

Minutes of the Blo' Norton Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 13 January 2015 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

Those Present: John Barnet-Lamb; Mike Bristow; Ann Lambert; Councillor Marion Chapman-Allen and two members of the public

1 Apologies for absence - none

2 Public Comment -

3 To receive Declarations of Interest in respect of items for consideration Chairman John Barnet-Lamb declared an interest in items 6 with regard to the Village Hall, ge hall and funding

3a Request for Dispensation (Standing Item) Request received from Chairman John Barnet-Lamb with regard to item 6. This was considered by the Council and accepted.

4 To approve the Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on 14 October 2014 – The minutes of the meeting held on 14 October were approved as circulated and signed by the Chairman.

5 Matters arising from the minutes held on 14 October 2014 (not elsewhere on agenda)
There were no matters arising

6 Village Hall Proposals All present were aware that the village hall committee struggle to improve facilities at the hall due to the running costs and maintenance. It was noted this was the only community facility that Blo' Norton had left. It was noted that currently the Parish Council paid a grant of £400 to the Village Hall for the meetings and grass cutting. The running costs of the hall were approximately £3250, money was raised through rental of the hall but this was never guaranteed. The Parish Council felt strongly that the village hall should be assisted and following discussion it was agreed to raise the precept by £2,600 so that the Parish Council would donate £3,000 per year to the Village Hall. The Parish Council hoped that this money would be sufficient to cover the cost of the routine running and maintenance of the hall and allow the monies raised by the Committee to be used for renovation and refurbishment.

7 Update re provision of a dog waste bin – Two responses had been received, following the Parish Clerk's article in the Bugle. Following discussion it was agreed that the bin would be sited by the Village Hall, although when previously discussed a number of years ago, thought was given to LOHP providing funding for one to be sited near the entrance to the Fens and another at Betty's Fen. The Clerk was asked to write to LOHP giving them the opportunity to purchase up to two bins and then the Clerk would organise the licence through Breckland Council. **ACTION: CLERK**

8 Elections – The Clerk reminded Councillors that elections would be held in May 2015 and asked if Councillors were considering to re-stand. It was noted that they were.

9 Blo Norton Sewage – It had been reported to the Parish Council that problems with private sewage continued in Fen Road and there was currently a problem in The Street. The Parish Clerk was asked to write to the householders enclosing a copy of the Breckland Council Leaflet providing guidance re sewage and asking for an update within a month. **ACTION: CLERK**

10 To consider adoption of the following:

The following documents had previously been circulated to the Councillors. There being no questions, all the documents were adopted for the following twelve months.

- Financial Regulations
- Standing Orders
- Code of Conduct

- 11 PCSO Match Funded Partnership Scheme – Following receipt of an invitation from Norfolk Constabulary with regard to this scheme which would allow for a dedicated resource over and above the PCSO ratio within a community, providing the partner stakeholder provided 50% of the funding, Norfolk Constabulary would match the funding. It was felt that it was not an affordable option, unless a few councils “clubbed” together, which would then mean the dedicated resource would need to share their time amongst villages, so would not be as effective.
- 12 To consider Parish Partnership Scheme (carried over from last meeting) An invitation from Norfolk County Council was briefly discussed at the last meeting, for further discussion. The scheme would offer 50/50 funding for schemes put forward by the Parish Council to deliver projects that are priorities for local communities. Schemes could include small lengths of formal footway; trods (a simplified and low cost footway) improved crossing facilities; improvements to public rights of way and the SAM2 sign which flashes up drivers speed. This was considered and felt not an affordable option as the onerous would be with the Parish Council for legal responsibility, insurance and maintenance.
- 13 Police and Crime Update – No report received
- 14 SNAP meeting – No meeting dates had been notified at the current time – it was felt this was the result of budget cuts within Norfolk Constabulary.
- 15 Finances
- (a) To consider Precept for 2015 Following earlier discussion regarding the village hall it was agreed to raise the precept by £2,600 to £5450.
- (b) To consider invoice re provision of Poppy Wreath – the invoice was approved for payment.
- (c) To consider Parish Clerk’s invoice (December-March) – the invoice was approved for payment and the cheque dated 1 March 2015.
- 16 Resignation – Councillor Ann Lambert announced her resignation, which was sadly accepted by the Chairman and Councillors. John Barnet-Lamb thanked Ann for her work as a Councillor on behalf of the Parish Council.
- 17 Planning – None notified.
- 18 Such other business as the Chairperson may direct

Dredging of Field at Top of Fen Road: It was reported that it appeared that LOHP had dredged the field at the top of Fen Road, which it was believed they rented. There appeared to be large ditches left as a result and it was asked what would happen if an animal or person was to fall into those ditches. The Clerk was asked to write to the Little Ouse Headway Project to find out about the recent work they have undertaken **ACTION: CLERK**

Wood Cutting on Betty’s Fen: It was asked about the right of taking wood from the Fens. This was discussed at a previous meeting, as the rights had now ceased and the Clerk would send the extract of the minutes to the Councillors. It was noted that Betty’s Fen was owned by the Little Ouse Headway Project and the Blo’ Norton Fens where the right to take cut wood had existed had been leased by village residents in 1997 from the village 'poor's trust', the Blo'Norton Fuel Allotment Charity, and started to restore its interest for fenland wildlife. In 2003 the 'Blo'Norton Fen Conservation Group' merged with the Little Ouse Headwaters Project which continues to lease and manage the fen. In more recent times, the removal of wood for fuel by local residents has ceased, and the Fuel Allotment Trustees now derive an annual income by leasing the land. This money is then distributed to a number parish residents each year, in place of the fuel from the fen

Mobile home on Farm in Fen Road: It was noted that Sue Arnold from the Enforcement Team at Breckland would make a site visit later this week with regard to the mobile home

on this site.

Sandpits Corner: It was reported that some of the banking appeared to be unsafe and Sue Arnold would be asked to assess this when she was doing her site visit.

Potholes continued to be a problem in the village and had been reported to Highways – and would be again

Railings – Churchyard: - Councillor Bristow updated the meeting that Mr Lorimer had said these are work in progress and would be provided.

19 Dates of meetings for 2015:

7 April
25 August

7 May (provisional)
17 November