

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL HELD at 7pm on
WEDNESDAY 1st JUNE 2022 IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Attendance: Mr Read in the Chair, Mr Harris, Mr Edwards, Ms Johnson, Mr Filgate, Mr Hill, Dr Bacon, Cllr Taylor (County Councillor), Mrs Cunningham (Clerk) and sixteen members of the public.

The meeting is being recorded for the purpose of producing the minutes.

Meeting started: 19.05

1. Apologies and approval of absences

Dr Harris (holiday), Mr Jordan (working), Mrs Gardiner (resigned), Cllr Groves-Jones (family commitment), Cllr Price did not attend meeting.

Mr Read advised Mrs Gardiner had resigned from the parish council due to other commitments and she had wished the council all the best and Mr Read wished Mrs Gardiner the best with all she is doing.

Mr Read advised that Cllr Taylor contacted him earlier to ask if agenda item 6.4 could be brought forward as he had another meeting to attend. All agreed, with no objections.

6.4 Cllr Taylor

Cllr Taylor provided a brief update on the following.

- i) There was uncertainty regarding the ownership of certain grass area which had overgrown, Cllr Taylor confirmed this belonging to Victory Housing, which he will try to sort, when he gets time.
- ii) Regarding the mental health impact of some residents of Lea Road, Cllr Taylor raised the issue further with the District Council. The written response was not ideal, so he met the District Council office to have a chat as the situation is still ongoing. They said they are trying to resolve the nutrient neutrality issues. There is no update yet when that will be.
- iii) Cllr Taylor happy for his details to be added to the village magazine.
- iv) Cllr Taylor asked for any questions. Mr Edwards explained there had been a reply from Phillip Rowson, regarding planning app PF/21/1749, where he states, "The case officer has written to request an extension of time to May 2022 for this case to be considered" and as it was now 1st June, what this means. Cllr Taylor said he has questioned this and was told this is more for guidance and that, in extenuating circumstances, this can be extended. Mr Harris asked Cllr Taylor to help explain what a 'call in' means in the sentence included in the same email, referenced above, which reads "under a call-in request from the Planning Portfolio Holder Cllr Toye". Cllr Taylor said, if there was a new minor planning application raised tomorrow, it could be delegated to the officers to decide but they will be asked if they want to call it in to the planning committee where this will be voted on by members. Mr Harris said there was a concern that the residents of Lea Road should be advised when it comes up and asked Cllr Taylor if this is possible, which he agreed he would. Cllr Taylor said that until the nutrient neutrality issue is decided, the planning council are not prepared to do anything. Mr Harris said they need to focus on Lea Road as the issue has been ongoing and not use this as an excuse. Cllr Taylor appreciates and understands this has been going on for a long while.

2. Declarations of interests

Mr Harris declared an interest in the Broads Authority, but unclear if needed, as he has no pecuniary interest. He said his decision will be the same as the neighbours – the Poors Trust.

Dr Bacon said he will declare an interest when we get to that item as well, on behalf of the Poors Trust.

Ms Johnson said three of the Councillors had interests as members of the Catfield Environmental Group. Mr Harris questioned this as they do not have a pecuniary interest, which Ms Johnson agreed, but said she thought it was worth mentioning.

3. To discuss co-option of new parish councillor

Mr Edwards said he was concerned about the time the PC had allowed for people to respond, as the vacancy appeared in the magazine and on the website. He said they would not be able to go ahead tonight as this would go against the rules. In addition, there is another vacancy to fill and there is a shortage of councillors at the meeting tonight, so maybe unfair. Mr Read confirmed the advert had been in the parish magazine for 2 months running. Mr Harris said we would not be able to co-opt two people, as the second vacancy has only been announced tonight. Mr Read said the PC would need to re-advertise in case anyone calls an election for the 2nd position. Dr Bacon confirmed the 1st position has already been confirmed as a co-opt and the 2nd must be advertised, as 10 people may call for an election. Mr Read confirmed as agenda item says 'discuss' then the PC are not able to co-opt tonight for the 1st vacancy.

Mr Edwards suggested all submissions should be presented at least 3 days before the meeting. Mr Hill agrees that there should be an end date for all application i.e., 3 days before, so applications in by 3rd July. Dr Bacon proposed we hold the co-option for 2 councillors at the 6th July meeting, unless North Norfolk receive a request for an election, for the second position. The vacancy will be advertised on the noticeboard, District notified, it would be advertised in the Parish magazine, so no reason we would not be able to co-opt for both at the next meeting. Applications should be received by 3rd July. Mr Harris seconded but said it should be clear in the magazine, this is for a 2nd vacancy otherwise it may be confusing. **Action: Mr Harris offered to write description for advert in magazine.** Full agreement.

4. To approve as accurate minutes of the previous meeting.

Mr Filgate said although he was not at the meeting, there are a couple of typos. Last paragraph of item 7, matters arising, says 'it too wet' instead of 'is too wet' and 'principal' should be 'principle'.

Ms Johnson said there were errors with the attendees, then she noticed she was reading last years minutes instead of the previous meetings minutes.

All in agreement with the minutes. Chairman signed.

5. To approve as accurate minutes of 2021 Annual Parish Meeting

All the Parish Council considered them, and in their view, they are correct, however, these will have to be officially approved at the next Annual Parish Meeting in 2023. **Action: Clerk to obtain approval in 2023 Annual Meeting.**

6. Public participation session (10 minutes)

6.1 Public

A parishioner thanked the Parish Council for the installation of the Village Hall ramp and personally thanked Mr Read for his help.

A second parishioner thanked the Parish Council for writing a letter regarding the trees, which have solved the issue. Mr Read said the Council try their best for everybody, sometimes not always successful, but they try.

6.2 Cllr Grove-Jones – Absent from meeting

6.3 Cllr Price – No apology received but absent from meeting

6.4 Cllr Taylor – Discussed after agenda item 1.

7. Matters Arising

Report on outstanding actions from the previous meeting

- i) 6.1. Dangerous branches overhanging road – Fir Dene.
Dr Bacon and Mr Jordan went to review area, as Poors Trust representatives, and they could only see one overhanging branch, which they would arrange to trim. They could not see any Poors Trust trees that were a highway issue.
Letter to be sent to parishioner explaining the above. **Action: Clerk.**
- ii) 7. Mr Hill offered to level off ground and top the brambles by the playing field.
Mr Hill confirmed the ground has been levelled but still to top the brambles. This will be actioned.
- iii) 11.3 Storage of records to be passed to Chairman. Dr Bacon produced several records. Orders for contributions from the overseer of the poor to the PC 1895-1925, the declaration of acceptance of office (2 books) 1894-1987, the counts book 1894-1996 and the minutes book 1894-1937. All these records have been photographed by Dr Bacon. He still has 2 more minutes books from 1937-1990's which he will pass to the Chairman, at the next meeting, once he has photographed them. **Action: Dr Bacon.**
In addition, the Clerk passed all records received from the previous Clerk to the Chairman. Mr Read asked if everyone would be happy for him to look through all the records passed to him before they are forwarded to storage. Dr Bacon confirmed that once records are passed to the Records Office, they produce an index of what they had received. Once index received, Mr Harris said it would be helpful to have a list so they could put on the website.
- iv) Mr Filgate added that Cllr Price discussed speeding in the village, at the last meeting and he would like this to be added, so it's not forgotten. Ms Johnson confirmed they have the camera back now. A parishioner added that it wasn't just the main road, it was also the back lanes and that 2 pairs of hedgehogs have been released which is concerning, with the speeding traffic. Dr Bacon suggested someone should attend a police meeting to highlight the speeding in Catfield. Ms Johnson said that you must be a representative and can't just attend but she and a few others are representatives, and she will find out when the next meeting will take place. She also said that she needs more poles as she has 6 locations where the camera can go but can't use them all as they don't all have the correct size poles. She has spoken to Cllr Price about funding for new posts, which he will look at. **Action: Ms Johnson to confirm date of next Police meeting.**

8. Planning

- 8.1 Lea Road
Mr Harris said this item was covered with Cllr Taylor. He said there is still no conclusion due to council using blanket excuse for not making a decision. Cllr Taylor agreed that he would make sure, the residents of Lea Road would know when they take it to committee. No action the PC can do for now. Mr Filgate asked if a letter could be sent to Cllr Taylor to remind him. **Action: Clerk**
- 8.2 Planning application PF/22/1255 - Parkers Close. See 8.3
- 8.3 Planning application PF/22/1283 - Greenacres. All councillors seen 8.2 and 8.3. Mr Harris said it depends whether the neighbours have issues with the application. If not, then it is up to North Norfolk to determine whether these meet the correct building regulations.

- 8.4 Planning application BA/2022/0184/FUL - Snipe Marsh. Mr Harris said clearly people are trying to control this invasive species and if the Broads Authority think this will work, then it should not be down to the PC to say we have a different view. Dr Bacon confirmed the area in question for anyone who didn't know where Snipe Marsh is. Mr Harris confirmed it was in the Catfield Public Enquiry, but the Broads Authority had to withdraw the evidence provided a week before it went to court because it was unsound.

There was a discussion re Catfield Marsh. Mr Read said a letter should be sent saying that this was 'dropped on us' at very short notice with no time for discussion. Dr Bacon said their argument will probably be that this began 2 years ago, and this is just a modification of it, but we haven't been told about the modifications. Mr Edwards said that 3 days to consult was not enough and said the Parish Council should write to them saying, it's not satisfactory and you haven't fulfilled obligations. Mr Harris said he has no pecuniary interest in this, but is a neighbour, just like the Poores Trust and they discussed this 2 years ago. He explained, after the Catfield Public Enquiry, the RSPB managed to obtain a large grant of money to rectify some of the damage that had been done by inaction of the Butterfly Trust. They proposed a major scheme. Mr Harris said he submitted a well-documented case and worked closely with the RSPB speaking to them directly, and they recognised the 2020 proposal was too much, particularly as closure of the public water supply in Ludham means the ground water levels are rising. The RSPB then said they cut it dramatically back. He continued, the problem is they haven't consulted with the PC or the neighbours. Dr Bacon declared a double interest, as Catfield United Charities owns the adjoining Great Fenn and Little Fenn, and he is still listed as honorary warden of the Butterfly Trust and said the problem is the acidic swirls of stagnant moss which encourage clumps of birch. Mr Harris added the reduction of alkaline ground water to the Fenn enabled acidic rainwater to penetrate deeper into the Fenn, which is one of the key findings in the Enquiry. He said the water issue and the management of Fenn issues are particularly relevant to the village because of the unique circumstances we find ourselves, which are reflected in our new environmental policy.

Mr Edwards proposed a letter be sent to the Broads Authority but after hearing from Mr Harris, the content of the letter needs careful consideration. Dr Bacon seconded but said we don't need to go into technical details but from a Parish Council view is that we were only given 3 days' notice before the meeting, so no time for consultation, which is a procedural mistake. Mr Harris said you can add that, they should have consulted with the Parish Council and understand you also did not consult with the neighbours. He did not think a notice had been put up either. All in agreement to the proposal. **Action: Mr Edwards, in consultation with Mr Harris, to draft letter to the Broads Authority.**

9. Discuss outcome of meeting on 9th May re; Catfield United Charities area of land for possible allotments

Dr Bacon said he was at the meeting but has declared an interest. Mr Harris said it was a very helpful meeting and we should be supporting the idea of having allotments. Mr Harris proposed, we go back to the United Charities saying we welcome their constructive proposal, we will wish to take on the site for 2 years to test market the central area, then review the progress at the end of the 2 years and decide the next steps, but under no circumstances could we take on the residual risk of clearing the site. Dr Bacon said from the Catfield United Charities point of view, there is a piece of land that is badly overgrown from the previous tenant, due to ill health and thought this was a good opportunity for the Parish Council. The

previous tenant paid £180 but they would supply to the Parish Council for 5 years rent free. Mr Read said there is an area that can be used as it is, for around 6-8 plots, but if more interested it would cost considerable money to clear the rest. Dr Bacon agreed that the worst part of the site is the lowest, nearest the Smea which has a lot of invasive white poplar growing into it and better if whole site could be cleared. Mr Edwards said he spoke to Mr Jordan on the site, and Mr Jordan estimated the cost could be around £1000 and a few days to clear the site. Mr Read said the real cost would be on the overhead tree work, otherwise some plots would not see daylight. Mr Edwards suggested that if the Poors Trust covered the cost to clear the site, then the council could start to pay rent straight away, as they would recover the money from their tenants. Mr Edwards said he would rather it be a 5-year commitment with a 2-year get-out clause. Mr Harris reiterated his previous proposal adding if you wish to adjust to add a 5-year commitment with a 2-year get-out clause, then it's clearly a better option. Mr Filgate seconded. Dr Bacon abstained and all others in agreement.

10. Correspondence

10.1 To discuss email regarding Harry Cox

All seen the email. Mr Read went on Monday and Tuesday to see the owners of the premises now, to ask if they have any objection but they are away on holiday. Mr Edwards said that it all depends on the owners now, so it has to go on hold until they can be contacted. Mr Harris said he was slightly nervous as the person requesting the blue plaque seem to suggest the Parish Council take on the project and the champion should be the person putting it forward and the Council should not have to put any money toward this.

10.2 To discuss Catfield Environmental Group project at the corner of New Road and The Street

Mr Filgate said they had a meeting, looked at some proposals and been told by Highways that the various steps must be followed by the Parish Council. Mr Edwards said that while the Group are up and running then there would be little to be done by the Parish Council however if the group were to fold, then we would have responsibilities. Dr Bacon asked if there are any neighbours/parishioners that don't like the idea that has been suggested. Mr Read queried the boundary of the work and the parishioner confirmed there is a cars-length, to take into consideration of any residents' car parking.

A parishioner asked if the area where the cars are parked is a designated parking area. Mr Read said he didn't think they were. Mr Harris said there is a gentleman there that runs a business and has used the space for many years, and as this is his livelihood, one needs to bear this in mind. A second parishioner said when they were measuring the site some of the residents spoke to them and they seemed in favour of it. Mr Edwards stressed that the proposal today is just about whether the Parish Council agree to completing the forms. The parishioner said they are dependant on the PC to do so and the PC will need to do some reciprocal maintenance to the site, managing some shrubs and hedges, and benches will need inspecting for safety. Mr Harris said he would be reluctant to the PC taking on a financial commitment, as there is no maintenance budget for something like this. Dr Bacon said if we agreed to this, we would be taken on the residual cost of insurance, grass cutting, maintenance, repairs to street furniture, for the benefit of the community. Mr Harris said before the PC take on any maintenance for the plot, we would need to know what the commitment would be. Ms Johnson said we should separate the two. Dr Bacon agreed that facilitating the paperwork, the residual maintenance would be a separate issue, and this would need to be covered under our insurance policy. Mr Harris said he agreed with Dr Bacon and Ms Johnson, but his proposal would add that the Environmental

Group should advise what they think the project will cost to maintain. **Action: Clerk to complete document and contact Highways by email.**

10.3 **To discuss email re Village Bench**

Mr Read said he put notice on it saying keep off and said, as its beyond repair and dangerous, asked if he should remove it completely. Mr Hill asked if this would be removed with the intention to replace the bench. Mr Read was unsure who put the bench there, but a parishioner said as far as they were aware it was put there by the Village Hall Committee. Dr Bacon said if it is replaced, ownership and future maintenance, should be by the PC and not the Village Hall Committee. Mr Hill asked if the lugs would be removed, to avoid a trip hazard but Mr Read said he would remove them and keep them for a replacement. A parishioner suggested a plastic, recycled bench instead, which Mr Read said was worth a consideration as may be vandal proof. All in agreement to remove with intention to replace bench at later date. **Action: Mr Read.**

11. To discuss and agree tree works at the Village Hall

Mr Edwards unhappy with insurance documents provided by Luke Mann as it does not show what his insurance covers. Mr Hill suggested Mr Edwards compile email direct stating what he wants to see on the policy, this can then be discussed further with Luke Mann. Dr Bacon confirmed that if Mr Edwards is happy with what he receives then everyone is happy to go ahead with the works. **Action: Mr Edwards**

12. Progress reports for information

- 12.1 Village Hall – A parishioner confirmed they are due to have an annual meeting next month. Nothing else to report.
- 12.2 All Saints Church – Dr Bacon said nothing to report other than volunteers are managing to keep on top of the grass cutting.
- 12.3 Poors Trust – Nothing to report. Allotments covered previously.

13. Policies & Procedures

13.1 Storage of documents

Mr Read suggested as Dr Bacon still had a few books to photograph, it would be best to wait until all the documents are compiled together before placing in the County records office. Dr Bacon suggested there should be no closure period to allow public access, if required.

13.2 Agenda items and what is the correct procedure

Item requested by Mr Hill as the Council is inconsistent with how agenda items are dealt with and whether items need to be on the agenda before we discuss it. He said he could not see any clear guidance in the good councillors' guide. Mr Edwards said you can't legally vote on something if not on the agenda, particularly financial. Mr Harris said that all contentious issues should be at the front of the agenda.

Ms Johnson said there are standard items that are there all the time and said that the school used to be on there, perhaps under reports. Dr Bacon suggested 'any others' under Progress Reports. **Action: Clerk to add to future Agendas.**

14. Finance

14.1 To approve payments – all payments approved. All seen invoices.

- 101284 – Clerks salary plus expenses plus £93.13 HMRC outstanding payment paid
- 101285 – The Swallowtail Federation of Church Schools - £277.09. Ms Johnson thanked the Parish Council for paying for the medals and the children loved them.
- 101286 – Information Commissioner £40.00

101287 – BHIB Ltd £560.83

Only one cheque signatory (Dr Bacon) at the meeting, so Mr Edwards agreed to take the cheque book to ask Mr Jordan to sign the cheques as soon as he could and would drop the cheque book into the Clerk.

14.2 Future method of payment of Clerks Salary

Currently paid by cheque, however previous Clerk paid by monthly standing order. Mr Edwards was unsure how it had been paid by standing order before as the HMRC payments would be variable. Mr Read suggested the Clerk have a float for small stationery items/expenses and shows the receipts at each meeting, including the contracted mobile phone payment. **Action: Clerk to speak to previous Clerk to find out how she dealt with variations of salary, if paid by standing order. Clerk to look at how best to run a float.**

Mr Hill asked how Clerks salary compared to previous Clerks salary. Mr Edwards explained Clerk is on a 28-hour contract per month. Mr Read said the hours have been inadequate as we are doing a lot more work now than we ever did, so a lot more work for the Clerk to do. Ms Johnson suggested the Clerk monitor her hours worked. Mr Hill suggested that the discrepancy should be addressed, as the Clerk role is not an easy role. Dr Bacon said that if the Clerk monitors her hours over the 3 months, then she would be back paid for any additional hours and then the pay hours would be adjusted going forward. All in agreement. **Action: Clerk to monitor hours worked.**

14.3 Review banking arrangements/signatures

Mr Read asked Dr Bacon the outcome, but nothing has been actioned as Dr Bacon said he was unsure how to proceed. There are currently only 2 signatories on the account. Mr Edwards suggested a letter be sent from the Parish Council, signed by the 2 signatories asking the bank to amend the details. Mr Read asked if bank statements were sent to previous Clerk, and also if she still has access to the online banking. All agreed letter should be sent. **Action: Clerk to write letter to bank. Dr Bacon to take letter into local branch and ask for guidance when in the branch.**

15. Date of next meeting

To confirm the date of the next meeting, scheduled for 6th July 2022 @ 7pm

16. Any Other Business/Information

No decisions can be under this item, for information purposes

Mr Read said that Adam contacted him regarding cutting the Sandhills and asked if he still needs to do this. Dr Bacon said it still needs to be done. Mr Read said Adam told him that he had been out and cut the grass where the posts are going to be for the bunting.

No other business from Councillors or Parishioners.

Meeting finished at 10.05pm

Chairman: _____

Date: _____