

Longworth Parish Council

MINUTES of PARISH MEETING.

Held at Longworth Parish Church (Houlton Room) at 7:30 pm 2nd July 2014

PRESENT: Chairman Mrs Boyce, Mr. Auckland, Mr Hodgkins, Mr Pearce, Ms Sabathy, Mrs Carlisle (Clerk) Mr Hayward D.C. and 9 members of the public.

55/14 OPEN SESSION

The issue of untrimmed hedges specifically at two points in the village were discussed, these are causing road blindness. Firstly the Hedge at Barn Ground cottage at the cross road junction of Green Lane and Cow lane (believe to be owned by the Thompson family), and secondly by The Old Bake House at the junction of Cow Lane and Sudbury Lane – Privets are sticking out by more than a metre. It was agreed that something needs doing about this as both spots are dangerous. It was suggested that the Highways department could be called to cut down if residents will not maintain their own hedges, Chairman and Clerk to draft letters to the owners, or contact Highways to get them cut.

Mr. Hall gave an update on the Village Hall Boiler. Funds have been researched, but not secured as yet. The next stage is to check with the manufacturers of boiler to see if it is still under warranty. Options to be considered are:

(a) Boxing boiler in and create a flue for emissions to pass out possibly through the roof or outside will above the windows.

(b) Moving as originally discussed to a housing outside the hall which would be much more expensive.

Mr Hall to come back to Parish council when all facts are known.

Mrs Dean advised that Longworth Parochial Parish Council will be holding their AGM on Sunday evening at Haugh House on Church Lane. Clerk to send email round to the village to invite any interested villagers (email sent 4/7).

56/14 DECLARATIONS of INTEREST

There were no changes in relevant personal circumstances reported.

57/14 APOLOGIES

Apologies received from Mr Longstaff, Mrs Broad and Mrs Tilley(OCC).

58/14 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the previous Meeting (21th May 2014) were accepted as correct by all councillors who attended the meeting; however Mr Pearce had an issue with the section under Councillors concerns, the minutes will be amended to include his comments and brought to the August meeting for signing off.

59/14 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising apart from items included on the agenda

60/14 PLAYGROUND INSPECTION

Mr Auckland carried out the May inspection, Mr Hodgkins carried out the June inspection. July inspection is to be carried out by Mr. Longstaff and Ms. Sabathy to carry out the August inspection. Inspection sheets and Rospa instructions to be issued to Mr Longstaff and Ms Sabathy. New Rota issued to all councillors present, copies to be issued to Mrs Broad and Mr Longstaff.

61/14 BRAMBLE CLEARING ON MANOR LAND

Following information received from Cynthia Napper about a team of volunteers who will clear brambles and make neat piles for wildlife to use for a small fee thought to be about £100. Parish Clerk spoke to Bernie at the Big lunch about the brambles around the trees on Manor land, Bernie confirmed that he would be happy for the brambles to be cleared, and that he had the original paperwork which he would be happy to give to the Parish council, Clerk to collect from the Manor. Parish council support was requested to fund this initiative which will cost approx £100. Parish council agreed to support this.

The following message was received from Mr Jarvis on 4th July:

In response to the discussion at the PC meeting yesterday, I visited the 'Community Woodland' for which I remember, the PC committed £100 to clear brambles. I have two points to make:

(1)The expenditure of £100 now to clear brambles would probably be a complete waste of money. This morning I tried to enter this woodland. From the footpath it is impossible, without a machete, to even cross the ditch to get in. One is faced with a sea of head-high brambles and stinging nettles into the distance - stinging nettles predominating. Walking down the footpath towards Hinton Road the scene is unchanging - and showing, too, that it is a big area. To be absolutely sure that I was not viewing just a narrow strip of hostile greenery I went round to the field side, via the Permissive Footpath, to try and get in. Through very tall grass one can push in a short way, only to get confirmation of the great extent of brambles and nettles. The area is so extensive that it would be a case of "Where to begin...?" if contemplating tackling brambles. It might be better to survey the area in the winter, when nettles, grasses and other undergrowth has subsided, and brambles can be easily seen. A more informed decision can then be made as to whether to do anything about them. But if they were removed, they would be replaced next spring with more tall nettles (and new brambles unless appropriate selective weedkiller was used) so that the area would still be hostile to would-be visitors. Probably the conclusion would be that it is simply best to just let the young trees (many barely head height) grow for a few more years when they will be tall enough to block the sunlight out from the ground and naturally control the undergrowth, as happens in all mature woodlands.

(2)Nobody at the meeting seemed to know whether 'the village' had any legal rights of access to the land. This should be investigated. I have heard about all the effort put in by villagers to plant these trees and it would be such a blow if someone, some day, exercised a right to exclude those for whom all the efforts were intended to benefit. If the village does not have the rights in writing then

the landowner should be approached now to seek such an agreement. The longer such a thing is left the more difficult it is likely to become. It is essential to guard against death, insanity and enforced sale if the then owner falls on hard times.

62/14 REQUEST FOR FUNDING FOR CHURCH ROOF

It was agreed to delay this until later in the year. Councillors agreed it would be useful to know where the Friends have got to with fundraising before the matter is discussed. Facts and figures needed. Mr French to be invited to the next meeting.

63/14 ALLOTMENTS

No news, still 5 empty plots.

64/14 RECEIPTS and PAYMENTS

The Clerk communicated that the Annual return was with the Auditors for review and feedback will be communicated when received.

Receipts - for the month of June were as follows:

Interest on NSI	7.43
Grave Headstone Fee	300.00
Community Development Grant (90% of £6000 for N. Plan)	5400.00

Payments

Allotment water rates	34.83
Churchyard Grass Cutting	264.00
Hire of Meeting room (Longworth school) to be repaid	15.00
Oxfordshire Playing Fields Assn. membership fee	40.00

65/14 RISK STATEMENT

In the Annual Return of the Council's accounts, the Council is required to confirm that "we have carried out an assessment of the risks facing the Council and taken appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required". In addition, the Annual Internal Audit Report to the Council in the Return is required to report on whether "The Council assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and had adequate arrangements to manage these".

Clerk issued revised Risk statement to all councillors during June. All councillors present accepted the revised risk statement without amendment.

66/14 SCHOOL MEETING ROOM

Longworth School is unhappy with Meetings other than on Friday, as they do not have the resource to open and close the school on other evenings. Ms. Sabathy reiterated that a more democratic method of picking the date, should be in force. It was agreed that the school is not the best venue for Parish Council meetings, and that larger meetings with presentations and contentious

issues likely to attract a large number of villagers should be held in the Village Hall and smaller meetings should be in the meeting room at the church, and should in future commence at 7:30pm.

67/14 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

Job reference numbers received from the Highways authority for surface water issues on both Pinewoods Road and the Appleton Road, We can look forward to engineer visits at some point in the not too distant future to review what remedial work is needed, and hopefully these issues can be resolved finally.

68/14 COUNCILLORS' CONCERNS

Mr Hayward (District Councillor) announced that work on British rail electrification is planned. The A338 will have a 2nd bridge and Roads from Wantage to Oxford will be open with night time closures. Mr Hayward to send more information to Parish Clerk which can be issued to Villagers via email, Notice board and village website. The A417 will be closing on 9th Sept for 4 months – net result traffic diverted via A420 and Kingston Bagpuize roundabout to A338

There are also major roadworks planned on the A420 Shrivenham Bypass between Watchfield Roundabout and Lower Bourton Junction due to start on Wednesday 23 July 2014 and expected to last for up to 7 weeks. Preconstruction activities will commence on the 14th July

Mr Hayward stated that there are Vale grants available at the present time, and suggested that the PCC request funding for Church roof.

Mr Eastwood requested better signage at crossing points on the A420 to help save lives. Request supported by councillors which was also noted by the district councillor.

Clerk to get information re A420 closure, and issue to village (emailed 4th July).

Following the comments made by Mr Longstaff at the May meeting that the grass cutters at the Church were leaving surface grass, causing clumps of dead brown grass, the Parish Clerk contacted BGG and spoke to Ben. He thought that the grass had been cut on a very wet day and apologised for the mess left; he confirmed that in future he would make sure that the grass cutters used the blower to avoid a repetition.

The PCC has requested a contribution from Parish Council towards gift for the Rector. This was denied as it would set a precedent.

The meeting ended at 8:30pm

Next meeting. Wednesday August 20th 2014 at Houlton room (Longworth Church).

Signed.....

Date.....