

**Minutes of the Town Council meeting held in The Old School Community Centre at 7.00 p.m.
on Thursday 23rd July 2015**

Present: Cllrs. Paul Bishop (Chair), Alan Parsley, Phil Gryce, Margaret Godwin,
Loveday Perceval-Maxwell, Bob Verguson
Borough Cllr. Alaric Pugh, County Councillor Mary Evans
Clare Ebeling (Town Clerk), Maureen Smith (RFO)
5 parishioners

Before the meeting started Cllr. Bishop asked if anybody intended to record the meeting. One parishioner said he wasn't recording at present but may do at some point during the meeting. Cllr. Bishop asked members of the public to note this should they wish to speak.

Cllr. Bishop proposed that the agenda be changed to take item 10.2a directly after item 4. Copies of the agenda were available for parishioners to enable them to follow proceedings. This was unanimously agreed.

Cllr. Bishop said that before the meeting started he wished to invite any parishioners who have concerns to raise them directly with the Council. He explained that in the last few months there have been many posts on various Facebook pages which are designed to stir up trouble rather than to impart correct information or enter into a dialogue about a particular issue. Often those posting have been ill-informed. The post relating to this evening's meeting on the 'Our Town Clare' Facebook page (calling for parishioners to attend this meeting, which was then copied onto the Christmas Lights Facebook page) says that the only body allowed to take out liability insurance on the Christmas Lights Switch On event is the Town Council. This is completely untrue.

Cllr. Bishop added that the current behaviour of some using Facebook to make unfounded accusations, to spread inaccurate information and generally try to stir things up puts the Town Council and other bodies at a disadvantage as they cannot enter into meaningless debates on the internet. This means that postings on Facebook go unchallenged. In the future Clare Town Council will use its website to publish relevant information to give parishioners the opportunity to see all the information rather than the selective views of a few disgruntled individuals.

With regard to the current debate about the Town Council's Public Liability Insurance, as many of the relevant documents as possible will be published on the Council's website in the coming days.

1 Apologies for absence – Cllrs. Mallows, Marchant & Kimminau – Accepted

2 Register of members' interest – Cllrs. Parsley & Verguson Item 10(2)a.

Section of the meeting open to the public:

3 Police Report – attached report.

PCSO Welford introduced PC Darren Marshall who has now been assigned to Clare, previously at Sudbury.

PC Marshall assured the meeting that emergency calls were being dealt with even with the road closure. For speed of access in emergencies, the Sudbury Police team are

covering Cavendish during the road closure period.

PC Marshall reported the presence of a group of sales people in the area, usually known as “Nottingham Knockers”. They are generally groups of men who purport to be ex offenders selling household items. Members of the public are advised not to buy from them and report to Trading Standards on 0845 040506.

PC Marshall reported that the previous Police Direct update service (by text and email) is no longer active. Those members of the public wishing to take advantage of this service should re-register as this is now being dealt with by a new service provider.

PCSO Welford reported that a football match Police v Clare Youths will take place on the playing fields on 11th August at 3pm.

- 4 Parishioners’ question time** – One parishioner speaking on behalf of the Christmas Lights committee wished to add to the information regarding Public Liability Insurance for the Christmas Lights event. He reported that the Christmas Lights committee had carried out research of 10 companies and believed none would insure a Christmas Tree on the public highway if it was over 3 metres high. He reported that the tree is erected by a contractor, is secure, and a barrier is placed around the tree, the electricity is fitted by a contractor, but is 7 metres high.

Cllr. Bishop responded that the Town Council will check any restrictions with the insurance company.

- 10 ii)a** Cllr. Godwin reported the two recommendations of the Finance Committee: Firstly, that all matters within the Public Liability Insurance Report, other than the cover for the Christmas Lights Switch-On event, had been resolved, therefore the approval of the report was recommended with the Christmas Lights matter to be treated as a separate item.

Secondly, Cllr. Godwin recommended that the Town Council takes the Christmas Lights Switch-On event onto its own public liability insurance policy in line with option two within the recommendations of the Public Liability Insurance Report.

Cllr. Gryce responded that since the Finance Committee agreed these recommendations new information has been received from the insurance broker (dated 21st July 2015) confirming the offer of cover for the Christmas Lights Committee to insure the Switch-On event including cover for the tree.

Cllr. Bishop confirmed that the letter had been received following a conference call he had called with the insurance broker, the RFO and the Clerk to understand the offer of insurance cover for the Christmas Lights Committee. In summary, the broker confirmed that the Christmas Lights Committee had not raised any queries about insuring the tree and had taken out Public Liability Insurance until the end of July. An annual policy, which would cover all Christmas Lights Committee’s activities including the Switch-On event would be offered for the premium of £141. Cllr. Bishop reported that he had specifically asked whether the tree could be covered and was told yes. The broker agreed to confirm the contents of the conversation in writing. Cllrs. have seen the letter as part of the correspondence report.

Cllr. Bishop proposed that the Finance Committee made its recommendations without the full facts and the recommendation should be reviewed. Cllr Perceval-Maxwell seconded the proposal in the light of the new information.

Cllr. Parsley expressed his wish to see the switch on event continue as it has been running for some 20 years. He expressed concern that the tree may not be covered. Cllr. Bishop said that the height of the tree was not discussed with the Insurance Broker but this will be checked.

Cllr. Gryce proposed an amendment to the Finance Committee recommendations:

The matters recommended in the Public Liability Insurance Report have now been resolved and therefore the report is to be recommended for approval.

It is specifically noted that the Clare Christmas Lights Committee will continue with its own Public Liability Insurance. It is also noted that this will mean that all groups operating in Clare are treated in the same way by the Town Council with regard to insurance.

The Town Council reiterates its support for the Christmas Lights Committee and the Switch-On event through continued grant funding and settling invoices on behalf of the Committee.

The Town Council writes to the Chair of the Christmas Light Committee to explain the decision and publishes the letter on the website.'

The revised recommendations were seconded by Cllr. Parsley and approved unanimously.

Cllr. Bishop congratulated the Christmas Lights Committee on their fundraising and the events they organise. He gave assurances that the height of the tree would be preserved.

5 County Councillor's Report – Report attached.

6 Borough Councillor's Report – Cllr. Pugh reported that as we are in a post-election period there is not much to report.

There is a new Transport Portfolio holder who lives locally and is therefore sympathetic to local issues.

On the question of charges relating to “brown bin” collections Cllr. Pugh reported that this was in the very early stages of discussion. Cllr. Bishop requested a more detailed presentation in the future and Cllr. Pugh agreed to arrange this.

End of public section of meeting

7 To approve minutes of previous meetings held on 18th June 2015 and 16th July 2015
The minutes were approved unanimously.

8 To receive an update on actions from the last meeting
All actions have been completed.

9 **Clerk's Report** – See attachment to the minutes.

Clerk

10 **Finance**

- i) The monthly accounts and cash flow report were proposed by Cllr Godwin and approved unanimously.
- ii) Cllr Godwin reported that the Financial Regulations and Finance & Personnel Committee Terms of Reference had been reviewed at the meeting last week and asked that these approved by the Town Council. Approved unanimously.

11 **Correspondence** - see attachment to minutes

The Clerk reported that following receipt of the letter from a parishioner regarding the right to record at a public meeting, she had taken advice from SALC and the Monitoring Officer/legal team at St Edmundsbury Borough Council. Both advisors had approved the draft letter of response which was then forwarded to all Councillors in advance of the meeting.

The Clerk asked for approval of the draft response letter. 5 councillors approved the response, 1 did not.

Cllr Godwin apologised for the misunderstanding regarding the legal position for recording of public meetings.

Clerk

12 **Planning**

None

13 **To receive items for decisions required by Town Council Committees and Working Parties**

Community Working Party – Cllr Perceval-Maxwell reported that the Business Association would still like 'new resident' packs. The Community committee will look to see if they can find a sponsor to fund a folder for the information. The information should also be placed in the Library, shops etc. A revised map of Clare is under construction.

Cllr Perceval-Maxwell

14 **To receive a proposal to cancel the Town Council meeting scheduled for 20th August 2015** – Cllr. Bishop proposed that the full Town Council meeting scheduled for 20th August be cancelled as a number of Councillors will be unable to attend. Approved unanimously

15 **To receive a proposal to seek advice, which might require financial expenditure, on the provision of bye-laws for Clare Castle Country Park and other town council areas of responsibility**

Cllr Gryce

Cllr. Gryce presented a briefing on research he had undertaken to understand the application of bye-laws for the Country Park and elsewhere in Clare:

1. Bye-Laws for the Country Park have lapsed as Suffolk County Council no longer has ownership. The Trust is not a suitable authority for the promulgation and management of bye-laws; only the owner, that is, Clare Town Council has that duty.
2. Horse-riding on local footpaths: Suffolk County Council could take out a TRO to stop this problem, but my understanding is that they will not do so. Local landowners similarly could take out court injunctions against the riders, but

because this would be at their expense they are unlikely to do so. A local bye-law adopted by Clare Town Council would be more effective.

3. The Nuttery has no bye-laws of its own but could be covered by Clare Town Council.
4. Dog fouling could still lie outside this and administered by SEBC, as at present. Alternatively, they could be part of Clare Town Council bye-laws, but more research is required in terms of cost implications for prosecution etc.

Cllr. Gryce proposed that the Town Council authorise him to seek advice, which might require financial expenditure, on the provision of bye-laws for Clare Castle Country Park and other Town Council areas of responsibility to see how Clare Town Council might adopt a set of appropriate bye-laws, and/or adjustment of current bye-laws as necessary.

Should financial expenditure for legal advice be required, this would be requested at a later Town Council meeting. Agreed unanimously

16 To receive agenda items for next meeting.

- (i) Chevron – any suggestions to Cllr Gryce
- (ii) Staffing matters (in camera)
- (iii) S.137 recommendations
- (iv) Media Policy

17 To confirm the date of the next meeting as Thursday 17th September 2015

Attachment to Minutes, Item 3, Police Report

Please see the below crime report for the period 18/06/15 to the 21/07/15:

- X1 Common Assault
- Interference with a Motor vehicle were the bolts on all 4 wheels of a van were undone, this happened overnight between the 18/06/15 and the 19/06/15 while the van was parked in the Clare Country park.
- Theft of a purse which was dropped in the Co-op at 1000 on the 10/07/15 – The investigation is still on-going.
- Theft of an Iron hanging basket which was attached to the front of a property, this happened overnight between the 11/07/15 and the 12/07/15.

Myself and PC Darren Marshall are both on duty Thursday evening and will be attending so will see you then.

Regards

Anthony

Attachment to Minutes, Item 5, County Councillors Report

Report for Clare town council 23 July 2015

HIGHWAYS

Gas Main replacement Cavendish Road/Church Street

As you are aware, work started on 13 July using traffic lights and the road closure was put into force on Saturday evening.

- On Monday 20 July, the first full weekday of working with the road closure there were some snags: National Grid didn't have gatemen available to man the barriers at the works site so they drew in the two Mervyn Lambert gatemen stationed at either end of the A1092. They had to do this because despite all the warning signs, car drivers were getting to Harp Lane – moving the cones and attempting to drive through. There were also complaints from drivers that they had no idea the road was closed.
- I have also heard a report that an ambulance tried to get through the road closure on Monday and had to be diverted. Our Network Assurance team has assured me the set procedure – tried and tested – for notifying the emergency services about the closure has been followed. To the letter.
- Our two inspectors Sarah McGonagle and Nick Blair demanded that the planned 4 strong team of gatemen must be on site every day – and this has been done. The inspectors drove the route from end to end on Monday felt the signage is correct.
- Since then Cllr Vergusson has raised the issue of the parking sign at Harp Lane which advises that parking on the playing fields is available for the country park. While I don't think a shopper is going to get that far and turn round, I do take his point that we must all support our traders. Sarah McGonagle has ordered a new sign and advised all gatemen to tell motorists about the parking so no one should be deterred from coming to Clare because of concerns about parking.
- Our Network Assurance team at SCC, which oversees the logistics of working on the roads/road closures etc works collaboratively with all the utilities and has taken advantage of the Cavendish Road works to invite BT to inspect all its cabling along this stretch.
- Our inspectors are keeping an eye on the back lanes to look out for any damage from HGVs etc. I had a report of HGVs rat running on Monday but nothing since. The feeling is that some lorries got into our zone of Monday because the outer gatemen had been drawn into the centre. However, having used the local lanes once it is felt that most HGV drivers would not readily want to use them again.
- National Grid is prepared to run a drop in session just before the works finish to explain how the business compensation scheme works and to show traders how to complete the claim forms.
- I realise we are all aware that the town is quieter with the road closure in place. This lengthy scheme will impact on the town's traders, businesses and attractions. I have been discussing ideas with people around Clare including members of this council, Alaric and Sarah Pugh, local shopkeepers and businesses. One idea is to organise an event in Clare once the works are finished but if that is happen then a group of people needs to commit to doing that ASAP and get on and get working.
- I have talked to the East Anglian Daily Times and they are happy and willing to produce an eight page 'My Clare' pull out supplement (along the lines of their regular 'My Town' supplements which are a mix of adverts and editorial and good photographs, that they already run promoting towns as diverse as Framlingham, Woodbridge and Hadleigh) This would appear in the East Anglian Daily Times (51,386 readers daily) and the Sudbury Mercury (18,639 readers weekly) and the cost would be £3,085 plus VAT.
- I have also approached Andrew Stone, from the senior management team at National Grid and asked him if they would fund such a supplement and he is discussing this with colleagues.
- The question is – does CTC want to get involved and play a leading role in undertaking a Clare event and do you support the idea of a promotional supplement?

- I think we are all aware of varying requests for support from National Grid and we must be realistic about what would be best for the town.
- SCC highways has also asked National Grid in the course of the works programme to tidy up the footway along Cavendish Road and to move the gas main in the pavement opposite The Bell. The idea is that if the gas main is moved the bollards could be sunk deeper. We will also look to install different bollards – metal posts filled with concrete which should be much more stable and durable.

HGVs

I would like to have a meeting with councillors interested in the lorry survey.

I had a useful meeting week, organised by the new Cabinet Member for Highways Cllr James Finch, looking at the problem across South Suffolk re lorries.

As you are aware one of the reasons officers are reluctant to impose a TRO limiting lorries through Clare is the real prospect that drivers will rat run around the back lanes. I am trying to monitor whether many vehicles are cutting through the country lanes during the current road closure in Clare.

Drainage

I have had complaints about blocked drains on The Granary thought to be as a result of debris from the Charles Church development. We have been clearing out the drains on Stoke Road and Ashen Road junction more frequently this year because of the dust and debris associated with the building works. So I have asked our highways inspector to investigate.

*I have a team from West Area highways coming out on Monday afternoon to look at various outstanding issues and I am planning to join them

Clare Primary School

Like all schools in Suffolk, Clare has suffered under the unfair national formula which has seen schools in other areas funded at almost twice the rate per pupil as in Suffolk. The Government has honoured its manifesto commitment to move to fairer funding and Suffolk will get a better deal. However Clare is being hit by a further bureaucratic problem which both James Cartlidge, our new MP, and I have challenged. The Clare primary school budget is set on the school numbers in October 14 but since then 38 new pupils have joined the school – without extra money following them – which is unfair

Countywide

SCC will be holding a consultation exercise on the fire service which will involve us looking for £1m savings. Locally I think the biggest impact will be the idea of increasing retained crew numbers. In Suffolk we set a maximum of 11 for a retained crew with 4 needed to take the appliance out. There is no problem answering 999 calls in the evenings when retained crew are at home but it has been more difficult when people are out of work. The suggestion is we increase the maximum to 15 to give us certainty of always being able to raise a crew.

The Suffolk Waste Partnership – made up of all the Suffolk district/borough and SCC are looking to encourage more home-composting by reducing the subsidy to the green waste collection with the introduction of a charge of probably £35-£50 per household for collecting your brown wheelie bins.

Mary Evans, Clare Division, Suffolk County Council

Attachment to Minutes, Item 9, Clerk's Report

Information:

This has been quite a busy month in terms of cemetery administration with several interment bookings, memorial work, transfers of deed ownership and purchases of plots.

I have received a number of enquiries regarding trees overhanging parishioners' gardens/land, most of which I have passed to the Country Park Trustees as the trees were on Country Park land.

St Edmundsbury Borough Council Planning decisions

DC/15/0857/LB Saddlers Cottage

Application for Listed Building Consent - (i) Replacement of South facing catslide roof with slate tiles (ii) Insertion of rooflight into kitchen roof (iii) Removal of asbestos from kitchen roof and replace with slate - Application approved.

DC/15/1032/LB 13 Church Street

Application for Listed Building Consent - (i) Oak framed garden room to rear and (ii) removal of dining room window and surrounding fabric to create opening/link to garden room - Application approved.

DC/15/1136/TCA Rushbrooke House 33 Cavendish Road

Trees in a Conservation Area Notification - Reduce height of 1 no. Silver Birch by up to 50% and shape sides to balance - Application approved.

DC/15/0883/HH 15 Market Hill

Householder Planning Application - (i) Reinstate 9 metres and 25 cms of collapsed Victorian Brick Wall rear/side of property (ii) Installation of white wooden picket gate - Application approved.

DC/15/0963/LB 15 Market Hill

Application for Listed Building Consent - (i) Reinstate 9 metres and 25 cms of collapsed Victorian Brick Wall to rear/side of property (ii) Installation of white wooden picket gate - Application approved.

DC/15/1003/TCA Norfolks 29 Callis Street

Trees in a Conservation Area Notification - 5 no. Robinia trees - Remove and replace with 2 no. trees – No objection

DC/15/1132/TCA 28 Bridewell Street

Trees in a Conservation Area Notification - Removal of 1 no. Rowan Tree - No objection

Attachment to Minutes, Item 11, Correspondence

SUMMARY OF CORRESPONDENCE July 2015

Items for action (all circulated to Town Councillors)

Chairman of NALC	The Commonwealth Flag Day Action: It was agreed not to take part in the event.
SALC	Policy Proposals to Government – invitation to respond to survey.
Linda McPhee	Right to record at a public meeting Action: A draft response was circulated prior to the meeting and approved for sending (see item 11 of the minutes).
Community Action Suffolk Insurance	Letter re cover for Christmas Lights event Action: Dealt with under item 10ii)a
Ashleigh Sheppard	Request to hold cake stall on Market Hill on 12th September. Action: Approved
Granary resident	Charles Church development – blocked drains, smell of stagnant water in SUDS overflow and all drains on Granary estate. Action: Cllr. Gryce will contact the developers.

Items for noting (copies available from the Clerk on request)

Simon Curl	Car for sale Daneum Holt following email from Cllr. Verguson).
Concertus	Clare Castle Country Park Refurbishment Works signed contract