

**x=MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL HELD at 7pm ON TUESDAY 22<sup>ND</sup>**  
**JUNE 2021 IN THE VILLAGE HALL**

**Attendance:** Dr Bacon in the Chair, Mr Filgate, Mrs Gardiner, Mr Harris, Mr Hill, Ms Johnson, Mr Jordan, Mr Read, Cllr Price (County Councillor), Ms S. Vergette (clerk) and nine members of the public.

Dr Bacon welcomed everyone to the meeting, he stated that the meeting was being recorded for the purpose of producing the minutes.

**1. Apologies for Absence:** Mrs Walker, Mrs Wickens, Cllr Grove-Jones (District Councillor), Cllr Millership (District Councillor).

**2. Declarations of Interest.** Mr Jordan declared an interest in the planning application for Wood Street Farm.

**3. To approve as accurate minutes of the last meeting of the council.** The minutes of 5<sup>th</sup> May were agreed as a true and correct record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

**4. Public participation**

4.1 No member of the public had anything to raise.

4.2 Report from Cllr Grove-Jones. Previously circulated – noted. Cllr Grove-Jones is looking into the complaint about the grass verge on the Ludham Road/Potter Heigham Road junction and has been involved a special disabled parking space for a resident.

4.3 Report from Cllr Price. Cllr Price reported on the latest Covid figures, there are 14 cases per 100,000 in North Norfolk. There are 3102 people who have tested positive which is an increase of 19 over the last week. Face masks and handwashing are still important. Cllr Price informed the Parish Council that the Boundary Commission is carrying out a Parliamentary Boundary Review for Norfolk which would see Catfield in the Parliamentary constituency of Great Yarmouth. Cllr Price is against this as is Duncan Baker MP and other Norfolk MPs. There will be a consultation and Cllr Price urged individuals and the Council to express their opinions. Rural parishes have different issues to market towns and we are different from Great Yarmouth. Dr Bacon stated that Sutton and Stalham are also involved but not Ludham. Cllr Price stated that he would be leaving the meeting after item 6.

**5. Correspondence**

5.1 Email from Mrs J Gardiner, circulated.

*Now that the elections are over, I feel that every councillor should be made aware of the behaviour and false information being spread around the village on the actual morning of the election about a candidate. There is of course a strict code of conduct and expected behaviour in particular on the day of an election.*

*I was approached on the morning of the 20<sup>th</sup> by parishioners from the village who had received a knock on the door informing them that not only should they not vote for one of the candidates because she was old and also extremely unwell but were they aware that her husband had applied for planning permission on his land to build.*

*If this was not sufficiently out of order, the “grey haired lady with a foreign accent” as described to me produced a plan showing the land in question. This was reported to North Norfolk as a complaint by the parishioners and it was confirmed that no such planning application had been received ever and was considered to be false information. North Norfolk then passed this information on to the police in line with electoral law.*

*As Councillors know every village were asked to suggest suitable development land back in an earlier housing development revue, as in fact as a council we are again being asked to complete the same exercise. To produce this plan to people who were about to vote and I hasten to add recognised as the wife of a councillor cannot be acceptable and should be*

*brought to the knowledge of council members so they are aware of what happened in case like me, they are approached.*

*Judith Gardiner*

Mrs Gardiner stated that this was regarding a complaint that had gone to her on the morning of the election which was a concern as there had been lots of complaints and she felt that Councillors should be aware as it was not etiquette and in fact written down in law that one should not be going out and doing things and saying things to upset other people.

Mr Filgate stated that he was concerned, he has been an election agent for a political party in this area for some time for several elections both County and others. He was concerned to read this because his understanding of electoral law is somewhat different and although he could see the point of parts, there are other points that he found offensive and difficult. References to people with different accents, he thought, was a discriminatory comment and even if it was said by somebody else it should have been challenged. Electoral campaigning and the democratic process are very important and we do need to be aware of this as an elected body of councillors and we need to take this into account. However, he thought there were elements that would cause concern. From Mr Filgate's experience as an agent there were other issues in the last election in other divisions and a member of the party chose not to report matters to the police because his words were 'I feel the police have more important things to do' but he did have grounds, trespass, criminal damage, apologies were received. There is a way to deal with these issues and Mr Filgate stated that he did not feel comfortable with this for the Council to deal with this.

Mr Harris stated that he would like to make a few comments about Mrs Gardiner's undated note which like other councillors he received last Thursday, the day after the informal meeting.

Mr Harris stated that the note is obviously aimed at his wife, although she is not named nor has anyone spoken to, or approached her, about the allegations made. The Electoral Commission's Code of Conduct for campaigners makes the point when it says 'any concerns that this code has been breached should be raised firstly with the candidate, political party or campaigner in question'. Mr Harris circulated copies of the Code dated March. Mrs Gardiner replied that she had read it, Mr Harris stated that she could not have read it very well because it says any concerns that this code has been breached should be raised firstly with the candidate, his wife heard nothing about this. Mrs Gardiner replied that she was not the candidate. Mr Harris stated it was not raised with Mr Edwards because he had checked, Mrs Gardiner had not raised it with anybody.

Mrs Gardiner stated that the lady who was being slandered, Mrs Shearing knew exactly, she phoned Mrs Gardiner as did some of the other people to ask what they should do.

Mr Harris stated that there is a code of conduct, and it is here, it is clear.

Mr Harris went on to say that as far as the legality of campaigning on polling day is concerned the Electoral Commission is also quite clear on the subject. They say 'campaigners should be allowed to put their messages to voters on polling day, including in public spaces outside polling stations. Mr Harris stated that there has been a long British tradition of getting the vote out on voting day and following the recent Chesham and Amersham by-election it has been reported that Liberals have claimed that they had eight canvassers out polling on polling day which contributed to their success so that is absolutely clear cut that can canvass on polling day you can't cause offences inside the voting hall.

Mr Harris stated that his wife did go out canvassing in the recent election but only spoke to a very few people on polling day whom she had missed on the previous day. The allegation that she misled anybody about future development for housing is simply wrong. While canvassing she showed people a copy of a map (handed round) this came from NNDC's official publication, site specific proposals. This is the section for Catfield.

Mr Harris stated that his wife told him that she did this having heard an unidentified man who had been canvassing before her telling people that as Mr Edwards was against the Lea Road proposal this candidate would be supporting new housing. This is an important issue and entirely appropriate for discussion at a local election so too is who sits on the Parish Council where the farming interest is already strongly represented; for example, Mr Hill is a Parish Councillor although he does not live in the village, in fact on the other side of Norwich and when any development is discussed such as the Mushroom Farm, he invariably raises the right of farmers to develop their farmland. In the case of both Mrs Gardiner and Mrs Shearing you have representatives from two of the leading farming families in the village. In Mrs Shearing's case one which has put forward the great majority of sites for housing development for the Catfield site proposals plan, shown on the plan circulated.

Interestingly, from the documents circulated when the relevant proposals were discussed North Norfolk ranked development of part of the Mushroom Farm for housing equally with Lea Road. This was never supported by the Parish Council until recently, it would be interesting to see why if you go back to 2009 it makes interesting reading. What is more as the Parish Council failed to take part in the recent Clause 18 planning consultations this inevitably is making it more difficult now to get the Parish Council to change views about the desirability of some housing on the Mushroom Site accepted by North Norfolk planning. So, who gets elected to the Parish Council and what interests they represent is very relevant to the Parish Council elections, it is also worth commenting there were other organisational problems with how the two recent elections were run. Firstly, the website information was consistently wrong for example for a long time it omitted Dr Jennifer Harris as a candidate. Secondly, in the second election the postal votes were erroneously sent out twice and Mr Harris was unclear whether the voting cards were sent out at all for the first election. Mr Harris asked if the clerk knew, she replied that she was told they were sent out. Mr Read did not receive a postal voting card for the first election. Mr Harris stated that perhaps those are the sort of things Mrs Gardiner should be looking at. Many people did get their voting cards.

Mr Harris stated that there is no question at all that the website was erroneous and omitted Dr Jennifer Harris and there is no question that postal votes were sent out twice, he had received two.

In summary, Mr Harris stated that Mrs Gardiner's charges are all erroneous and without substance and can be confirmed from the documents which Mr Harris had quoted or handed round, which have not been followed particularly the Electoral Commission's Code of Conduct on campaigning and the NNDC's Local Site Specific proposals draft plan to see what was put forward and by whom.

Mr Harris stated that on a personal note any suspicion that his wife and foreignness might be used as a way to attack himself and what he has been trying to do to make the Parish Council more effective and accountable in representing the views and interests of the village he found deeply troubling.

Dr Bacon stated that on the issue of the foreignness or foreign accent what is in the note is in speech marks and is a quote from the member of the public, the parishioners who identified the person in that way, that it was their way of identifying a particular person. Dr Bacon stated that he did not think it was being discriminatory in any way, if you had to describe somebody you pick something that distinguishes that person from other people who might come to your door and that is what this particular person did apparently. As far as the planning issues are concerned Dr Bacon believed, from what he has seen here, that the person who complained had said that they were given the impression that there was a planning application for land belonging to the Shearings not that there were suggested sites for future development that belonged to the Shearings. There is a difference between having identified sites in the Local Plan which might be one day subject to a planning application and actually saying that there is a planning application in progress. Dr Bacon stated that he was not commenting about how accurate

that person's reporting is but that is what they reported, that the comments from the lady concerned was that there was a planning application not that there was land belonging to her family identified as possible future planning sites.

Mr Harris asked how Dr Bacon knew that? Dr Bacon stated that he was not saying he knew, that is what he had reported to him by Mrs Shearing.

Mr Harris stated that the document makes very clear that these are the sites put forward suggested for development, his wife never said about planning. The grounds for misunderstanding are self-evident and the fact that this paper shows that also the document he had provided is clear. Dr Bacon stated that he was not disagreeing he was just saying that was what was reported.

Mr Harris replied that the idea that a complaint should be made on the basis of hearsay when it is clear from this what was talked about is extremely wrong and he was against this. This first person that should have been talked to was either Mr Edwards as she was representing Mr Edwards, the Code of Conduct is quite clear on that, Mrs Gardiner was in breach.

Dr Bacon went on to say that the other thing about the reporting process, he believed, he was unsure if it was Mrs Gardiner or Mrs Shearing who were both candidates in that election, somebody reported it to NNDC, NNDC reported it to the police, it is not the candidates who reported it to the police, they reported it to NNDC and NNDC apparently reported it to the police.

Mr Harris stated that Mrs Gardiner did not comply with the Code of Conduct she talks about the Code of Conduct. Secondly, it is clear from the evidence that his wife never said this and the fact that she is foreign is extremely troubling in the modern age.

Mrs Gardiner stated that she thought the people in question stopped her, they were livid on the day, they told her they had already told Mrs Shearing, they had already rung NNDC to see if planning had gone in, because they were told that Mrs Shearing was too old and that asked if they all know that she was very ill. There were also told that Mr Shearing had applied for building. The document is 2009 and it is no different from the new Development Plan they are doing but he has not applied and he was quite upset. Mrs Gardiner stated that she was not the one who made the complaint, it came back to her on that day because to say that sort of thing about a candidate is not acceptable.

Mr Harris replied that his wife denies that she said that, she did say that Mr Edwards is a younger candidate, she is allowed to do that, if one reads the code of conduct it is clear. It does not look like anybody has looked at the documents, it is wrong what has been done to his wife is wrong and to attack Mr Harris through his wife.

Dr Bacon stated that arguably, pointing out the age difference is ageist.

Mr Read stated that in a world where we live of political correctness this could be interpreted as racism regardless of what colour you are because the person was described as a foreign accent, that could have been anywhere in the world if you speak with a foreign accent, you could still be white, it is racism. Dr Bacon stated that it is xenophobic not racist.

Mr Harris said that was not true, if allegations are made about Irish people that is not racist but it is against the act.

Mr Read went on to say that over the last few months he has noticed more and more there seems to be a witch hunt against the Harrises, be it their daughter wanting to get in on the Parish Council, or Mr and Mrs Harris themselves, there is a witch hunt and that it is stemming from this Parish Council which he thought is totally appalling they are here to help the people of this village to do what they can for them. Infighting like this does no good at all and that is a total witch hunt. Mr Read thought it was time something was done about it.

Mrs Gardiner stated that if something had not been said tonight no one would have been aware of what happened that day. Mr Harris replied this was untrue, the fact that it was put in writing puts Mrs Gardiner into the dock and potentially us because this now is a

public document, Mrs Gardiner has made it a public document, it is not dated, Mrs Gardiner did not warn anybody she made it a public document.

Mr Hill stated that he was not too concerned about the planning angle of this but if the personal comments that were made are true, he thought it was an absolute disgrace about Mrs Shearing.

Ms Johnson replied if it was true then yes but there is a difficulty when there is hearsay this it can cause a lot of angst as well because there is no proof and no way of going back to check. Mr Harris said that you can say the suitability of the candidate, age is clearly one of those and the activeness in the campaign is also another. He went on to say that he did not know what his wife said, his understanding is she did not make comments about Mrs Shearing in the way it has been suggested. His wife has been maligned in this way; he was surprised that Mr Hill did not recognise this. Mr Hill stated that he had no issues with Mrs Harris but if it was true what was said about Mrs Shearing, he thought it was disgraceful. Mr Harris asked if Mr Hill thought it was disgraceful to discuss his wife in this way. Mr Hill replied that he did not know what happened and he had said if it was true then it is disgraceful, if it was not true then it's not.

Mrs Harris (a parishioner) stated that everyone is talking about her and she wanted to say to Mrs Gardiner that she is shocked and upset about the letter. Personally, she found it very unchristian, malicious and full of hate. Mrs Harris stated that was all she had to say, and she might take it up.

Cllr Price thought that care is needed about the labels used to describe people and it must always be respectful and secondly as far as canvassing he had stood in six district and County elections and he assured the Parish Council that as far as the major parties are concerned, they are very much told and encouraged to phone the electorate on the voting day to make sure they get the vote out and to contact everybody. Cllr Price personally goes round the polling stations but had never talked to any member of the public inside and he does not approach them outside because he feels once they have arrived at the polling station that is for them to make their mind up.

Dr Bacon stated that he had thirty years of being a Labour Party candidate and canvassing for them here and other parts of Norfolk and was well aware of what the rules are.

- 5.2** Email from Mrs J Roberson, circulated. Dr Bacon explained that the land concerned is in the civil parish of Sutton and ecclesiastical parish of Hickling, it used to be called Squires Acre and was sold off recently, somebody has bought and apparently is involved with an organisation called Sanctuary Camping to turn it into a camping site. Full details are given on their website. People can use pieces of land for camping purposes for a certain number of days per year without planning permission, there has been no planning application. Mr Read asked if they have doubled the number of days for this year to 56? Mr Hill thought that a longer period was being considered. Mr Harris stated that the rules allow farmers to use their land for camping. However, there is a traffic issue in Plumsgate Road as it is, in his view, the most dangerous road in Catfield. Anything that increases the volume of traffic in that road is not to be recommended. Mr Read stated that traffic, access and the road's state was one of the reasons against a previous application for accommodation. Mr Harris stated that if this comes to any sort of planning the Parish Council should emphasise that they have a dim view of anything that increases traffic in Plumsgate Road. Dr Bacon stated that it is in Sutton, so Sutton Parish Council should be the parish that is consulted if there is any consultation from the District but Catfield would be entitled to, as an adjoining parish, put a comment in as well. Mr Harris replied that if this is the law there is nothing the Parish Council can do, there are no toilet facilities on this site, and it is close to an SSSI. Water is the key issue in the village and any sniff of sewage would be extremely damaging and wrong.

Dr Bacon went on to say that the other aspect that he thought was wrong, he was not sure whether planning rules applied or not, is that he thought the idea of this camping dispensation for farmers is to help farmers to diversify a bit by having a temporary camp site, if this was an established farmer who was using a piece of land for that purpose he thought it was different from somebody specifically buying a small acre of land thinking that is a good place to have a camp site because it is not diversification and helping farming it is a speculative venture to think a piece of land would make a good camp site. Mr Read asked if they look like genuine holiday people or travellers? Dr Bacon replied that there is no one there at the moment, it is just a field and has recently had a gate put on it. Mr Read was concerned that the people who use the site might be travellers, and we could get overrun with them.

Mr Harris proposed that a letter be sent to NNDC raising concerns with regard to the increase in traffic and access, as this is exacerbating something which is already a problem this was seconded by Mr Filgate with all in agreement. **Action Point Clerk to write to NNDC.** Mr Filgate also suggested that an email should be sent to Mrs Roberson to say that the Parish Council would be writing to NNDC. **Action Point Clerk to respond to Mrs Roberson.**

**5.3** Urgent. Dr Bacon read out a letter from NNDC proposing a change of name for Canon Wake Court to Willow Court. He also read a letter from a man giving further details about the change. Noted. The Parish Council agreed that the name should be changed.

## **6. To consider planning matters**

**6.1** Response from Flagship Housing – Lea Road. It was agreed that no further discussion was necessary until a planning application had been received. Mr Harris stated that there was no point in having a public meeting until there is an application from Flagship and then see if Cllr Price could get someone to chair a public meeting. No information has been received yet. Cllr Price has asked Flagship to let Duncan Baker MP and himself know when the application goes in. He will be discussing the application with the County Highways team and also the flood resilience team to ensure that they investigate thoroughly and make a comment.

**6.2** Email from Mr Snelling – Lea Road. This email relates to HGVs using New Road and Lea Road for entering Traymaster. New Road is prone to flooding and is narrow in places.

Mr Harris stated that Mr Snelling's email indicates hazards with regard to traffic which are independent to any planning application, if planning is granted it will get worse. This needs to be brought to the attention of Highways, to consider the issues and kept on file. The bollards have been repeatedly knocked down. It was agreed to send the email on to Highways. **Action Point clerk to send the email to Highways.**

Mr Snelling (a parishioner) stated that further information had come to light and he would send an updated email to the clerk.

Dr Bacon stated that this had cropped up years ago, around twenty years ago there had been issues with Traymaster which some of the Parish Council had been discussed with Highways and the manager of Traymaster.

Mr Harris stated that if planning permission is given for Lea Road, Highways would need to do something, this point has not been addressed by Flagship.

Mrs Gardiner asked if there is evidence of how many lorries are doing this, is it daily, several times a day but Mr Snelling replied that it is not possible to say without actually asking the company itself.

Mr Read stated that it is not just Traymaster where there is a problem there is also the chicken farm, if there is an emergency a vehicle coming into New Road it might not be able to get passed a lorry which is manoeuvring and this might be the difference between living and dying if it was an ambulance. The lorries take several minutes to manoeuvre.

Mr Snelling (a parishioner) stated that the road floods close to the A149, vehicles coming into New Road in the dark often do not see the large puddle, drivers panic and brake.

A member of the public stated that the previous week she witnessed a HGV coming out of Traymaster and had to stop, it was as good ten minutes and the lorry was coming out not reversing in.

- 6.3** Letter from Greenoaks Residents Association. Dr Bacon has spoken to the person who sent in the letter. He explained to her how the bund came to be and its purpose. In 1990s the Parish Council met NNDC when there were complaints about the Industrial Site. It was agreed with NNDC that the Industrial Estate should be part housing and a large bund should be created to prevent noise and visibility. Anyone who bought a house would know that their property would be backed by the bund. The original developer sold the bund to new owners of the Industrial Estate but had sold off parts of the bund to the adjoining houses. Parts of the bund are entirely owned by the Industrial Estate; parts have one slope owned by the householder and one slope owned by the Industrial owner. The owner of the Industrial Estate is refusing to sell off any more of the bund or would only sell at a very large price.

The Residents Association is asking what can be done, they have tried speaking to the NNDC Enforcement Officer and it boils down to the bund itself to those people managing to get sight of the original planning application which would have, possibly, a Section 106 Agreement regarding the bund, who owns and maintains it and the legalities of the bund. NNDC apparently cannot find anything to do with the legality of the legal conditions associated with the bund.

Mr Harris agreed this was a sensible approach, NNDC should have this information. However, the planning website always seems to be down, and they seem to lose past applications. The Parish Council should support the Residents Association.

Dr Bacon stated that the Parish Council could write to NNDC asking them to urgently find the original conditions relating to the bund. **Action Point clerk to write to NNDC**

There is a fence on top of the bund which also helps with sound prevention. Cllr Price stated that the structure at the top of the bund might come under a Party Wall legislation. Dr Bacon was concerned that if the Industrial Estate was developed as housing, presumably all parties concerned would have no problem with the bund being removed.

Mr Read stated that he understood it was a condition of the build to have the fence and bund and he understood that the bund belonged to what was the original Mushroom Site. Dr Bacon replied that some of the bund had been sold to individual properties.

Mr Filgate suggested that the resident should be informed of the Parish Council's actions. **Action Point Clerk to write to the Residents Association.**

- 6.4** Planning application PF/21/1426 2 Elderbush Lane (circulated). No objection.

- 6.5** An application had been received for Wood Street Farm, but it was agreed to discuss this at the next meeting. Previously a Prior Notification Application had been received but turned out not to be appropriate and had to be a full planning application which it now is. Mr Harris stated that he was concerned about Plumsgate Road, a most dangerous road in Catfield and the volume of traffic using it and would like to know what number of horses was approved on the original planning application and are they complying. The site is expanding. There is a difference between B & B horses, where the owner must feed them and look after them and full board horses, the latter require less cars.

Dr Bacon stated that the application is for covering a muck heap to comply with Government regulations about nitrates. Mr Harris replied that it could because it is a big cover over a muck heap, the issue is that place has been growing using the agricultural light approach so that no one knows, the resident up there doesn't even

know it is happening, and it has been growing like topsy and the issue is the road. The weakness of the place is the road. The Parish Council ought to know how many horses were approved because the concern Mr Harris has is that they give planning permission/conditions but never control them. Mr Harris hoped that the information could be gained but perhaps NNDC have lost that as well.

## **7. Environmental Matters**

**7.1** To consider the siting of a new dog bin. Mr Harris explained that Mr Edwards had tried to put together evidence and this should be adopted, this ought to be dealt with and decided. Mr Edward's information is consistent with Mrs Gardiner's proposal.

Ms Johnson reported that she had spoken to the resident on the corner of Thorn Road who was not happy to have the dog bin moved near to her garden. She had also tried to see the resident at the Old Chapel, but they had not been in. Mrs Gardiner had suggested a dog bin should be placed near to the church. Ms Johnson stated that the problem may be solved if the Council accepted to have the bin positioned at the church and the other bin near the oak tree in Back Lane. There would then be two opposite corners of that walk covered with bins. Those walking in School Road could use the bin at the church. This would solve the problems and the Council would only need to buy one new bin and revisit this in six months to see if another bin was needed.

Dr Bacon stated that in fact this would be doing away with the bin near the Chapel and having one instead at the church and one at the oak tree in Back Lane/Dale Lane. Mr Harris suggested that a bin should be put at the oak tree and suggested one at the church, and Mr Edwards had a good point about the playing field, one should be put there as well. Mr Harris suggested a decision regarding the Back Lane bin should be deferred until Mr Edwards was present. The only weakness in the argument is the one that is most used is being done away with.

The clerk stated that the NNDC are expecting a response regarding the Back Lane bin the following day and they had also offered to empty the bins twice a week through the summer months if the Parish Council would meet the payment for one. This was agreed.

Mr Hill thought it would be better to have green bins if possible.

Mr Harris stated that the bin opposite the Old Chapel is well used and smells, it is also overfilled. He suggested that Ms Johnson and Mr Edwards should see if they can find somewhere to put this bin.

A member of the public asked if people realised the bin lid had been broken for years and it had not been emptied. Dr Bacon stated the bin had been there for many years and apart from when the post tipped over there had been next to no complaints about it. NNDC had admitted that Serco had failed to empty to bin.

Mrs Harris (a parishioner) stated that whoever had decided to put the bin opposite the Chapel, it was a very poor place.

Mr Harris stated that NNDC now have the message and this needs to be dealt with.

It was agreed to purchase new dog bins for the church, near to the oak tree in Back Lane and the recreation field. Mr Read stated that there were two cars and lots of dogs and it looks like the recreation ground is used for dog training. The dog bin at the recreation field needs to go near to the gate.

**7.2** To consider a new refuse bin at the recreation ground. The clerk had circulated details of a litter bin and the costs for emptying it. Mr Hill asked after all this time of not having a bin here why do we suddenly need one. Mr Filgate stated that there was a considerable amount of rubbish left in the undergrowth when they did a litter pick. Mr Read stated that there was rubbish hidden in the brambles. Mr Filgate proposed that a litter bin should be put at the recreation field, this was seconded by Mr Read with all in agreement.

Ms Johnson suggested that an article should be put in the magazine reminding people that there are fines for littering.

**7.3** To consider the email regarding Johnny Crowe's Staithe. Dr Bacon explained that there is a live aboard squatter at Johnny Crowe Staithe, he had been in touch with the BA Officers and the Senior Ranger who knows the person. They suggested that the person would probably respond to a pleasant request to move on. He had been visited by Broads Beat and a Ranger. Dr Bacon had circulated an email but received no responses. He suggested that Mr Filgate and he would go and speak to the person and ask them to move, if anyone else would like to join them they would be welcome. Dr Bacon explained that this is part of the Staithe and registered common, it is Open Access land, none of this would apply if he was a few yards upstream. It is unfair on those who are paying for their moorings. Dr Bacon suggested that the friendly approach is taken first.

Mr Harris asked if the person had created some form of right against the Parish Council, he was not concerned so long as there is no right against the Parish Council. The Parish Council had already agreed to develop Johnny Crowe Staithe in the future. Dr Bacon stated that in 2011 the land was registered with the Land Registry as belonging to the Parish Council. Dr Bacon replied that if the person does not move formal notice can be given as the Parish Council owns the site and it is registered to the Parish Council.

Mr Read asked if the person was blocking access to the dyke, Dr Bacon replied that it depends on how the boats are positioned, it is not easy to get passed sometimes to launch.

**7.4** To consider new dog bin sites. Already discussed above.

## **8. To Review & Accept Policies**

8.1 Standing Orders

8.2 Financial Regulations

8.3 Risk Management Policy

Dr Bacon explained that there had been a meeting about policies the previous week which was not a formal Parish Council meeting to discuss issues regarding the policies. Mr Read stated that he was under the understanding that most of this was already sorted out when the meeting had been held. Ms Johnson replied that the meeting to discuss the policies, now they need to be voted on formally. Dr Bacon stated that the other meeting was not an official meeting of the Parish Council, it was a gathering to discuss the issues about the policies so we could then come to this meeting and instead of spending half an hour thrashing out each one, the Parish Council could then hopefully just formally adopt the policies.

Mr Harris stated he had done the mark-up for all of these, and he was very happy for these three policies to be adopted and he was the one who did the work they should all be accepted as taking into account of what was talked about the previous week. Mr Harris went on to say that it is best practice to review these policies annually, they had not been agreed for a number of years. The Parish Council is split and that is why there is a problem. This is why there are problems and why he has been handed up or his wife had been handed up twice in six months. This is why there is a problem in the Council. This demonstrates how we can resolve it because the meeting was offline and because he had done the work we managed to agree all of them. There had been an attitude which goes back to 2013, NNDC wrote saying about a new standards regime asking if the Parish Council would like a visit from an officer to explain to them. It was agreed that the Parish Council already knows a lot of the topic but it was decided that Catfield would host a meeting with the neighbouring parishes. This is the problem, if we could have actually used the resources for example himself as he has the ability to go through things and take time. You can get things done but it is the attitude of mind that has blocked that and that is why the suggestion of the 360 meeting is still needed. There is an absence of trust which was apparent in the first half of the meeting. If councillors could work

constructively together then they would work better together. The 360 is needed, it is not about training, it is about actually having this sort of conversation and how we work constructively together, this is a good example. The policies should be accepted, they are now up to date. We need to look at the Data Protection Policy, clearly we need to sort out the Code of Conduct but that should be done last. Mr Edwards is a good resource; the Parish Council should use the resources.

Mr Read thought that what was talked about here the 360 is urgently needed to get things sorted out, to get the whole Parish Council on a footing where they are singing off the same hymn sheet instead of bickering at each other. Mr Read stated that Dr Bacon was not helping much, he might say he agrees but he has not helped much. Mr Read went on to say that over the three issues on number 8 he thought the Parish Council as a whole should thank Mr Harris for all the work, he has done for them, sorting them all out. Dr Bacon agreed, he is happy to cooperate and use anybody.

Ms Johnson thought that there should be a meeting, but it should be focused on how we use each other's strengths in the best way, we need to put a lot of things under the bridge, move forward together. We have people who are specialist at farming, money, business. There are a lot of skills around the Parish Council that should be used in a better way than start working as a team. Ms Johnson stated that part of her reluctance to do that meeting was that she did not want to go through the hassle and headache of two hours bickering and if it could be agreed to go in there with the right attitude, move forward for the parish and for when we get our award and complete training recognition then we could be very proud of what has been done. The meeting should be held in July in the village hall.

Mr Read stated that the 360 was a matter of urgency because going back to earlier in the meeting what was said was a witch hunt, we have a man there very well educated in the money world, the Parish Council are not taking advantage of the advice and the help of such a person. There is a farmer, he can give a lot of advice on land problems and such like. Everybody has their own expertise, but it seems everything bypassed Mr Harris. Mr Read stated that Dr Bacon had not helped the matter. Mr Hill agreed that a 360 should be held and there is a lot that Mr Harris says that he agrees with and there are somethings he says that Mr Hill does not agree with. Mr Hill stated he does not have a problem with anyone on the Council, he thought it was a good Council and it can be constructive. Mr Read stated that there will never be one hundred percent agreement because different people have different views on any given subject. But the differences can be sorted out amicably not how it has been done in the past. Mr Hill replied that out of the differences you often end up with a better result because there would be more input from different people. Mr Harris does not think Gabbie is the right person to facilitate the meeting.

Mr Filgate said that there are two things on the table, we should be looking at agenda item 8 which is important and the 360 which is also needed.

Dr Bacon thanked Mr Harris for putting the documents together. Ms Johnson proposed that all the above documents should be adopted, this was seconded by Mrs Gardiner with all in agreement.

Various dates were discussed for the 360 meeting. Mr Read asked if anyone had ideas about somebody who would arbitrate/facilitate the meeting. Mr Harris asked if the Council would like Cllr Price to chair the meeting. Mr Read stated that Cllr Price may also be very good at advice on certain matters which could be discussed. Mr Harris thought it was difficult because Dr Bacon was one of the prime players. Dr Bacon thought from his point of view he did not want to chair the meeting and probably from other people's point of view they would not want him to chair the meeting. Mr Read replied that Dr Bacon is one of the Parish Council but

he should also be there to feel that he could say what he wished to say and he would probably feel restricted if he was the Chairman. Dr Bacon replied that being the Chairman one is restricted to running the meeting, the time is taken up with concentrating on running the meeting rather than fully participating in the debates. Mr Harris suggested Cllr Price because he knows the Council. It was not possible to agree a date so the clerk would put out a Doodle Poll asking for availability in July for dates to hold the 360 meeting. **Action Point Clerk.**

## **9. Finance**

**9.1** Approval of the Certificate of Exemption. Mr Harris proposed acceptance of this certificate, seconded by Mr Jordan with all in agreement. This was signed by the Chairman and RFO.

**9.2** To note the Internal Audit report. Mr Harris stated that item L, the authority publishes information on a website, the webpage should be up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the Transparency Code for Small Authorities. This has not been done so the box should be crossed. Mr Harris stated that if there was a tick, tick, tick when it actually it is clearly nothing like this it makes the whole exercise suspect. Mr Harris stated that because of the size of the expenditure if there was a risk of fraud it would be trivial. You cannot have that the website is ok when it is non-existent. The website needs to be discussed at the 360. These things needs pointing out to the internal auditor, the clerk will do this. The form was amended. Mr Harris then proposed this could be accepted, seconded by Mr Read with all in agreement.

**9.3** Approval of the Governance Statement of the Annual Return. Acceptance proposed by Mr Harris, seconded by Ms Johnson and signed by Chairman and Clerk.

**9.4** Approval of the Accounting Statements of Annual Return. Agreed, proposed by Mr Harris, seconded by Mr Read and signed by the Chairman and RFO.

**9.5** To approve payments, including clerk's salary. Two cheques were presented for payment:

101371 for £106 payable to HMRC for tax.

101372 for £40 payable to the clerk for reimbursement of ICO payment.

Clerk's salary by standing order. Mr Filgate proposed these payments be made, seconded by Ms Johnson with all in agreement. The clerk had explained that her tax code had changed and therefore the amount paid to HMRC was different from previous, but the overall amount remained the same. She had drafted a letter to change the standing order at the bank which was agreed and signed.

Mr Filgate asked when the clerk's salary was last reviewed, Dr Bacon replied that it was a long while ago and this is something the Parish Council needs to be looking at. Mr Filgate suggested that with the amount of work and being RFO this should be done. Dr Bacon stated that as the clerk is undergoing extra training for a higher qualification as a clerk deserves recognition. Mr Harris stated that there should also be a performance review and employment contract. Dr Bacon replied that these things had been done previously by Mr Beckley and Mr Partridge.

The current account stands at £2352.22, the number two account at £629.52 and the BPA at £22180.76.

## **10. Progress reports for information**

10.1 Village hall. The hall is now open and complies with all the Covid regulations.

10.2 All Saints Church. The grass is under control and the wildflowers can now be trimmed.

10.3 Poors Trust. Nothing to discuss.

10.4 Training. The Training Officer had sent an email to the clerk and Ms Johnson outlining two options and associated costs. Ms Johnson told the Training Officer that she wanted a blended training session. Then we can put in some areas that we particularly want to cover, there is also another session which goes towards the award that the Council can have. The clerk suggested that the course which Mr Harris attended 'Being an Effective Councillor' over two sessions would be better so that everyone received the same training and cover more

things that are relevant. It was agreed to opt for 'Being an Effective Councillor' at £500 plus VAT at the beginning of September. **Action Point clerk to confirm with Norfolk ALC.**

10.5 Speedwatch. Ms Johnson stated that the SAM2s come back to Catfield next week and asked for a volunteer put them up. Mr Read will do this.

Mr Filgate stated that parishioners had complained regarding speeding through the village. Interestingly some chippings have just been done with signs saying 20mph, lots of people speeding through and there are still problems with people using the village for speeding. Speed is causing a lot of concern particularly those living on The Street and have to step out into traffic. People need reminding they should go slower. It is not acceptable to be told, as has been stated by Highways and/or the police, in the past, that there is no problem until someone has been killed. Solutions should be sought around the speeding, the flashing signs are being ignored. Evidence is being gathered from the SAM2 signs. Ms Johnson would like to meet with Highways to talk about a couple of places where should would like to put the camera and suggested those as named places but there are no suitable posts. Ms Johnson would like to have a site near to the school and the other along New Road but there is no suitable post to get visibility. This might also help to count the traffic in New Road.

10.6 School. Ms Johnson reported that the school is having a 'staycation' in July. Sports Day will take place with Year 6 parents attending.

10.7 Mr Read stated that there had been a work order to put in to cut the grass in Long Lane. Mr Read stated it has been pointed out to him that cutting the grass was difference to cutting the brambles down. Do Highways value the life of bugs, beetles and everything above the life of people, could we ask Highways who they value the most whether it is a child walking to school or a beetle running through a pieces of grass. There is still a problem with the brambles on the corner of Long Lane, they are dangerous. **Action Point clerk to contact Highways.**

11. **Date of the next meeting.** Agreed for Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> July at 7pm in the village hall.

12. **Any Other Business/Information.** Nothing to discuss.

The meeting closed at 9.35pm.

.....  
Chairman

.....  
Date