

**GREAT CORNARD PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Meeting of the **POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

held in The Stevenson Centre at 8:06pm on Monday 27th November 2023

**Present**  Councillors Cllr Tony Bavington **Chair**

Cllr Marjorie Bark Cllr Sharon Bowman

Cllr Tom Keane Cllr Stewart Sheridan

Cllr Jane Wakeman Cllr Pamela White

Cllr David Young

Council Administrator Miss E Skuce

Council Administrator Mrs S Kubat

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllr Judith Wilson.

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

**NONE.**

1. **DECLARATIONS OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY**

**NONE.**

1. **ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD – FOR NOTING**

Members reviewed and **NOTED** the Items Brought Forward list.

The Chair highlighted that in relation to the Village Hall Lease, a meeting had been arranged between the Parish Council and the Scouts for 7pm on Thursday 14th December at the Village Hall.

1. **TO CONSIDER A QUOTATION TO RENEW THE 3 YEAR SERVICE AGREEMENT FOR THE CHURCH CLOCK**

Members reviewed a quotation from Smith of Derby to renew the three year service agreement for the St Andrew’s Church Clock for £810.00 plus VAT, to start on the 1st February 2024. The quotation provides for three yearly services including the service and testing of parts, any oiling/greasing required and a reduced call out charge.

Members agreed to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that it accepts Smith of Derby’s quotation for £810.00 plus VAT to renew the three year service agreement for the Church clock from 1st February 2024.

Funds to come from Earmarked Funds for the Church Clock.

1. **TO RECEIVE THE GREAT CORNARD PARISH COUNCIL’S WORK PLAN**

Members reviewed the Parish Council’s Work Plan **(see Appendix A)** which gives a broad overview of tasks to be completed throughout each year. The Chair highlighted that the Work Plan was a working document, to be updated by staff as and when required and had been produced by the Council Manager in conjunction with the Council’s Major Projects List and Budgets. **NOTED.**

It was **AGREED** for the Work Plan to be included in future Member packs.

1. **TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE ON THE MEETING WITH JAMES CARTLIDGE MP**

The Chair confirmed that he, Cllrs White and Young and the Council Manager had attended a meeting with James Cartlidge MP and two of his staff, together with Police Sergeant Williams and PCSO Skeggs of Sudbury SNT.

The meeting discussed various issues within Great Cornard, including the recent illegal encampment on the Recreation Ground and general criminal activity within the village. Cllrs Bavington, White and Young stated they felt the meeting was a positive one with the MP being helpful in facilitating the discussions.

PS Williams had confirmed that Great and Little Cornard would soon have a police constable assigned as part of a larger team designed to be a more visible presence within the villages and it was hoped that this would assist in deterring criminal activity. Whilst the operational hours of the new police presence was unknown it was felt that a warranted officer ‘on the beat’ would be a positive move for Great Cornard.

The Chair confirmed that any future incidents should continue to be reported to the Police and that the Parish Council should continue to encourage parishioners to do the same.

The Chair confirmed that PCSO Grant Skegs, who had worked with Great Cornard for a number of years was due to leave his current role for another within the Police service. Cllr Keane suggested that the Parish Council formally write to PCSO Skeggs to thank him for all his efforts during his time in post.

It was **AGREED** for the Council Manager to write to PCSO Grant Skeggs on behalf of the Parish Council to formally thank him for his service during his time spent in Great Cornard.

1. **POLICY MATTERS**
2. **To consider adopting a Traveller Protocol**

Members reviewed a draft Traveller Protocol **(see Appendix B).**

The Chair highlighted point 4 in the Protocol and suggested that Councillors also be included in those advised to ‘avoid any interaction with the travellers’.

The Chair also brought to Members’ attention, points 6 in the document which refer to the Council’s insurers and the process for instructing the services of bailiffs through them to deal with evictions. In relation to point 7, it should be noted that instructing bailiffs directly, rather than through the insurers, may expedite the eviction process but would be likely to incur higher costs. This would be a decision to be made by the Council Manager and Chair of the Parish Council at the time of any future incursion. **NOTED.**

A Member stated they felt it was important to keep raising the issue of traveller provision with the District and County Councils.

It was agreed to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that it adopts the Traveller Protocol with the amendment to point 4 as detailed above.

1. **Environmental Policy Statement**

The Chair invited Cllr Bark to speak on this matter as she is the Parish Council’s Environmental Champion and had produced the draft Environmental Policy Statement which Members were asked to review **(see Appendix C).**

Cllr Bark explained that she had adapted the current Policy Statement in conjunction with the Parish Council’s Major Projects List and the PIIP (Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan) and invited Members to suggest any changes, additions or deletions to the points within the document.

In relation to the final point about delivering a Neighbourhood Plan, Cllr Bark clarified that although the Parish Council cannot stop development within the village, a Neighbourhood Plan would help define the detail of future development. It was **AGREED** for Cllr Bark to obtain cost estimates for producing a Neighbourhood Plan, ideally before Christmas so that it could be taken into account when considering the FY2024/2025 Budget.

A number of minor amendments to the Policy Statement were suggested and Cllr Bark agreed to amend the document accordingly.

The Chair stated that he had a number of suggested amendments to the Parish Council’s PIIP document and would share these with Cllr Bark.

It was agreed to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that it adopts the Environmental Policy Statement, subject to the agreed amendments being made by Cllr Bark.

1. **FINANCIAL MATTERS**
2. **To approve the latest list of payments**

Members reviewed and **NOTED** the latest list of payments **(see Appendix D).**

1. **Proposal to EXCLUDE PRESS AND PUBLIC from the meeting in accordance with section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act (1960) for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of confidential and exempt information**

The Chair proposed that the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting in accordance with Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act (1960) for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of confidential and exempt information. **AGREED.**

1. **TO CONSIDER LEGAL ADVICE RELATING TO THE CORNARD UNITED LEASE**

Members had been provided with copies of confidential correspondence between Cornard United, the Parish Council and the Council’s solicitors in relation to both the Council’s and the Club’s responsibilities under the terms of the Lease.

Members **NOTED** that the Council’s solicitor had clarified that the current Lease is a full repairing lease and it is therefore the Club’s responsibility to carry out necessary repair works.

The Chair reminded Members that at the Full Council meeting in November, it had been agreed that a sum of £3,000 would be vired from Earmarked Funds for Shawlands Woods Improvements and The Stevenson Centre Grant Budget, in order to contribute towards the cost of repairing the driveway at Cornard United as a matter of urgency. The Club had been asked to complete a grant application form for this sum and once a fully completed application had been received, the Council Manager was authorised to pay over the sum of £3,000 to the Club. **NOTED.**

The Chair also confirmed that the previous Chairman of Cornard United, Harvey Doherty, had tendered his resignation as Trustee of Cornard United FC. The Parish Council has formally written to Mr Doherty to advise on the proper procedure to be followed under the terms of the Lease in relation to resignations. **NOTED.**

1. **TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE IN RELATION TO THE RECRUITMENT OF A NEW COUNCIL MANAGER**

The Chair confirmed that a meeting with Dave Crimmin, an experienced local Parish Clerk, had been arranged for Monday 11th December to discuss re-advertising the role of Council Manager in the New Year. **NOTED.**

**Meeting closed at 9:30pm**

**APPENDIX A**

A list of months and months

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**APPENDIX B**

**TRAVELLER PROTOCOL**

To be followed in the event of a traveller community gaining access to Council owned land:

1. If the Police have not already been made aware of the illegal encampment, call 999 to notify that travellers are onsite and insist they attend based on threat to public safety and evidence of any criminality and anti-social behaviour;
2. Ensure the Police issue the Code of Respect and ask for written confirmation of whether the Police intend to use Section 61 or not;
3. Review the CCTV footage and establish how the travellers gained access and if any criminal damage has occurred. Download images on to 2 memory sticks (Police & GCPC) and report via Police 101 website;
4. Council staff to avoid any interaction with the travellers and contact Community Wardens for additional support, if necessary;
5. Contact the Council Chair to advise the situation and discuss what support is needed to protect staff and whether The Stevenson Centre should remain open;
6. Call Zurich’s DAS Claims Line on 0117 934 2116 and advise that a traveller community has gained illegal access to Council owned land and request they instruct the process to evict the travellers immediately;
7. Depending on response from DAS and the estimated time to issue an Eviction Notice; consult with the Chair on whether to instruct bailiffs direct. If needed, advise DAS that the Council will instruct its own bailiffs and will seek reimbursement of the cost;
8. Contact Norfolk County Council’s Stronger Communities Officer to ask about cost and their availability to conduct a Welfare Assessment and a Stakeholder meeting;
9. Arrange a date and time for the Welfare Assessment and Stakeholder meeting to take place as a matter of urgency. Invite Parish, District and County Councillors, the Police and BDC representatives (Robert Feakes – Housing Enabling Officer), a Community Warden representative and the NCC Communities Officer;
10. Depending on DAS’s response to the Council instructing its own bailiffs, contact the Council’s preferred Bailiffs, Bryan le Coche on 01234 824570 and confirm that travellers have set up an illegal encampment and that following the outcome of the Stakeholders meeting, that the Council may need to instruct their services. Arrange for a quotation to be issued prior to the Stakeholder meeting;
11. Consult with the Council Chair on all the costs and discuss the need for an action out of meeting to be signed;
12. Once the Welfare Assessment has been conducted by the Communities Officer, the Stakeholder meeting can take place. If there are no welfare issues, Members can agree to issue Eviction Notices the same or next day. The time on the Eviction Notices must also be considered, as the travellers will not be in a position to leave until the males have returned from work. Please note that the last Eviction Notice was issued the day after the Stakeholders meeting and stated an eviction time of 2pm, but the travellers did not leave until 6.30pm;
13. Contact Bryan le Coche and instruct their services and advise the agreed eviction date and time. Advise DAS of the Council’s actions and the costs to be reimbursed.
14. Advise the Police of eviction date and time and ask for assistance from the time on the Eviction Notices to when the travellers actually leave;
15. Keep all the Parish Council Members updated on the agreed course of action;
16. Make arrangements to secure and clear the area once the travellers have left;
17. If feasible, make arrangements to secure other vulnerable Parish Council owned land.

**APPENDIX C**

Environmental Policy Statement - draft text

Great Cornard Parish Council is committed to providing facilities and services to the residents of Great Cornard for the benefit of the community, which includes protecting our local environment so that our residents can enjoy nature now and for future generations.

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The Council has a responsibility to protect the environment both morally and legally which the Council will demonstrate by the following duties:

* To comply fully with all relevant legal requirements, codes of practice and regulations at International, National and Local levels
* To provide adequate resources to control environmental risks arising from our work activities
* To ensure that emergency procedures are in place at all locations for dealing with environmental issues

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We aim to protect and improve the environment through good management and by adopting best practice wherever possible.

We will work to integrate environmental considerations into our business decisions and adopt greener alternatives wherever possible, throughout our operations.

We will provide suitable training to enable employees to deal with their specific areas of environmental control.

Our objectives will focus on the following priorities:

1. **To protect the environment *(prevent, reduce, minimise, refuse)***

* To prevent pollution to land, air and water where we identify potential for harm from our activities.
* To reduce or eliminate risks to the environment, where possible, through selection and design of materials, buildings, facilities, equipment and processes.
* To minimise waste and increase recycling within the framework of our waste management procedures.
* To reduce the use of water, energy and any other natural resources.
* To seek a solution for a renewable energy project for the Parish Council’s buildings.

1. **To enhance the environment**

* improve the environmental efficiency of our transport and travel.
* promote environmentally responsible purchasing.
* source materials from sustainable supplies when practicable.
* involve customers, partners, clients, suppliers and subcontractors in the implementation of our objectives.
* only engage contractors who are able to demonstrate due regard to environmental matters.

1. **To encourage enjoyment our natural environment**

* To improve access to open spaces
* To provide educational information of the natural environment (information boards, signs etc, engagement of schools and community groups)
* To support community activities (support local wildlife group, residents’ green initiatives, litter picks, allotments, etc)
* To provide benefits to the health and wellbeing of residents through access to nature and open spaces for leisure and amenity activities.
* To eliminate pesticides used by contractors.
* To implements upgrade to low energy lighting.
* To protect and manage small open spaces with grass cutting and landscaping around village.
* To protect trees around the village and replant where desirable
* To promote biodiversity through Ranger’s programme for woodland and wildflower stewardship in Shawlands Wood and GC Country Park.
* To promote walking routes, and public transport with street furniture improvements and footpaths maintenance of those rights of way in our control. (also pushing BDC and SCC to repair and maintain rights of way).
* Deliver a Neighbourhood Plan to enhance the level of control that Great Cornard residents have over decisions that affect the protection of habitats, traffic, air quality, water courses, production of waste and use of natural resources in the village.
* To establish targets to measure the continuous improvement in our environmental performance to identify and manage environmental risks and hazards.

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This Environmental Policy will be reviewed annually and revised as necessary to reflect changes to the business activities and any changes to legislation.

Any changes to the Policy will be brought to the attention of all stakeholders.

**Performance indicators for this policy will be presented for review at the Annual Council Meeting**

**APPENDIX D**

**Summary of income and expenditure for Great Cornard Parish Council**

**up to 27th November 2023**

