

BERGH APTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 29th March 2004 at 7.30pm at the Village Hall

Present: Alison Freeman (Chairman) John Ling, Derek Blake, Sally Leigh, Jean Bobbin and David Skedge
 Also present: the Clerk (Lorie Lain-Rogers) Adrian Gunson (County Councillor,) John Fuller (District Councillor) and ten members of the public.

1. **Apologies:** Chris Johnson who is unwell
2. **Declaration of Interest:** none
3. **Minutes of meeting** of 11th February 2004 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman
4. **Matters arising:**
 - a. 4a. Village Hall commemorative tree: Jean Bobbin said Chris Johnson had found that a blue spruce would not be available from South Norfolk Council as it is a non-native tree and as the season for tree planting is now over it was decided to defer any decision until the autumn
 - b. 4b. Large Scale Voluntary Transfer of Housing Stock: no letter had yet been received by the Parish Council confirming the right of public access to the village green areas associated with the Taylor and Green houses in Church Road nor that of right of access to Verena Murtagh's sculpture entitled "Burghers of Apton." The Clerk had spoken to Ros Kemp to find out the current position this afternoon and will again write to SNC asking for a written agreement that will have the authority of a legal document. John Fuller said the sale will take place on 17th May.
 - c. 4c. Bus Shelter: this has been satisfactorily installed at Hellington Corner and thanks expressed to the Council for this long awaited improvement from local residents.
 - d. 5. Farrow's site: the additional hedge planting has taken place but is not wholly satisfactory. The eastern end of the site has had virtually no additional planting. Adrian Gunson will ask the County Council to continue to monitor the site.
 - e. 6. Alliance and Leicester have refunded the additional £30.00 for an overdrawn cheque
 - f. 7.9. EDP Village of the Year Competition this was completed and returned on 19th March
 - g. 11. Appointment of School Governor to Alington and Bergh Apton VA Primary School: the Chairman of the Governors sent a message to the Council to say this appointment is now withdrawn as there is to be greater emphasis on involving parents in the governing body.
5. **Public consultation** including reports from County and District Councillors: Sally Leigh proposed the closure of the meeting this was seconded by John Ling and agreed unanimously.
County Councillor's report: Adrian Gunson reported on the success of the Park and Ride schemes with the new facility of Harford Bridges working well since its opening in February. The Airport and Postwick sites are usually full, Sprowston less so, Cringleford will start in the summer. Bus services there are few changes to affect Bergh Apton as the Anglian service through the village does not need a subsidy. First Bus service through Brooke has halved its service but Anglian Coaches have adopted the other half and the new service is as good as before. The County Council spends £140,000 in subsidising bus fares. Earsham Gravel road closure at Mundham for the creation of passing places this road is now open and the minimum of disruption was caused. The road from Seething to Brooke will be subject to closure fairly soon and this may operate for some months, this is to enable BT to install underground cables which will also have the facility of Broadband. All weather playing surface at Loddon, the Conservative group on South Norfolk Council continue to press for this development which financially would break even on a 12 to 13 hours a week use. The capital cost will be in the region of £300,000 but if undertaken now can form part of the PFI. The PFI agreement should be signed by end of March. The Planning Applications for new schools at

Thurton, and Seething and the extensions to Hobart High have not yet been completed for a variety of reasons but there is no need to delay the signing of the PFI document. A47 Alliance Group a new campaigning organisation of which Adrian is the Chairman is pressing for dualling of the Acle straight important for the economy of the area. Local roads, the bank opposite Town Farm needs strengthening and work is needed in Church Meadow Lane, Upper Kiln Lane and Nichols Corner it will not be in this financial year. Further drainage work is needed near the pond in Cookes Road. There is a pot hole near Town Farm and another opposite Pippins in Cookes Road.

District Councillor's report: John Fuller referred to the proposed all weather surface at Loddon and after some discussion it was agreed that the Clerk send a letter to Paul Hunt at South Norfolk Council detailing the Parish Council's support for this provision a copy of the letter and earlier email to be sent to Adrian. At the Area Planning Committee the application for a new house on Plot 209 Church Road was refused on the grounds that this development does not comply with the Local Plan for Development formed in 1997 and agreed last year. Broadband will shortly be available on the 480 telephone network and work continues for wireless provision locally elsewhere. Wheelie bins and recycling, the government has awarded SNC a grant of £1m to introduce a dual bin collection service, a green bin for recyclables and a grey one for other waste these will be collected on alternate weeks. When the service is introduced three ladies will visit every house in the parish explaining the new service and noting any who through age or infirmity are not able to push their wheelie bin to the gate. Loddon Church Plain car park John has found that many residents are not able to access this car park as it is heavily used, in part by local residents without parking facilities and by those using the bus service to Norwich. It is proposed to keep the service free but place a limit of four hour parking on it. The new regulation that will charge rates on second homes at 90% instead of the current 50% will benefit District Councils in that the money will be redistributed to all Councils. He mentioned a request from Mrs. Wilcox that the Parish Council rescind their request for the house in Sunnyside to be in brick as she is unable to obtain bricks of the right size and would like to use block and render to build the extension. Large Scale Voluntary Transfer of Housing Stock, John Fuller said it was unlikely that any employee at South Norfolk Council would lose their jobs as there was a 15% natural wastage annually in the housing department and recruitment will be reduced.

Questions from the public: Some residents expressed disquiet at the 95% rise in the precept by this Parish Council details of which together with a full reasoned explanation had been published in the February/March 2004 edition of the Newsletter. Further reassurance was given by the Chairman that the Council was mindful of the need to budget prudently but previous under-funding for various capital projects together with increased costs for insurance, training, and administration and the need to respond to an increasing burden of local government regulations had left little choice for this year. Few Councillors would voluntarily give up their free time to serve on a Council that could provide no services in that community. Shane Jermy asked for the Council's support in obtaining planning permission for a house on a plot of land owned by him in Church Road. The Council listened to his request but confirmed that as this site does not comply with the current Local Plan there is nothing they can do. It was suggested that anyone wanting to make representation to change the Local Plan attends the meeting arranged for 9th May at Hempnall Village Hall 1pm to 9pm. It was then proposed by Sally Leigh and seconded by Jean Bobbin that the meeting be reinstated, this was agreed unanimously.

6. Finance:

- a. Statement of accounts: copies of the receipts and payments for the year to date together with the bank statement were issued. It was noted that there is a shortage of funds to pay the following cheques in full until the precept is received on 30th April.
- b. Village Sign cost of oak post £35.00 + VAT deferred until after 30th April
- c. Bus Shelters Ltd net £3642.04 + VAT £637.35 = £4279.39 (Cancel cheque no. 700367 for £250 to Bus Shelters Ltd. as issued on 11th February) Cost of shelter £3642.04 agreed to issue cheque no: 700369 for this and to send a further cheque for £637.35 covering the VAT on 30th April. The Clerk to contact Bus Shelters Ltd to arrange this.

- d. Village Web page £79.31 (J & H Bunn Ltd.) cheque no. 700370 agreed for payment
- e. Parish Plan – petty cash - £130 from No. 2 account (cheque no. 000001) the Clerk to pass this to Michael Rolfe treasurer of Parish Plan.

7. Correspondence:

1. NCC Local Transport Plan – Annual Forum 29th April at 9.15am at Sportspark, UEA registration from 8.45 am book by 16th April. One representative only.
2. SNC Refuse sack delivery changed to one delivery per year of 70 sacks on 10th June
3. SN Alliance - Planning for Real - Up 2 U 2! informal consultation Hempnall Village Hall – Wednesday, 7th April 1pm to 9pm
4. SNC Licensing Act 2003 more time for consultation response
5. SNC District Guide more copies available to order – it was noted that this guide has a couple of errors in it, no river at Pye's Mill and no railway at Diss.
6. Norfolk Police Authority information on budget etc.
7. DTI information of Broadband for rural communities
8. Standards Board for England – Code of Conduct applying for a review of a referral decision
9. Wymondham music festival 2004 2nd – 11th July
10. Chet Valley Festival group proposed series of events from 23rd October to 30th October
11. Farming and the public highway – these leaflets were welcomed and questions raised on the status of road verge in Whiteheath Road at the top where damage was done by sugar beet contractors this winter and by Rose Cottage where the field has been nearly ploughed to the road. Adrian Gunson agreed to look into this. The land owners names to be passed to him.
12. SNC Planning permission granted to Chet Cottage, Sunnyside, Field View, Prospect Place Rose Cottage, Whiteheath Road and Bussey Bridge Farm
13. Bergh Apton Newsletter seeking a donation – deferred until after 30th April
14. CPRE seeking more representatives for management committee.
15. Eastern NHS support services – patient and public involvement forums
16. BA Village Hall Management Committee invitation to AGM on Wednesday, 5th May at 7pm in the Village Hall – seeking a short report on work of Parish Council and who will present it. After discussion it was agreed that as a report will be given at the Annual Parish Meeting it was not necessary to do a further report for the Village Hall AGM.
17. Advertising literature from Glasdon and Bus Shelters Ltd.
18. Letter from Barnham Broom Parish Council seeking comment on Quality Parish Council status. The Clerk to reply
19. John Fuller letter re Broadband
20. SNC Consultation with Town and Parish Clerks on Tuesday, 20th April 2004 the Clerk is unable to attend this meeting.
21. Norfolk Recorders seeking information on allotments in Bergh Apton
22. CPRE Update – for circulation

8. Planning applications: none

9. **Parish Plan:** Derek Blake reported that all the questionnaires had been delivered and most had been collected it was anticipated that there would be a 95% response. Thanks were expressed to John Ling, and Keith and Ann Etta Mann for the work done in compiling the questionnaire and to the Manns for the considerable work they are doing in inputting the data from each response this takes 12/15 minutes for each one so a considerable commitment. The next stage of the consultative process is for the public meeting which will take place on 26th April at 7.30pm at the Village Hall. There is a need for suggestions on photographs to include in the published Parish Plan.

10. **Risk Assessment:** Sally Leigh reported on a seminar she had attended organised by NCAPTC on 18th November 2003 at which the following recommendations were made:
- a. Donations: Councils should expect to see evidence of the purpose for which the money is used. They should ensure that it is for the good of the community.
 - b. Finance: a check should be made regularly on the bank statements, payments and receipts by a Parish Councillor, Sally Leigh agreed to do this. Invoices should be photocopied with the cheque being used for payment.
 - c. Computer records should be backed up in case of computer crash. A member of the Parish Council should know how to access the Council's records if the Clerk is ill.
 - d. Expenses claims from Councillors should be on a standard form
 - e. The Clerk should have a formal contract
 - f. PAYE the Council should have a formal letter from the Inland Revenue indicating that they are authorised to pay the Clerk's salary without deduction of income tax.
 - g. Insurance cover should be reviewed regularly and be an annual agenda item to assess risk liability.
 - h. Health and Safety: it is recommended that this item is on the agenda for every meeting. Anyone employed by the Council must come under the Council's Employers' Liability insurance and contractors must have their own adequate insurance cover.
- It was agreed that all these points would be implemented and form part of Council policy.
11. **Quality Parish Council:** this item was on the agenda following receipt of a letter from Barnham Broom Parish Council seeking the Council's views on the value of becoming a Quality Parish Council. It was noted that this Council fulfils the qualification requirements to become a QPC and that the Clerk is undertaking the necessary training. All these things are a good in themselves, but Councillors have yet to be convinced of the benefits or even the role of a QPC and are awaiting further information before coming to a decision. The Clerk will write.
12. **Appointment of representative** to serve on Village Hall Management Committee: Jean Bobbin does not wish to continue in this role. David Skedge volunteered to do this for one year. It was also agreed to clarify the position of the Parish Council appointee with Maggie Smith and find out if the representative was unable whether to attend a substitute could be sent.
13. **Other matters for future agendas** and items for information: the meeting was again closed to allow further questions from the public. Michael Hubbard raised the issue of a perceived delay in erecting two direction signs to the HWRC as requested by the previous Parish Council. The Clerk to ask Adrian Gunson on the status of these. Graham Harber reported that footpath No.12 is blocked at the Whiteheath Road end, the Clerk was asked to contact the land owner and if a satisfactory outcome is not forthcoming to draw the attention of Norfolk County Council to it. Graham also wondered if an improvement could be made of the footpath in Thurton No.4 which has a very steep approach bank. In view of the strong representation made earlier in the meeting by members of the public concerned with Parish Council spending it was agreed that the wine and nibbles usually provided for the Annual Parish Meeting will be substituted with coffee and biscuits. Mrs Janet Skedge was thanked for the very welcome refreshments during the meeting.
14. **Dates of next meetings:** Annual Parish Meeting 14th April; AGM and meeting Wednesday, 12th May; Parish Council meetings Monday, 7th June; Monday, 12th July; Monday, 6th September; Monday, 4th October.

The meeting closed at 10.10pm