Ellington Parish Council

Minutes of Ellington Parish Council Parish Meeting
Held 4th March 2019 at 7:30 at the Village Hall, Ellington

Present:

Councillors: Cllrs M Chapman, R Lumbers, R Palmer, and D Porter.
Clerk/Dist Cllr: Darren Tysoe
County Cllr: Cllr Ian Gardener

Public: 5

Open Forum

A resident asked if Church Lane and Green Lane road surface could be improved. Members stated that the roads are unadopted by the County Council so there was little that could be achieved unless all households in the road agreed to contribute towards the cost of updating the road surface.

A resident asked how street signs could be updated. The Clerk stated that street signs were generally the responsibility of the District Council and would only be replaced when damaged.

A resident asked if the 30 mph sign on Grafham road could be cleaned. Cllr Chapman offered to do this.

1243. Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Elliott, Walters and McCutcheon. Cllr Chapman was elected Chairman for the meeting.
1244. The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on January 7th 2019 and Planning Meeting Held on 6th February 2019 were both approved.
1245 There were no matters arising from Minutes of the Meeting held on 7th January 2019.
1246. There were no declarations as to disclosable pecuniary, non-disclosable pecuniary or non pecuniary interests in relation to any Agenda item.
1247. Update from District and County Councillors. County Cllr Gardener updated the Council in related to the Japanese Knotweed on Grafham Road. He stated that the CC have scheduled the work for May or June. LHI (Local Highways Initiative) Bids should be with the CC by the beginning of July. There is an interim Highways Manager – Steve Alexander. Joseph Hudson is the engineer who covers Ellington. The CC's share of the Council Tax had risen by 2.99%. Adult and Social Services had risen by around 2%. Bus services will be protected for the rest of the year. East/West rail – the bypass for the St Neots will be the Orange route. Cllr Gardener was asked to chase up when the slip road would be cleared up and also when bollards could be reinstated. As part of the LHI bid, Councillors requested a costing for a footpath across the village green (bottom section, between Parsons Drive, and Green Lane). Cllrs requested that the bollards are reinstated along Grafham Road (by The Green).

    District Cllr updated Members in relation to traffic through Ellington and Grafham due to A1 closures. He had contacted the new A14 Stakeholder Manager, John Birchall to raise concerns regarding significantly increased traffic during the recent A1 weekend closures, including HGV traffic. Mr Birchall supplied a detailed

response, where he apologised for the pressure put on Grafham and Ellington. He explained that a member of the A14 Team drove the route to ensure the correct signage was in place to divert traffic via the A428, A1198 and A14. These included black and yellow signs, mobile message boards, and also some of Highways England's fixed message boards above the carriageway. They also deployed 'unsuitable for HGVs' signs on alternative routes to discourage HGV traffic. Drivers are obviously ignoring signs and relying on their sat navs. The good news is that the last northbound A1 road closure was 2/3rd March. After this, the road closures will be on the southbound A1, (9th/10th, 16th/17th,and 23rd/24th March). It is expected that this will have less impact on Ellington and Grafham as rat-running will be self-defeating, as it will be a longer distance than the diversion. Cllr Tysoe described the new Digital Portal (my.huntingdonshire.gov.uk). This will grow into a one-stop site for residents to access personalised information about benefits, council tax, bin dates, Frequently Asked Questions, etc. The Council is busy converting its forms to an online format, which means that residents can complete forms directly on the portal, rather than having to send forms through the post (which then need to be manually keyed into a computer system). The site is available 24/7, which is clearly of benefit to residents who may otherwise have to take time off to visit the Council during working hours. The portal is evolving weekly, with new forms and functions added on a regular basis. Cllr Tysoe described the plans to implement 'Pay for What You Use" parking charges in Huntingdonshire's Off-Street Car Parks, and the first stage of a major programme of improvements in our off-street car parks was unanimously approved by the District Council's Cabinet at its February meeting. The move to 'Pay for What You Use' charging will, it is hoped, benefit local businesses and our market towns, by encouraging visitors to stay for longer, and not need to rush back to their cars in time for an expiring ticket. A Council Tax increase of 2.6% will mean that an average Band D property will pay £142.16 per year. Due to the current economic climate, the council is faced with reduced government funding levels for 2019/20 compared to previous years, followed by further significant reductions in 2020/21. This means that further efficiencies will need to be found over the next 12 months in preparation for the challenge ahead.

The Council's ruling Group have committed to a policy that any Council Tax increase will be lower than both the most recent State Pension increases and the average increase in local earnings." In the last Financial Year, average wage growth to April 2018 was 3.5% in Huntingdonshire, 4.8% in Cambridgeshire, and 2.7% nationally. Additionally, the minimum increase in State Pensions was 2.6%, due to the government's Triple Lock Policy. A 2.6% increase equates to £3.60 per year for a Band D property, and for most residents it will be less than this.

In due course the Council will be issuing Council Tax bills to all its residents and an average Band D property will total £1,855.38 of which this Council's charge is only 7.7%. However, we do continue to face some tough challenges ahead with Central Government reducing our grant next year, with some grant disappearing altogether the year after.

1248. Finances

a) The Cashbook and Bank Reconciliation as of 31 January 2019 was approved. Proposed by Cllr: Porter and seconded by Cllr Lumbers.

b) To approve other payments and to note payments made since last meeting

1249 Planning Matters

a) Proposal: AMENDED PLANS AND ELEVATIONS RECEIVED Erection of two dwellings with attached garages. Site Address: Land Adjacent The Brambles Thrapston Road Ellington. Reference: 15/00442/FUL

On 6th July, 2015, PC Members recommended REFUSAL of the application for the following reasons:

- Proposed development is too large for the site
- Proposal is too far forward. Its size and location will not be in-keeping with the existing properties on Thrapston Road

- Proposal is too close to the adjacent property, Brambles, resulting in loss of privacy to the owners of Brambles.

- It will appear cramped on the street scene
- Inadequate turning space for vehicles - which will be forced to reverse onto a very busy road

The Parish Council support the principle of development on this site and suggest that an application that is proportionate to the size of the plot, sympathetic to the street scene and existing properties would be more suitable. A shared drive may assist with creating safer access and egress onto Thrapston Road.

With regard to the amended plans, members noted that the proposed dwellings do not appear to have been moved back, though it is noted that the site has been lowered to reduce the impact on the street scene and the effect on neighbours' amenity. Members noted that the access to the adjacent property (Brambles) will also be negatively affected and that the footprint is still too large for the site, again resulting in a cramped street scene as previously observed. Access onto the site and car parking are still poor, as previously observed.

For the above reasons, members again recommend REFUSAL.

b) Proposal: AMENDED PLOT 7/ ADDITIONAL INFORMATION INCL NOISE ECOLOGY LANDSCAPING APPEARANCE Erection of 7 No. dwellinghouses and associated works following demolition of existing buildings. Site Address: Land At Corner Of Thrapston Road And Malting Lane Ellington. Reference: 18/02756/FUL

Members recommended APPROVAL of the application for the same reasons as previously:

The proposal will improve the street scene viewed from Malting Lane, Thrapston Road, and from the High Street

The design and style of homes, including the proposed timber-frame and use of traditional materials is in-keeping with the rural village setting and neighbouring homes, and compliments Grove Cottage, the Listed Building, and the barn-like building that has planning permission on the adjoining plot

The proposal is for varied sized homes, which will provide market housing for families of various sizes

The proposal makes good use of the site, and keeps open the public footpath

The existence of properties at this brownfield site reinstates cottages which were present in the past

In addition, the Parish Council notes the re-calculated noise ecology and welcomes the addition of mature landscaping to assist with the street scene.

1250. Other Matters to consider/updates

a) The completion of the Village Sign was noted.
b) The support of a defibrillator was noted.
c) It was agreed to support the replacement of three benches as a suitable next project, together with village gates. The Clerk was asked to check whether any benches had been donated.
d) Update on Neighbourhood Plan. The Clerk reported that he had attended Grafham PC (in his role as District Councillor) and they are keen to join together with Ellington to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. A date of 28th May (at Grafham Village Hall) has been suggested for a joint meeting.
e) Update on Enforcement issues (if any). None.
f) Update on visit from Highways Engineer.
g) Village Hall Update – a resident and former councillor commented that the flat roof guarantee is coming to an end and also asked whether the toilets should be refurbished.
h) Playing Field Committee Update. The Chairman of the Playing Field Committee gave a presentation setting out plans to redevelop the play equipment. Their aim is to replace the clamber stack, swings and slide with new, robust and hard wearing replacements within 2019. This will ensure the Ellington Playing Fields remain a fun, educational and safe place for years to come. In total the EPFA are looking to raising between £35,000 and £40,000 from grants, contributions from local businesses and EPFA funds/fundraising events to replace these three pieces of equipment with 4 new additions.
a) Neighbourhood Watch Update – None.

1251. Correspondence: Thank you letter for Defibrillator grant, Update from A14 Scheme, Complaints regarding traffic due to A1 closures

1252. Items for discussion at next meeting

1253. Date of next Meeting – Wednesday, 8th May at 7.00 pm (following the Annual Parish Meeting).

Signed Clerk: 1st May 2019

Darren Tysoe, Clerk to the Council, Grove Cottage, Malting Lane, Ellington, PE28 0AA
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