction running out on 7th May. He stated that he would have more information on this by the next meeting.

03/21/04 Covid 19

RF: According to Government guidelines pubs will be required to offer waitress service in gardens which the Seymour arms cannot offer. RF has been in contact with Environmental Health and they are going to come back to him regarding this.

MG added that the landlord should keep an eye out for details on a grant for pubs in this situation. This could be a substantial grant.

03/21/05 Planning

None

03/21/06 Finance

03/21/06.1

03/21/06.2 AGAR 19/20 and update on Cash Book (DF/JK/CH/JR)

JR explained the changes he had made to the cashbook for this year. It now matches the AGAR.

CH felt there were still a number of issues with the cashbook and that he would circulate these for comment.

JK reported that he had been in discussions with PKF regarding the 19/20 AGAR. They are getting closer to agreeing with the end of year figure. Errors were made last year and we are now dealing with those issues. Details are as follows:

Issues.

3. Annual Governance Statement. This will have to be changed for AGAR 20/21 so that No is answered for Assertion 4 as we have not yet published a Notice of Conclusion of Audit. This change is not contentious so I propose that this is just minuted.

4. Accounting Statements. There are several errors here which we need to sort out:

a. We need to complete Box 8 for both years in future and as we have no short term investments this figure should be the same as Box 7 i.e.12927 for the Year Ending 31 March 2019. It should not be Nil. We need to make sure we correct this and again I think we should just minute the actions needed.

b. Box 7 (and therefore Box 8) for the Year Ending 31 March 2020 is incorrect and does not match the bank reconciliation. Donna aided by Jim Rosser are working on this but have had to go through the 19/20 Cash Book line by line to work out where the error is. To get this right in future we need to have a running bank balance i.e. on every row. I tried to get this started last year but Val resisted at the time. I believe after

a conversation with Jim that he knows the formula to do this as well as other improvements. Jim has been very helpful here. However I am not yet clear what we need to do about this as PKF have not responded to my last query. Do we have to change the AGAR before allowing inspection?

c. Box 9 (Total Fixed Assets) should not be Nil for either year. After discussions with PKF I suggest that we base the Fixed Assets on the Insurance schedule above. As this is the Replacement Value (about £40,000) as far as I can see, I would propose that we put in the value of 50% i.e. of this and depreciate by 10% per year. However other suggestions gratefully received. A final decision should then be minuted."

CH suggested that the cash book be approved at every meeting. HB stated that redesigning the cashbook was 'work in progress'.

CH to send any queries to DF and JR.

03/21/06.3 AGAR 20/21

DF has attended Year End training and cash book is now almost ready for use at Year End. An improved format will be created for 21/22.

03/21/06.4 To present accounts for payment:

SSE Southern Electric: Car Park Lighting, 71228790112: £48.59 *Approved*

Clerk's Timesheet: £417.60 *Approved*

Jim's Country & Garden Resources, 2020/089: £140.00 *Approved*

HB raised the question of whether a printer/scanner could be bought for the Clerk.

CH gave details of one which he uses. He will send the details to DF. *Approved up to £40*

HB stated that he had received grateful acknowledgement for the CAB donation.

03/21/07 Actions:

- CH to detail the errors found in the Cash Book and liaise with DF. Discussed *Ongoing*
 - HB to send an email to Claire Haskins thanking her for work carried out at West End Hill. *Sent*
 - CH to put notice on the Website regarding the switch off of power on 5th March. *Actioned*
 - JK to liaise with Jim Rosser re costs for improving the Recreation Field entrance. *Actioned*
 - WS to investigate further the use of Danny Shepperd's farm for car parking. *Now at Showground*
 - DF to invite Network Rail to next WFPC meeting and to copy MP in on all correspondence. *Attended*
 - MP to chase up network rail regarding the rubbish on Tynemead track. *Sent photos today.*
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- JK stated that the website should include the Code of Conduct, SOPs, Financial Regulations as well as the AGAR documents. JK will try and get this together over the next couple of months.
 - HB to supply more information on incident regarding taking of water for filling of toilet facilities.
 - CH to send printer details to DF.
 - HB to speak to farmer re manure on the roads.
 - FN to report faulty drain to Highways.
 - WS/JK to arrange for sign for recreation field. Also to organise Mark Norris re car park lighting.
 - HB to arrange for feedback on Table Tennis idea on Facebook.

03/21/08 Reports

03/21/08.1 Highways (FN)

There have been no notifications of anything wrong apart from lots of muck coming from the village into Holt Road. HB has spoken to the farmer but will speak to him again.

AH reported a faulty drain outside their gate causing a grounding issue for low cars. FN to report to Highways.

03/21/08.2 Communications (CH)

No internet problems have been reported.
The website is updated frequently.

03/21/08.3 Recreation Ground (WS)

The sight line out onto road at the church end is still not as good as it should be, so they need to pull it back a little further to ensure safety.

There is a problem with the car park lights, probably a fuse blown. Asked for £100 for Mark Norris to inspect and fix. *Approved.*

The footpath is very successful but it is being used by dog walkers. A notice saying 'No Dogs' needs to be placed at the beginning of the path. He asked for this to be included in the £100 budget. *All agreed.*

03/21/08.4 Play Patch (JK)

Nothing to report.

03/21/08.5 Footpaths (JK)

MG is hoping to get highways to downgrade the Wanstrow end of the footpath from being a public highway but there is still the question of whether it is a bridleway or a footpath. They would welcome it being a bridleway. They need to clarify the situation and for it to be recognised as a bridle path on the definitive map. Parish Council to invite Claire Haskins to visit the path once she is able to.

03/21/09 Witham Water Update

HB declared his disappointment that Tim St John of Bristol Water had still not given an update. He hoped there would be one for the next meeting.

03/21/10 Village Signposts

HB gave a vote of thanks to the Conker Committee for their work and their promise to do more.

JK requested that they look at the two Witham Friary signs. The Conker Committee is understood to have included them in their plans.

03/21/11 Outdoor Table Tennis

This was suggested for the recreation field back in the Autumn. HB has done some research: £750 or 3.5K for a table. The £750 table is metal and pegged into the ground. The 3.5k table is concrete which cannot be moved. HB agreed to place an item on Facebook to see how the village felt about a table tennis table.

03/21/12 Working Group Report

RF said it was work in progress. He reported that he had spoken to people in the village in order to put together a comprehensive report of all the organisations and what they do. HB asked RF to circulate his findings, once completed, to the council and then they could add any more and be prepared to discuss at next month's meeting.

It was reported that Sustainable Witham had planted lots of trees last weekend.

JK reported that when the grass on the recreation field is re-sown, areas for repair on the track will show up. Grass Valet have equipment to do the work for repair on track once grass is grown and should be invited to quote for it, with a view to including path maintenance into their contract.

03/21/13 Other Business referred to the Clerk

None

Format of future WFPC meetings to be discussed at next meeting. A preference for a continuation of the current remote format was stated by several councillors.

03/21/14 The next WFPC meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 13th April at 7.30pm, via Zoom.