

**Minutes of Martham Parish Council Meeting
held in the School Room, Methodist Church, Repps Road, Martham
on 17th September 2008 at 19:30 hrs.**

PUBLIC FORUM

The Chairman opened the public forum by welcoming 20 members of the public, County Councillor M Carttiss, PCSO Meri Blunsden, Carl Dawrdy & Emma Harrison of Norfolk County Council Highways Department. Apologies were received from Borough Councillors Barry & Mary Coleman and PC Cook.

Nursery Close/Black Street Passageways

Mrs Meakin asked what action the Council had taken since the last meeting about these two blocked paths. She pointed out that Mr Fields had now erected gates at the Black Street end of his drive which had previously been used as a short cut for many years. She stated that the drive had been a public right of way since 1989 and in use by the former landowners since 1938. She alleged that those who blocked the paths had no regard for public concern and their anti social behaviour had caused inconvenience and distress to local residents. She requested that the Parish Council write to Mr Fields requesting the removal of the gates on his driveway.

In answer, the Chairman repeated that Norfolk County Council had refused to officially designate Mr Fields drive as a public right of way and had not adopted the Nursery Close end of the passageway. He also repeated the advice given last month that the issue of access to the blocked Nursery Close end of the path is essentially one between those residents who claim to have rights of access to it included in their deeds and Mr Rhodes and that they should consult a solicitor as to their rights. He went on to say that since the last meeting the Council had written to the owners of the Nursery Close passageway, John Investments Ltd, asking them to write to Mr Rhodes demanding he remove the fences he had erected blocking the path but had not yet had a reply. The Council had also taken wider legal advice that it would be considering in private session at the end of the meeting.

A claim was made that until recently there was a sign near Mr Fields drive saying it was a public right of way. Councillor Carttiss said that when he saw the sign it said it was NOT a public right of way. The sign has since been removed.

Further robust questions were asked about the £1,000 given to Mr Fields in October 2004 to help pave his driveway and keep it open as a link to the Nursery Close passageway. The Chairman confirmed the same information as last month that unfortunately at the time the payment was made it was not felt necessary to obtain any written condition attached to making the payment but that it had been properly authorised and minuted as a payment by full Council at the time. Different public opinions were expressed about suggested action that should be taken to recover the money.

Councillor Carttiss explained that he had established that the County Council were not involved with the Nursery Close end of the passageway and neither were the Parish Council. He endorsed the answers given by the Chairman and repeated that the matter is one for private civil action, subject to legal advice. He also reported that in his investigation of the situation other residents living closer to the Nursery Close passageway had indicated to him that they were pleased it had been closed.

Black Street Traffic

15 members of the public indicated that they had attended in response to Council consultations about long standing traffic problems in Black Street. Public complaints had increased since the expansion of the Primary School and the Chairman invited members of the public to express their views. The following is a representation of the topics raised during the wide ranging debate:

- There has been speeding along the road for 27 years but it has got much worse recently and is adversely affecting the quality of life.
- There have been several accidents and near misses recently.
- Speed guns are a deterrent but only because the Police are plainly visible. They should operate covertly.
- It is a disgrace that the Highways Authority removed the 30mph repeater signs.
- Mr Dawrdy of NCC explained that the signs had to be removed for legal reasons so that the police could enforce speeding offences.
- Parking is inconsiderate and parking spaces should be provided by cutting out verges.
- There should be a 20mph limit at the school end.
- There should be a 20mph speed limit along the whole road.

- The whole village should be subject to a 20mph speed limit.
- There should be speed warning window stickers and an appeal to the parents visiting the school.
- Bigger scale traffic calming measures are required including 'chicane' type speed restriction.
- Mr Dawdry explained that due to comparatively low accident rates large scheme would never get priority. Full schemes would cost upwards of £60,000. Schemes had been provided in other villages using building developers planning gain contributions.
- It was disgusting that a fatal accident will be required before something was done.
- Councillor Carttiss felt there was more danger in Black Street than near the school in Great Ormesby where he had been instrumental in obtaining traffic calming measures. He was fully supportive of a campaign to introduce a 20mph speed limit but did not favour speed humps because of the effects on emergency services.
- Mr Dawdry said it was against NCC policy to provide a 20mph speed limit without supporting traffic calming measures.
- A public petition was sent to NCC in 2002 but nothing was done because of the low accident rates.
- Improvements should not depend on past accident rate levels when there has been a recent expansion of the school giving rise to far more traffic. In addition there was a plan to stop using buses to deliver children to school and this is likely to give rise to even more cars visiting the school to drop off children.
- A Governor at the school will raise the concerns again.
- Emma Harrison of NCC works in liaison with the school and will discuss with them ideas for addressing speeding and safety concerns. In other parts of Norfolk they are trialling 20mph restriction around schools.
- The farming community is also affected by congestion around the school.
- Yellow no parking lines are required.
- Some properties have no off road parking facilities and would be badly affected if parking was banned.
- No parking down one side of a road produces a race track, chicanes slow traffic more effectively.
- Parking in front of properties helps slow vehicles down.
- Parking restrictions are also needed at the village end of Black Street.
- The problems of speeding are not just confined to school times in fact they are worse at other times when there is less congestion.
- Grove Close is an elderly persons residential area and people need protecting.
- The library in the same road means extra traffic adding to safety demands.
- Meri Blunsden, (PCSO) reported that past speeding assessments indicated low levels of speeding. The police hoped to deploy 'minute-man' for two weeks shortly to measure speeds over a longer period than just school times. They have counted up to 200 cars at school pick up time and most problems are caused by stopping, starting and parking rather than speed.
- Flashing speed signs are effective and should be considered. The typical print of one sign ranges from £5,000 to £8,000.
- If street improvements take place flooding issues need addressing at the same time.
- Could a one way system be investigated?
- Speeding issues could be highlighted in magazines.
- Carl Dawdry will investigate the provision of temporary black and white 'Think Speed' signs.
- Three people volunteered to serve on a working party to campaign for improvements. They were Keith Bush, Ray Phillips and Andy Banner.

The public forum ended at 21.02 hours.

COUNCIL MEETING

Those Present:

Councillors: J Beales; T Brookman; B Carberry; M Horrocks; M Huke; K Jordan and B Wright.

Presiding: M Huke.

Clerk in attendance: Peter Dawson.

1. Apologies

It was agreed to accept apologies from Councillors Gates, Huxtable, Manifold and Watson.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Beales and Jordan expressed a non prejudicial interest in item 17 of the agenda.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 20th August 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

4.1 There had been no reply to a letter sent to John Investments Ltd on 21st August 2008 concerning the Nursery Close passageway.

4.2 Norfolk County Council had not written as expected concerning the future of the Youth Club building.

5. Black Street Traffic Calming

Councillor Huke **proposed** that a working party be set up to fully investigate the Black Street traffic problems and seek solutions and make recommendations to Council. The working party to be made up of Councillor Jordan (as Chair), Keith Bush, Ray Phillips and Andy Banner.

Seconded by T Brookman. **Unanimously agreed**.

6. Planning

6.1 The schedule of comments on planning applications received for consultation was approved subject to an objection in respect of the conversion from (SSAF) offices in Back Lane into four self contained residential units with garages because there is no outside living space.

Proposed M Huke, **seconded** by B Wright. **Unanimously agreed**.

6.2 The Chairman informed members that Gladedale has lodged an appeal against the planning refusal to demolish Elmside House and build 11 cottage style properties in its place. It was AGREED that further written evidence should be sent to the Planning Inspectorate pointing out the compromise suggested to Gladedale which would see the conversion of Elmside House into low cost flats.

7. Correspondence

7.1 Letter No 119 – Vacancy on the Standards Committee at GYBC. If any member is interested please contact the Clerk.

7.2 Letter Nos 122 & 122A – Retention of telephone Box at Somerton Road. No action.

7.3 Letter No 138 - Request for a new bench near the School in Black Street. The Clerk was asked to investigate land ownership and potential permission for placing a seat near the library.

7.4 Letter No 138 – Hedges overgrowing the footway 8 Thurne Close. The Clerk was asked to discuss the wider issues of similar problems in the village with Borough Councillor Mary Coleman.

7.5 Letter No 141 – Consultations on Police Plan. Councillor Brookman was asked to compile suitable observations and discuss them with the Chairman before making a response.

7.6 Letter No 144 – Request to provide Broads Landscape character assessment. Councillor Jordan agreed to ask Councillor Manifold if he would submit an assessment on behalf of the Council.

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

8. Finance

8.1 Members noted that the external audit of the 2007/08 accounts had been completed without any qualification and that this would help fulfil one of the criteria required for the Quality Council submission.

8.2 The schedule of invoices circulated with the agenda was approved for payment subject to the addition of one payment to P Bunting of £152.75 for repairs to the Repps Road bus shelter. **Proposed** by K Jordan, **seconded** by M Horrocks. **Unanimously agreed.**

9. Footways/highways

Nothing to report.

10. Footpaths

10.1 A new comprehensive footpath guide had been produced which complimented the shorter five circular walks guide. Both were thought to be a valuable contribution to village life.

10.2 Footpath No15 has still not been reinstated. To be referred to Raz Woollacott by the Clerk.

11. Communications

11.1 The Communications Working Party had its first meeting with Sarita Presland, Parish Liaison Officer, on 20th August to look at the qualifications required for applying to become a Quality Council. A plan had been produced which was designed to meet all the requirements in time to make a submission in April or May 2009.

11.2 The Working Party had produced a first draft of a 'Welcome Booklet' which was intended to provide new residents with information about facilities in the village. It was hoped that a final version would be circulated at the next meeting. The Clerk was asked to contact the Rating Department to see if change of occupier information could be provided.

12. Small Works

The Repps Road bus shelter has had temporary repairs carried out. Plans are progressing for its replacement for which planning permission is required.

13. Allotments

3.1 Councillor Wright reported that Anglian Water had failed to turn up on three occasions to connect the new water supply and was still unable to give a firm date for the connection. A formal complaint had been made and a compensation payment of £250 had been requested.

3.2 Authority was given to Councillor Wright to terminate the tenancy of allotments that are not being properly maintained.

14. Top Priorities for the Next Three Years

This matter was deferred until the next meeting.

15. Luncheon Club

Nothing to report.

17. Boat Dyke Trustee

Mr Steven Beales had applied to become a Trustee of Martham Boat Dyke Trust. Councillor M Huke **proposed** that Mr Steven Beales be appointed as a Trustee of the Boat Dyke Trust, **seconded** by T Brookman. **Unanimously agree.** Councillors Jordan and Beales took no part in this discussion.

18. No Cold Calling Zones

Norfolk County Council had written asking the Council if it would support 'No Cold Calling Zones' where the residents wished to declare they no longer wanted to accept traders calling at their homes without an appointment. Details of how the scheme works had been circulated and members AGREED to support any residents group that made an application. The Clerk was asked to contact the Borough Council to suggest adoption of a scheme for Grove Close.

19. Boundary Committee Proposals

Councillors Huxtable, Jordan and Wright had attended meetings during the past month about the consequences of the proposed Boundary Commission proposals to replace eight local councils in Norfolk with unitary authorities. Councillor Jordan explained the three main options which will include Lowestoft. Concerns were expressed about the make up of the proposed Partnership Boards which would have spending powers but not be fully elected. Consultations end this month and anyone can send in views via the Boundary Commission website. Councillor Jordan was handed a consultation document provide by Great Yarmouth Borough Council and was asked to consider appropriate responses using the questionnaire that was included.

20. Items for Next Agenda:

Priorities for the next three years.
Church Hall and churchyard improvement.

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday, 15th October 2008. There is a Finance Committee meeting on 8th October 2008 to consider grants and the budget for 2009/10. The next Public Surgery is on 27th September.

The meeting closed at 21.58 hours.

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