

FOULDEN PARISH COUNCIL
Ordinary Meeting held 7.00pm, 26th January 2023

MINUTES

Present: M Christian, R Cooper, J Green, S McMahon (Vice Chair),
S Parker (Chairman), B Parnham, B Pye
Absent: None.
In attendance: Ten members of the public; J Taylor (Clerk)

1. To receive and accept apologies (LGA1972, s85(1)(2))

None required.

2. To receive declarations of interest in any items to be discussed and grant any dispensation requests

Precept – all councillors declared. Those councillors on the council for the last Precept decision had received dispensations at the time; new councillors (Green, McMahon, Parnham) were issued dispensations.

Planning application: White Hart. Cllr Parker declared, and confirmed that the Vice Chair would take over for that item.

3. Public Participation

Cllr Pye mentioned the fence at the Recreation Ground, which was starting to rot. To be discussed under Item 5e.

4. To receive communications as the person presiding wishes to lay before the Council

None.

5. To receive reports for information only

a. Cllr Fabian Eagle (Norfolk County Council)

Cllr Eagle wished councillors a happy New Year. He noted that Norfolk County Council had decided to increase council tax by the maximum allowed of 4.99%, 2.99% general taxation and 2.00% for adult social care. He explained the negative future funding consequences if the full allowed increase were not used. There still remained a funding gap.

It has been proposed that county councillors receive an extra £1,000 allowance in 2023/24 for Highways and Environmental projects, so parish councillors should let him know their priorities.

Cllr Eagle outlined the Devolution proposal for Norfolk, and noted that under the 'directly-elected' leader system, it would be possible for the Leader of NCC to be of a different political party to the Council itself. He asked the electorate to let him have their views. There would be a public consultation shortly and a decision was required by 23rd December this year.

Finally, Cllr Eagle reminded all that Avian Flu remained a serious problem, and to remain vigilant when visiting the countryside. [Cllr Eagle left the meeting at 7.17pm.]

b. Cllr Mike Nairn (Breckland District Council)

Breckland DC had set a 2023/24 council tax increase at less than the rate of inflation, though at the maximum allowed, and it remains the lowest district council

tax in England – Cllr Nairn commended the work of council officers for this achievement.

There is funding for the Coronation – up to £500 for a village celebration and £200 match-funding for flagpoles.

A resident queried whether the BDC ‘food bus’ could visit the village. Cllr Nairn explained that this was a re-purposed mobile library, supported by Morrison’s supermarket, offering free and reduced-price food. Swaffham and Dereham also have community fridges, which offer free food. Further information is available about Nourishing Norfolk, from Norfolk Community Foundation.

White Hart change of use planning application: Cllr Nairn has asked the Chairman of BDC Planning Committee to put the application to Committee. He has raised an objection, on the basis that there is nothing new in the latest application which would enable approval.

Finally, Cllr Nairn confirmed that he would be standing down as a district councillor in May.

[Cllr Nairn left the meeting at 7.25pm.]

c. Parish Council Clerk

Nothing not covered elsewhere in the agenda.

d. SAM2

Cllr Parker commented that it appears the SAM2 was having a positive effect on School Road. Re Fallon End, Cllr McMahon had spoken with the resident looking after the units. The location had been chosen to pick up traffic from both directions, and it had been agreed by NCC Highways, but it is possible that the unit is picking up cars outside the 30mph zone. Cllr McMahon undertook to liaise with Highways regarding moving the SAM2 unit.

e. Councillors

Cllr Pye raised the issue of the fence at the Recreation Ground, adjacent Vicarage Road. Cllr Cooper suggested replacement with a hedge. It was AGREED that some temporary repairs to the fence be undertaken, with a view to planting a new hedge on the road side of the fence, and that the fence be removed once the hedge had grown sufficiently. Clerk to investigate provision of hedging. To be funded by the Recreation Ground charity.

Cllr Pye noted problems of cars parking on the green area adjacent. It was suggested that a polite note be placed on relevant cars, requesting that they be moved.

6. To approve Minutes of the meeting held 17th November 2022

It was AGREED to approve the Minutes (all in favour).

7. Planning

Cllr Parker stepped down as Chairman and took no part in the item. Cllr McMahon took over as Chairman.

Cllr McMahon summarised recent community engagement. Two meetings had been convened, with 41 residents attending (12% response rate), and 184 questionnaires delivered to residences, with 33 returned (18% response rate).

Opinions expressed at the meetings: 26 opposing the application; 6 supporting; 4 abstaining.

Opinions expressed via the questionnaire: 25 opposing the application; 8 supporting.

Cllr McMahon thanked all residents who responded.

A review of the opinions expressed on the Breckland DC Planning Portal was carried out: of 27 responses, 20 were opposed; 3 were non-residents; 2 were concerned about the proposed new structures.

The council considered the motion: Does Foulton Parish Council support or oppose the change of use planning application for the White Hart pub?

Support: one. Oppose: four. Abstain: one.

It was AGREED that the parish council oppose the application.

Development at School Road (standing item). Cllr Green had requested a meeting with the landowner, which had so far been declined.

Cllr Parker resumed the Chair.

8. To consider issuing of Dispensation(s) for non-attendance

Not required.

9. Parish Council website – to decide upon access

It was AGREED that the parish council clerk and the village hall manager required access. It was AGREED that training be provided for the village hall manager.

10. Review of action required to manage trees

Cllr McMahon noted that UK Power Networks had declined to take on the responsibility of trimming trees, since there was no immediate danger to their wires. Cllrs Pye and Cooper had met with the tree surgeon; they would hold a further meeting to identify specific trees versus quote, and establish a priority action list.

11. Funding: to review available grants and decide upon applications

An updated list of available grants was noted.

12. HM Charles III Coronation 6 May 2023 – to consider actions and funding

The village hall manager had applied for the £500 grant from Breckland District Council. It was AGREED that an application for funding for a flagpole was not required.

13. Budget 2023/24 – to discuss and decide

AGREED.

14. Precept 2023/24 – to decide

It was proposed that the Precept for 2023/24 remain at £9,065. All in favour. AGREED.

15. Finance

a) to agree financial statements and bank reconciliation

AGREED.

b) to note payments since last meeting and outstanding payments

AGREED.

c) Asset Register – to approve update; to consider actions re old laptop

It was AGREED that the old laptop be removed from the Asset Register. Clerk to arrange proper deletion of information and disposal.

16. Public Participation

Members of the public expressed support for the recent exercise regarding the White Hart pub (holding meetings and distribution of village questionnaire), and hoped that such community engagement would continue.

A resident queried whether, if the White Hart application were rejected, the parish council could continue dialogue with the developer. Cllr Green confirmed that the council remains in conversation with both the developer and Breckland Planning.

A resident enquired about the Parish Plan which had been developed some years previously, and whether it could be resurrected. Cllr McMahon confirmed that there remains a parish plan in development, but noted that it must comply with the district-level Local Plan. A resident hoped that the question “Where is Foulden going?” could be addressed, with particular emphasis on what facilities the village needed into the future.

17. Date of next meeting and items for the agenda

Thursday 23rd March 2023.

It was AGREED that the Annual Parish Meeting would follow the Annual Parish Council meeting on Thursday 11th May 2023.

Meeting closed 8.20pm.

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Chairman

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Date