

**Minutes of Martham Parish Council Meeting
held in the School Room, Methodist Church, Repps Road, Martham
on 16th July 2008 at 19:30 hrs.**

PUBLIC FORUM

The Chairman opened the public forum by welcoming two members of the public and PC Cook. Apologies were received from Borough Councillors Barry & Mary Coleman and County Councillor Michael Carttiss.

The Chairman informed members about the sad death of Pam Pynegar who had served as a councillor in the 1990's. All those present stood in silence for one minute in remembrance of Mrs Pynegar and the contributions she had made to the community through her work on the Parish Council.

A resident of Black Street pointed out to the Council in strong, measured terms the continuing seriousness of speeding and dangerous traffic in Black Street where he had recently nearly been knocked down. He emphasised how traffic problems had got worse since the opening of the extensions to the school.

The Chairman made it clear that the Parish Council has no powers to take action on highway matters which are the responsibility of Norfolk County Council but gave details of the long history of lobbying that the Parish Council had undertaken about traffic problems in both this street and others in the village. Members generally expressed strong support for the points raised by the parishioner and condemned the recent action by Norfolk County Council Highways Department in removing speed repeater signs which was seen as a significant backward step. Suggestions were made that a major, sustained campaign should be mounted to introduce speed calming measures along the road before serious injury occurred. PC Cook said he would look into providing rubber speed measure strips as a verification check of the SAM speed checks carried out in February 2008.

Another resident reminded the Council that she had been waiting for more than 15 years for the County Council to resolve road flooding outside her house in Black Street.

The Council was asked if a letter could be sent to the developer of the derelict building site at Grove Cottages, Black Street as the site is an eyesore.

In answer to a question from Councillor Wright, PC Cook said he would check into motorbikes driving at excessive speeds along Cess Road.

The public forum ended at 20.08 hours.

COUNCIL MEETING

Those Present:

Councillors: J Beales; T Brookman; T Gates; M Horrocks; M Huke; B Huxtable; K Jordan; P Manifold; T Watson and B Wright.

Presiding: M Huke.

Clerk in attendance: Peter Dawson.

1. Apologies

It was agreed to accept apologies from Councillor Carberry who everyone wished a speedy recover from illness.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor B Wright declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in item 12 as an allotment holder.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 18th June 2008

These having been circulated with the agenda it was resolved to AGREE the minutes. *Proposed* by K Jordan, *seconded* by B Wright and *unanimously agreed*.

4. Actions arising from the minutes

Councillors Huxtable and Wright reported back on the meeting they had attended at the Priory Centre to hear about unitary authority plans. (See minute 6.1; 18.6.08). The meeting was addressed by the Leader of the Borough Council and information was given but no handouts. It was felt that the whole proposals for local government re-organisation lacked sufficient democratic consultation. The proposal for one single Norfolk-wide authority also taking in Lowestoft would result in 120 Unitary Authority board members being appointed, not all of whom would be elected. They would probably be full time representatives. The proposals were seen as a huge step change for which very little detailed information had been provided. The public appear to get no vote on the proposals but there could be potential for large savings in public expenditure. Comments on the proposals are invited before 26th September 2008. The NCAPTC had written separately inviting members to attend a briefing on the re-organisation proposals to be held on Wednesday 30th July at County Hall. It was AGREED that Councillors Huxtable, Jordan and Wright would attend on behalf of the Parish Council.

5. Planning

5.1 The Chairman reported on two planning application matters that had been received on the day of the meeting.

The first was the granting of planning permission at 33 The Green for a side and rear single storey annex extension. It was AGREED that clarification be sought about the Conservation Officer's opinion on this proposal and that a request be made for a meeting with the Planning Officer to be attended by two representatives of the Planning Working Party to seek clarification on matters relating to development in the conservation area. Additionally the Clerk was asked to inform Councillor Mary Coleman of the findings arising from this meeting and the Council's concerns over the granting of the planning permission.

The second matter was the reporting of permission given to fell a lime tree at plot 4, Back Lane.

5.2 The balance of the schedule of comments on planning applications received for consultation was approved.

6. Correspondence

6.1 Letter No 97 – The former Spar Shop. Arising from this letter the Clerk was asked to find out if the normal planning processes had been followed in relation to the works to the roof of this building.

6.2 The balance of the schedule of correspondence provided with the agenda for information was received.

7. Finance

7.1 Councillor Jordan *proposed* that the recommendations made by the Finance Committee at its meeting held on 2nd July 2008 in accordance with the draft minutes attached to the agenda be approved. *Seconded* P Manifold. *Unanimously agreed*. The Clerk was asked to make the necessary arrangements to open the new deposit account with the Alliance Leicester Commercial Bank.

7.2 Subject to the addition of an invoice for £102.00 for the annual subscription to The Society for Local Council Clerks the schedule of invoices circulated with the agenda was approved for payment but it was noted that the payment due to Simons Landscaping Ltd in the sum of £24,616 for landscaping work at Staithe Road would not be paid until grant

income had been received to cover the outgoing payment. *Proposed by J Beales, seconded by P Manifold. Unanimously agreed.*

- 7.3 The Clerk was asked to find out if insurance cover for special events like the Christmas and May Fairs could be added to the Council's standard insurance cover.
- 7.4 The Chairman read out a letter received that day from the Audit Commission turning down an appeal against the audit fee for 2006/07 of £1,450. Councillor P Manifold *proposed* that the matter be raised with the Tony Wright MP and the NCAPTC and the bill not paid, *seconded by K Jordan. Unanimously agreed.*
It was noted that as a result of passing these examinations the Clerk's salary would be increased from national scale point 18 to scale point 19.

8. Footways/highways

- 8.1 Arising from minute 18/6/08, page 366 and the comments made during the public forum at the beginning of the meeting Councillor B Huxtable *proposed* that a special item be added to the agenda of the next meeting to discuss a campaign aimed at introducing traffic calming improvements in Black Street and potentially other areas of the village. In addition he suggested that representatives of the Highways Authority, Councillor Cartiss, the local Councillors and as many members of the public as possible be invited to the meeting. The proposal was *seconded by K Jordan and unanimously agreed.*
- 8.2 Councillor Watson asked if anything could be done to tidy up a small piece of waste land at the junction of Hall Road and Hemsby Road. It was explained that this matter had already been taken up with the owners of the land, Cripps Builders, who had agreed to cut the grass there within the next three weeks. The land is subject to future adoption by Norfolk County Council.

9. Footpaths

It was generally agreed that cutting and maintenance carried out by Norfolk County Council was not meeting the standards assured during discussions with officers at NCC during the winter. Several complaints about footpath maintenance had been received during the last three weeks. The Footpath WP was asked to investigate and take action as necessary to help resolve the problems.

10. Communications

- 10.1 New website – comments and suggestion on the design and content of the new website are overdue. It was agreed that this matter be deferred for further consideration at the next meeting after which the new site should go live.
- 10.2 As a result of reporting on preparations for the Christmas Fair it was agreed that £700 be transferred from the General Fund to the Christmas Fair cost centre to provide for set up costs.
- 10.3 It was agreed that the old notice board formerly used at the Village Hall be offered to the Bowls Club free of charge.
- 10.4 Councillor T Brookman informed members that the Clerk had passed the Society for Local Council Clerks examinations and he now held the Certificate in Local Council Administration. The Council unanimously congratulated the Clerk on this achievement which completes one mandatory element of the Council becoming a Quality Council.

11. Small Works

Nothing to report.

12. Allotments

Councillor Wright reported that all the rents have been paid for the year and that preparations are being made that should release sufficient allotments to clear the waiting list in time for the growing season next year.

13. Top Priorities for the Next Three Years

The Chairman presented a report giving details of his proposals for the top priorities for the Council for the next three years which were intended to underpin the village enhancements programme and to strengthen the social festivals.

Councillor Jordan proposed that the three suggested priorities be merged into one and that further thought be given to adding others like traffic calming and youth activities to form a key list of three or four items. It was agreed that this matter be deferred for further suggestions and discussion at the next meeting of the Council.

14 Freedom of Information

The Clerk provided a report on the above act and suggested that it would strengthen the Council's corporate management to adopt a clear policy statement in addition to the Publication Scheme. Councillor K Jordan *proposed* the adoption of the Freedom of Information Policy as presented. *Seconded* by T Brookman. *Unanimously agreed.*

15 Ponds

Rubbish had been removed from the main pond prior to the carnival weekend and repair needs were outlined. The Green, Open Spaces, Car Parks and Staithes Working Party were asked to make any future recommendations as necessary.

16. Common Road Wildlife Area

Councillor Jordan provided an update on arrangements of discussions with the Broad Authority. Actual arrangements for improvements could not be made until after plan details are received from NCC and vegetation growth dies back at the end of the autumn.

17. Bus Shelter, Repps Road

Several complaints had been made to councillors recently about the poor state of the shelter at Repps Road. On behalf of the working party Councillor Jordan explained that the recommendation was to provide a brick and tiled pitched roof shelter and on a show of hands this was endorsed by members. The Working Party was asked to hasten plans for a new shelter but in recognising that this may take many months to deliver it was agreed that the Small Works WP be authorised to spend up to £400 to carry out temporary repairs.

18. Carnival Weekend

Councillor Huke said he thought the carnival weekend had been a particularly successful event for the village this year and his sentiments were AGREED by all those present. Councillor Huke *proposed* that a letter of congratulations be sent to the carnival organisers. *Seconded* P Manifold. *Unanimously agreed.*

19. Items for Next Agenda:

- Traffic calming in Black Street.
- Unitary authority proposals.
- Tree wardens.
- Luncheon Club.
- Key priorities.

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday, 17th September 2008 and the next Public Surgery is on 26th July 2008 when the representatives are Councillors Huxtable and Jordan.

The meeting closed at 21.41 hours.

Signed..... Dated.....
Chairman