

Rocklands Parish Council (RPC)
Minutes of Parish Council Meeting (Virtual meeting - held using ZOOM)
7.00pm on Monday 8 March 2021

Present:	David Howie	Chair
	Nickie Southgate	Vice Chair
	Tim Ford	
	Richard Harrison	
	Kim Austin	Clerk
	Sarah Suggitt	Breckland District Councillor

Also present: 7 members of the public joined the group meeting.
The meeting opened at 19:11

1. To consider accepting apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr. Connolly who was attending another Parish Council meeting and Cllr. Martin who was unwell. Apologies were accepted.

2. To record declarations of interest from members in any items on the agenda

There were no declarations of interest.

3. To approve the minutes of the last council meeting on Monday 11 January 2021

The minutes had been circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting. All councillors approved the minutes and agreed they would be signed by the Chair, Cllr. David Howie after the meeting.

4. To discuss any matters arising from the minutes (11 January 2021) not on the agenda.

Dog poo. Another problem area regards dog poo. The PC had received a complaint about dog poo on the playing field and the lack of notices, and also unable to get to the bin. Cllr. Howie would post notices if required and check access to the bin. It was thought something had been placed in front of it.

Building work. The Parish Council had written to the resident concerned and had received a letter back by return, confirming work was compliant with planning.

Damaged bench. It is unlikely we will find out now who damaged the Parish Council bench, despite asking Breckland, NCC and Flagship. Someone must know but no-one has owned up. The Clerk has sent photographs of the damaged bench to the supplier Glasdon (Purchased on 23 June 2018) for advice. Had not heard back yet, but their website shows you can just buy the ends or the slats. The ends are £116.61 (excluding VAT). The Clerk has already received relevant claims forms from Insurance Company should PC need to make a claim. The Clerk would contact Sam Mariner who installed the bench.

5. To Co-opt a new Parish Councillors

The vacancy had been advertised and Bryan Swaddling had volunteered to become a Parish Councillor. Bryan was present at this meeting. There was a unanimous vote from the councillors for Bryan to join Rocklands Parish Council. The Clerk would forward the relevant forms to Bryan for signing. Welcome to Bryan.

6. To adjourn the meeting for public participation

The meeting was adjourned at 19:30. There were no comments from the members of the public present and the meeting resumed.

7. Update from our Norfolk County Councillor, Ed Connolly

Cllr. Connolly continues to send reports from County by email on a weekly basis which is much appreciated. Cllr. Connolly's report for March is attached at the end of this document.

Signed

Date

8. Update from our Breckland District Councillor, Sarah Suggitt

At the council we continue to fulfil our democratic responsibility and are still carrying out our official council meetings by zoom !! At the full council meeting held on 25th February, we approved our sustainability strategy, budget for the upcoming year, our medium-term capital strategy and agreed to separate from a 10-year partnership with South Holland Council.

The sustainability strategy includes releasing £525,000 from our inclusive growth reserve to fund a series of works to tackle our declaration of a climate emergency which includes - Trees and rewilding planting schemes, additional electric vehicle charging points and the creation of a green grants scheme to name but a few.

We are continuing to work with partners to enable our residents and businesses to thrive. We have been able to hand out £40m in grants and around £2m to over 1000 businesses across the district from our discretionary fund.

We have been able to offer assistance to residents with food delivery slots and provided £60k in support for food hardship across the district. This includes supporting the first community supermarket to open its doors in Thetford and enabling Dereham foodbank to move to larger premises. There will be extra support for the youngsters of our communities by the way of employability workshops. These will be launched under the Young Carers arm of our vulnerability programme which was launched in 2019 with £1M allocated to help the most vulnerable members of our communities.

We are just a short distance away from the start of our new waste contract going live. This is a really good example of collaborative working. With our partners at Kings Lynn and North Norfolk we have secured a waste contract showing significant savings and are awaiting a new fleet of waste vehicles to arrive any day.

We have also had confirmation that the local elections will be going ahead in May. This is where residents can have their say on who they wish to have as their Norfolk County Councillor and Police and Crime Commissioner. You can choose to vote in person, by post or by proxy.

For more information on any of the above please visit our website www.breckland.gov.uk or me directly sarah.suggitt@breckland.gov.uk

9. To receive village reports

9.1 Village Shop and Post Office (Dave Seaton DS). No report.

DH reported the shop had held its AGM and had asked for minutes and accounts but none yet.

9.2 Village Hall (Sarah Good SG) No report.

9.3 Little Rocky's Parent and Toddler Group (Sharon Brown). No report.

9.4 Rocklands Primary School (David Jones DJ). No report,

DH reported that the schools had gone back. No Covid testing for primary school children.

9.5 Rocklands Playing Fields (Sarah Good SG) No report.

DH reported playing field had been plagued with moles which had now been dealt with. Play Park committee are purchasing another piece of equipment. Grass cutting equipment being serviced.

9.6 Rockland St. Peter Church (RSP) (John Brown JB).No report

9.7 Rockland All Saints' Church (RAS) (Cath Jones CJ)

The Clerk read out the report from CJ. There is very little to report about the church because services are still not allowed under Lockdown rules, the only real activity 'up the hill' has been from the rooks who have persistently broken through the strong wire netting on the louvred openings at the top of the tower. In the most inaccessible places for replacement, of course ! The good news is that the rabbits have been feasting on the luscious grass in the churchyard so that hasn't needed mowing just yet! If only they kept it up all summer.

Barbara's Day has had to be cancelled again, because of the pandemic, but Barbara is going to hold another plant sale in The Street, near the shop, in May as this was so successful last year and raised a small amount of necessary cash. We are still hoping the Flower Festival might be able to happen in July, but much depends on how the relaxation of the Covid rules pans out.

As I write, our two priests, Rev Christina and Rev Sue, are meeting with the bishop and other Anglican hierarchy to discuss the future of rural churches in Norfolk so we look forward to hearing the outcomes of that.

Signed

Date

9.8 White Hart Public House (Dave Thomas DT)

We intend to open at the earliest in April if all goes to the government plan ! I am currently liaising with Breckland Licensing to vary our premises licence to include the cabin bar on the old bowling green. Last year the government gave dispensation etc. No updates at the moment if that will be the same this time or not. Therefore, will get the forms in by the 12/03/21 for the 28-day consultation period etc.

9.9 To update on Chapel Green Meadow (Carolyn Emblen)

Chris Sharpe read out the following report. Over the autumn and winter months there has been little need for meetings or activities, but CGMC are now planning the first of 2021 online meetings.

Community outreach. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, we were unable to carry out any of the community and school visits envisaged for 2020 or the first half of 2021. Despite that, Chapel Green did receive a number of Covid-19 compliant small group visits during 2020.

Rocklands parish meadow map. A map indicating the location of a dozen or so wildflower meadows, compiled by CGMC, has been submitted for publication in the The Rocklander. Some of these meadows, like Chapel Green, are public spaces, while others form part of gardens and other private land. In total they provide a small, but valuable network for wildflowers and pollinators.

Collaboration with Longs Wood. Rachel Long of Longs Wood, Wreningham has kindly offered to provide us with some hay bales from their own wildflower meadow in order to reseed Chapel Green with some of the local plants of very high conservation value that have been widely lost over South Norfolk in recent decades. One of the plants of most interest, which was once a regular feature of local grasslands, is the very local Sulphur Clover.

The book Much Ado About Mothing: A year intoxicated by Britain's rare and remarkable moths by award-winning author James Lowen is scheduled for publication by Bloomsbury in May. The book includes a chapter celebrating the author's visit to Chapel Green, specifically focussing on the regionally important Ghost Moth lek, which he described as one of the most impressive spectacles of his entire year.

Soil dumping on Chapel Green. In February, gravel and sand was dumped on the eastern margin of the meadow during widening and consolidation work undertaken on the adjacent permissive access. The incident was apparently reported to RPC. Unless removed, this will prevent cutting of the grass at that edge of the meadow.

Issues at Chapel Green were then discussed. The problem of the gravel and sand had been brought to the attention of the Parish Council. Photographs not only showed the gravel encroachment on the edge of the meadow but also how the permissive way alongside the Chapel had increased in width over the years, by the track being widened to take in the grass verge. Cllr. Howie visited the site to see for himself. It appeared that new gravel had been laid up to the sleepers, some removed earth, grass and gravel had also been deposited on the meadow side of the sleepers. Chapel Green Meadow is owned by the Parish Council. Anybody wishing to do anything that affects this land is 'expected' to consult with the Parish Council prior to doing anything, out of courtesy.

Chapel Green will continue to be maintained as a flower meadow as was agreed after a questionnaire was issued and a 'fair' vote was taken. (PC Minutes Sept/Nov 2017). The Parish Council will continue to support the majority decision. It would be appreciated if the volunteers and the CGMC were allowed to get on with their work. It is not acceptable for anyone to attempt to disrupt their work or make threats to people for whatever reason. The PC will not hesitate to involve the police if there are problems in the future.

Comments from a Chapel Green resident could have constituted a breach of confidentiality and data protection regulations. They have been advised of this.

The Parish Council agreed that the edge of the meadow needed to be reinstated with clear markers/logs/sleepers. Vehicles would then keep to the track and grass cutting on the meadow would be made easier. They would make sure any work done would not hinder access to pond

regeneration vehicles. The PC appreciates that the heavy rain and flooding has added to the problem, and although the residents are responsible for maintaining the track, this does not mean they can interfere with the meadow itself. Chapel Green residents are reminded that access over the Parish Council land is subject to legal arrangements.

The Parish Council are well aware the pond needs some work. The job is in hand, but due to Covid and the weather, having the wettest few months for years, the work has unfortunately been delayed. Need to get the timing right. Cllr. Howie is in regular contact with Ed Stocker, ecologist at NCC and can confirm that funds are earmarked by the Norfolk Ponds Project for regeneration of this pond. This will include shoring up the collapsed banks, with the help of a long reach digger. It was mentioned that Mrs Robinson has been asked not to cut the grass along the bank as it was making the situation worse, but someone continues to cut it. It was also mentioned that she had not paid for the licence to place her house sign on the green last year. The licence can be revoked at any time.

Anglian water is doing some surveys as part of the First Time Sewerage scheme. Potentially a joint project with them.

The Clerk would look through the Chapel Green file for any useful documents.

9.10 To update on VE Day Grant money (Shena Scholes)

VE Day grant money of £379.22 remains. All councillors rejected the idea of paving slabs around the flower bed. Not sure if the memorial bed was to be a permanent fixture. Cllr. Howie would prefer a flag-pole and flag. Cllr. Howie would let Shena know of this decision and ask if there were any other ideas. Karen Roseberry had weeded and tidied the bed and had an invoice for £40 for bulbs she had planted. She would pass to the Clerk for payment. Karen who was at the meeting, would try and come up with a few ideas for the remaining grant money.

10.0 To report on financial matters

10.1 New signatory on Bank Account and payment authorisation

We lost a bank signatory when Shirley Colenutt resigned from the Parish Council, so paperwork has been completed and signed for Richard Harrison to become new Barclays signatory. To make the process of authorising payments easier it may be possible for the Clerk to authorise payments online and then for a signatory to sign-off online. All councillors were happy with this change if possible. Financial Regulations would need to be updated.

10.2 Financial position

Bank account balances as at Monday 8 March 2021

Barclays Community Account	£	4797.76
Barclays Saver (Reserve) Account	£	336.79
TOTAL as per bank	£	5134.55

Summary

RPC Rocklands Parish Council	£	4504.76
RNP Rocklands Neighbourhood Plan (RG)	£	200.60
Rocklands Play Park (KR)	£	50.00
Norfolk Community Fund grant for VE DAY events (Shena)	£	379.22
TOTAL as per bank	£	5134.55

Councillors agreed the Play Park £50 balance should be paid to the Play Park account.

RG confirmed there would be costs associated with the RNP; organising future RNP events, possibly a consultant to proof-read final draft. May even need to apply for a top-up grant.

10.3 Money in since last meeting (11 January 2020)

8/3/2021	Barclays Saver account interest	£	0.01
	TOTAL IN	£	0.01

Signed

Date

10.4 Money out since last meeting (11 January 2020)

10.4.1 Standing Orders/Direct Debits

18/1/2021	Eon-Electricity (DD)	£	35.62
1/2/2021	Clerk's wages (SO)	£	273.87
16/2/2021	Eon-Electricity (DD)	£	35.62
1/3/2021	Clerk's wages (SO)	£	273.87
TOTAL OUT			£ 618.98

10.4.2 Cheques out (to sign)

CHQ 715	Reimburse Cllr. Ford. Baileys sandbags x 130	£	273.00
CHQ 716	K&M Lighting - streetlight maint. (Feb/Mar21)	£	30.60
CHQ 717	Norfolk Parish Training - Annual subscription	£	62.00
CHQ 718	Kim Austin (Clerk) Reimb. ZOOM subscription (01)	£	14.39
TOTAL OUT			£ 379.99

Notes:

Chapel Green Licence Letter posted to Pat Robinson in January 2020 for Chapel Green Licence payment of £1. No money received. The next one is due now. The Clerk will send request for previous year (overdue) and this year (due now).

End of financial year. End of March is the end of our financial year. Michaela Canham to carry out the internal audit. Yet to receive external audit forms from PKF Littlejohn.

11.0 To consider planning applications

11.1 Planning **outcomes** since last meeting

11.2 Applications **pending** outcome

11.3 **New** applications since last meeting (11 January 2021)

3PL/2021/0027/F Free Range Chicken/Common Farm Scoulton Rd/Replace house (208) NO OBJ

The Parish Council had no objection to this application.

3PL/2020/1481/F Dunning/Magna Farm Barn/Agri to dwelling, cart lodge (209) NO OBJ

The Parish Council had no objection to this application.

3PL/2020/0780/F 2 Agriculture Ltd/Feed Mill Snetterton (210) OBJ, COMMENTS

Although not in the Parish, Rocklands can understand and is sympathetic to the concerns of other parishes regards this application. Traffic may increase along the Attleborough Road and may be able to see the light generated by the plant. Comments on the planning website from other surrounding villages show they are not happy for many reasons. There will be a few more months before any decisions.

3PL/2021/0092/HOU Sams/Sage Cottage Annexe, Chapel St/Extn. To annexe (211)

Cllr. Southgate had spoken to the neighbours who were both quite happy with the application.

The Parish Council had no objection to this application.

3PL/2021/0133/F Jones/Swangey Lakes/Rural workers dwelling (212)

Simon Jones, the applicant, explained that Swangey Lakes is a thriving fishing business, having ~5000 visitors per year. Fish stock is worth a lot of money and living on site would provide a level of security. Responding to call outs at the lakes would also be easier. The Parish Council agreed there were no neighbours to consider, there were no road issues and they would rather a single dwelling as part of their housing quota rather than a development on a different site. The Parish Council explained it must be consistent in its approach to applications. They must mention the building is outside the settlement boundary. Labelling the development as a Rural Workers Dwelling means the application seeks to satisfy the conditions of Policy HOU 13. It does satisfy all conditions except Part 5 relating to size as the house is quite large. The applicant explained that the cost of installing services to a remote location such as this would be very costly and thus, he wished to ensure that the dwelling was satisfactory to house himself and his family for the long term. It was suggested that Breckland Planning might refuse the application based on size. Being outside the settlement boundary, Breckland will probably 'call it in' anyway, to go before the Planning Committee. Rocklands Parish Council have no objections

Signed

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as such but do need to point out the items mentioned. This build would add 1 to the already oversubscribed housing quota.

3PL/2021/0122/HOU Coe/Fairfield 65 The Street/Side/rear extension (213)

Their previous application (which was withdrawn) was to remove the side extensions to the property and rebuild, compliant with building regulations. This application is the same. The neighbours are happy. The Parish Councillors agreed they had no objections.

3PN/2021/0005/UC Shadrack/Agri building Rectory Road/Agri to 2 dwellings CLASS Q (214)

Rocklands Parish Council has some reservations about this even though, in the past, it has been their policy to support the conversion of redundant agricultural buildings to provide new housing for the village. It is outside the settlement boundary and more importantly, it would constitute back land development which does not conform to the characteristic housing pattern in this part of the village. It also raises the issue of noise and other inconveniences to the nearby residents with 2 extra households and the traffic associated with this, in what is currently a quiet location. The proposed access is tortuous and problematic and needs clarification. The applicant has mentioned he would create his own entrance rather than accessing the new dwellings via someone else's land. In this case the drawings submitted with the application would not apply. Not sure this would be accepted by Highways. The road is not really wide enough for two vehicles. Proposed methods of dealing with surface water run-off and sewerage - particularly in the light of recent flood events that have seriously affected the centre of Rockland All Saints need clarification. There are important matters to be clarified.

3PL/2021/0269/VAR Warnes Magpie Lane/Removal of Condition No's 4 & 5 (215)

This is for removal of conditions that are preventing the applicant from operating a horse breeding business on site. Rocklands Parish Council is confused by this application. It appears that the agent has made a monumental error. Even if permission is given for the removal (or modification) of Condition nos. 4 & 5 imposed under application ref. 3PL/2016/1039/F as stated, the site could still not be used for commercial purposes since the 2017 Conditions remain in force. By his own admission, the Applicant is already in breach of the Conditions imposed under application ref. 3PL/2017/1278/F, stating 'The site is currently being used to care for horses that are being bred'; and 'The residential plot is to be associated and linked to the business'. The Parish Council believes this qualifies for enforcement action by Breckland Council.

12. To update on Broadband (Sarah Martin SM)

Cllr. Martin had confirmed work was finished in The Street. Cllr. Harrison confirmed that Mount Pleasant was also finished. Cllr. Howie had an email from Luke/Emily in Bell Road asking if their broadband could be improved. Their request would be forwarded to Peter Martin. Details of the first-time sewerage scheme would also be forwarded to Luke/Emily. Not sure what would be possible as their house is quite a bit back from the road.

13. To update on First Time Sewerage System for Rocklands St. Peter (RH)

Cllr. Harrison had distributed this detailed report to all councillors prior to the meeting:

During w/c 8 February, Anglian Water sent an information pack and form to all eligible households in Rocklands, North of Attleborough Road. Surveying commenced on 16th February - and is ongoing. This marks the first on-site works of the 'Delivery Phase' - leading to the commencement of engineering works, anticipated to be next year. On 4 March, Cllr Howie and myself met with representatives of the project team - a representative from Barhale (engineering contractors to the @one Alliance) and a representative from Savills (land agents for Anglian Water). We provided some local information, and I asked a question about where/how the sewer was likely to be implemented.

It is early days, and surveying is ongoing, but the engineer advised that they try not to site the sewer under roads - as this is the most disruptive and expensive option. This is potentially good to hear - as connection from rear gardens (where most septic tanks are located) to a sewer under the road could be an expensive proposition for residents. I explained that a lot of residents in the St Peter area had suffered particularly badly this Winter from exceedingly high groundwater levels causing serious

Signed

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backflow problems into their septic tanks - leading to numerous (expensive) pump-out visits. Apart from the very heavy rainfall over the Christmas period, this still-lingering issue will probably also be investigated by the Lead Local Flood Authority - who will be carrying out extensive investigations as part of the Norfolk Flooding Alliance investigations. On asking about where the new St Peter area sewer would run to, I was advised that it will not connect with the pumping station in Low Lane - which already struggles at times. Instead, their aim is to route it towards the Attleborough network. This week (w/c 8 March), a Habitats Survey will start - when specialist consultants will be surveying ponds, gardens, hedgerows etc. to get a picture of where sensitive habitats/creatures may be present. The aim is to avoid disturbance as much as possible. Residents will be approached if their outside properties need to be visited. When all surveys are complete - and design options have been established - a public meeting will be held to discuss plans/options with residents. Could use a burrowing device for thrust boring which allows for pipework underground beneath residents' gardens.

14. To update on the Rocklands Neighbourhood Plan (RNP) and Local Plan (LP)

Work on the Neighbourhood Plan is continuing.

15. To update on SID (Flashing Speed sign) (Cllr. Harrison RH)

Cllr. Harrison had distributed this detailed report to all councillors prior to the meeting.

Since our last meeting, a further two deployments of the SID have been completed as follows:

a. The Street, Approaching B1077 Crossroads

Deployed: 14:00 hrs 03 January 2021

Finished: 11:00 hrs 03 February 2021

The analysis results show:

6,557 vehicles detected

Average 212 vehicles/day

Morning peak time - 11:15 to 12:15

Afternoon peak time - 12:00 to 13:00

5,060 vehicles (77.2%) within 30 mph speed limit

1,497 vehicles (22.8%) exceeding speed limit

- of which 340 vehicles (5.2%) over 35 mph - and likely open to a fine*

Top speed: 50 mph - 04/01/2021 @ 18:05 hrs#

b. Attleborough Road, Vehicles from Great Ellingham

Deployed: 12:00 hrs 03 February 2021

Finished: 10:00 hrs 04 March 2021

The analysis results show:

35,237 vehicles detected

Average 1,215 vehicles/day

Morning peak time - 07:15 to 08:15

Afternoon peak time - 15:00 to 16:00

27,054 vehicles (76.8%) within 40 mph speed limit

8,183 vehicles (23.2%) exceeding speed limit

- of which 3,022 vehicles (8.6%) over 45 mph - and likely open to a fine*

Top speed: 85 mph - 28/02/2021 @ 21:10 hrs#

Since the last deployment at the Crossroads-facing position:

- vehicle movements averaged 1,007 per day - an increase of 21% since last monitoring here.
- vehicles speeding numbered 3,028 (9.7%) - an encouraging 33% relative decrease.
- vehicles open to enforcement action numbered 528 (1.7%) - an encouraging 48% relative decrease.

Overall, a smaller proportion of speeding vehicles - but still almost a quarter exceeding the speed limit. Of course, average daily vehicle movements were down significantly due to lockdown. However, from my vantage point up here on Attleborough Road, there are still far more vehicles at commuting times - and throughout the day - than in the first lockdown period last year. During the day, there are certainly

Signed

Date

more construction vehicles (mainly aggregate trucks), and farm vehicles (tractor/trailer units) than first lockdown.

Since the last deployment at the Great Ellingham-facing position:

- vehicle movements averaged 1,215 per day - a 21% reduction in daily traffic volumes.
- vehicles speeding numbered 8,183 (23.2%) - a 7.2% larger proportion of vehicles speeding.
- vehicles open to enforcement action numbered 3,022 (8.6%) - a 9.3% larger proportion of vehicles open to enforcement.

Despite a 'Lockdown' reduction in overall vehicle movements, we unfortunately see significant increases in vehicles speeding and vehicles open to enforcement action. Further, you will see that I have had to add another row to the spreadsheet - as we recorded one vehicle travelling at 85 mph at nine o'clock in the evening on Sunday 28 February! It may have been an emergency vehicle, but I don't think a Police car - and certainly not an ambulance - would travel around the double-apex bend from Great Ellingham and reach that speed at that point!

I am surprised at the daily traffic volumes at this time. This latest lockdown does not appear to have affected traffic numbers anywhere near as much as the first. Very large aggregate lorries travelling to/from house building sites at Watton, Great Ellingham and Attleborough continue to plague residents on Attleborough Road - shaking our houses and windows as they go past, and seriously damaging the road in places

Once again, sincere thanks to Cllr. Tim Ford for his help in relocating the speed sign.

* The SID is limited to grouping vehicle speeds into 5mph blocks. However, for a 40mph speed limit, enforcement action is normally applied at 46mph and above - so a very small proportion of vehicles above 45mph could arguably be travelling at less than 46mph (e.g. 45.5mph). The SID also has a specified accuracy of ± 0.5 mph. Enforcement action is not always a fine - depending on circumstances, drivers may be offered a speed awareness course. (SID tables at the end of these minutes).

16. To update on Highways

Potholes have been reported. A collapsed grid is a danger to cyclists. Heavy aggregate lorries are not helping and actually make the houses shake along the Attleborough road. Any repairs being done are of very poor quality. Potholes are being filled with tarmac and in less than no time, they need doing again. Road at bottom of Stowlay Lane is further disintegrating. Barriers and cones were in the running water. Cllr. Harrison moved them out of the water. Highways need to sort this. Cllr. Southgate has reported problem to Highways at junction between Gt. Ellingham Road and Penhill Road. Waiting for them to respond.

17. To update on Flooding (RH)

Cllr. Harrison had distributed this report to all councillors before the meeting:

On 15 January, two pallets carrying at total of 130 x 15 kg sandbags were delivered to the village hall. Their availability was posted via notices in the village shop, the PC noticeboard, the village website and the village Facebook pages. A number of residents whose properties are more vulnerable to flooding have taken some as a contingency (more rain was forecast for 20 January). Would residents please remember to notify either Cllr Ford or Cllr Martin when they take them - and could they be similarly returned when the risk of flooding is less likely. Thank you also to Dave Jones and the Village Hall Committee for agreeing to the storage location.

On 18 January, I was invited by George Freeman MP to join a newly-formed 'Mid Norfolk Flood Partnership' - a forum conceived by George, following dozens of calls, letters and emails he had received following the severe flooding over the Christmas holiday, and the preceding Summer - and recognising that, with climate change, it is only likely to get worse. A forum in which local councillors and community action groups can proactively engage with the relevant officials from Norfolk County Council, Anglian Water and the Environment Agency - all of whom have responsibilities for flooding, as well as water and drainage management.

Our first meeting (90 mins virtual) was held on 29 January, the first summary report of which is below:

Mid Norfolk Flood Partnership Meeting - Report No.1

Attending the meeting were:

Signed

Date

- 5 Norfolk County Councillors (including Ed Connolly for Yare & All Saints division)
- 4 Breckland District Councillors (one also Chair of Breckland Planning Committee)
- 3 representatives from Anglian Water
- 2 representatives from NCC Flooding & Water Management
- 1 representative from NCC Highways
- 1 representative from the Environment Agency (Flood & Coastal Risk Manager, Norfolk)
- 5 representatives from Parish Councils
- 3 representatives from parish flood/drainage groups

The Partnership was set up following the county-wide flooding events just prior to Christmas 2020, and over subsequent weeks. It was emphasised that these were only the latest such events, with flooding having hit Mid Norfolk multiple times, and with growing frequency, over the past few years. GF explained that NCC were convening a Norfolk-wide 'Flooding Alliance' - chaired by Lord Dannatt - with the aim of strengthening Norfolk's resilience to flooding. It was agreed that the MNFP would feed into this.

County Councillors introduced their respective Parish Council representatives - who went on to explain their experiences of flooding and responses from the various agencies. Common themes included:

- Landowners / farmers / householders failing to keep watercourses on their land clear.
- Culverting of ditches (often unauthorised) with inadequate design and/or capacity. Sometimes, illegal (e.g. foul water) connections to watercourses.
- Inadequate road drainage, with inadequate maintenance of Highways gullies and culverts.
- Inadequate/overloaded sewage pumping stations in times of flood.
- I mentioned high groundwater levels rendering septic tank systems subject to backflow, and possibly causing sewage pollution of gardens and nearby properties. Also, the horrendous costs of frequent 'pumping out'.
- Planning permissions granted with inadequate infrastructure (I mentioned Green Lane/Mill Lane).
- Geographical location of properties (I mentioned The Street/Low Lane).
- Inadequate communications from responsible agencies - including poor response times, and 'passing the buck..'

I was interested to hear that Barford had managed to secure DEFRA funding to build an attenuation pond that has helped to mitigate flooding in the village. Something to follow-up...

It was reported that £600,000 had been earmarked by NCC to investigate the flooding events over the Christmas period, but it was acknowledged that the investigation and report could take 5-6 months to complete. An additional three flood risk officers had been funded to facilitate this. The report would make recommendations, but it would not trigger additional funding. However, funding would need to be sought for remedial mitigation works - but there are local case studies where this had proven possible.

Enforcement could sometimes prove difficult but NCC, whilst seeking cooperation from landowners, would also be pleased to receive intelligence from local flood action groups.

It was also reported that the NCC Infrastructure Select Committee, and NCC Cabinet had committed £1.5 million to flooding in the next financial year.

The Chair of Breckland Planning Committee stressed that both the Lead Local Flood Authority and Anglian Water needed to be far more vocal about planning applications if they had concerns about local flooding issues and/or were aware that existing drainage systems in the community were already at, or over, capacity. There followed significant discussion of the flaws in the current planning system in relation to flooding.

Anglian Water emphasised the unprecedented scale of the recent flooding that had hit the region, that they were working tirelessly to respond, but that it had been incredibly tough as they were significantly overstretched.

The Environment Agency representative shared her email address, so that communities could raise their specific queries with her directly. She described how there was already a Resilience team in the emergency services control room at Wymondham, and that an emergency flood response unit with dedicated number might also be accommodated.

Signed

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There were discussions about improving communications. I suggested that, in times of flood emergency, there should be a central 'triage' facility - with just one adequately supported phone number to ring. I thought it was wrong to expect residents in great distress at times of flooding to work out which of numerous phone numbers to ring.

The meeting concluded with a number of key bullet points to be fed into Lord Dannatt's group:

1. A dedicated 'Helpline' for those affected by flooding.
2. A leaflet campaign to inform residents and businesses about who is responsible for each part of their local drainage systems, and who they can call for help.
3. Culvert maintenance and enforcement action.
4. Highways maintenance (including much higher standards of street cleaning) and enforcement action.
5. Greater work with farmers and landowners.
6. Expansion of the remit of Norfolk Internal Drainage Board.
7. Improvement on the current, failing system - with responsibilities split across multiple bodies.
8. Remedial works on pipes and drainage infrastructure.
9. Attenuation ponds.
10. Planning - those with flooding responsibilities must comment on applications when they have concerns about flooding and drainage.
11. Government legislation - reforms to the National Planning system and the Flood and Water Management Act.
12. Compensation.

Subsequently, the appointment of Lord Dannatt to head-up the Norfolk flooding taskforce was announced.

Huge thanks to Cllr. Martin, her husband Pete, Andrew Roebuck, Kevin Eagleton and others for searching for any blocked sections of drainage culvert in The Street and rodding clear where possible, in a very cold early February.

Since our last meeting, I have been in contact with the NCC Senior Flood Risk Officer, and the Head of NCC Flood & Water Management - re-emphasising our serious concerns about the forthcoming 7-house development at the junction of Green Lane and Mill Lane. This proposes to discharge surface water into the already overloaded culvert system in The Street - with the potential to make flooding events even worse. We have challenged that the existing NCC Guidance on consenting to the discharge of additional surface water into the culvert be robustly applied when consenting is due.

A proper survey is needed. Cllr. Howie agreed to ask Cllr. Connelly if there would be any money available for this purpose.

18. To discuss any correspondence.

Grit Bin. It had been reported that the grit bin in The Street has split open. A new bin would cost ~£200 and would need siting and filling. It was agreed the bin should be replaced.

Lateral Flow Device testing for Covid 19. The Clerk had received an email from Norfolk County Council offering Town and Parish Councils in Norfolk the opportunity to receive free rapid asymptomatic/symptom-free/ Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing. This is aimed at Town and Parish councils which have 2 or more members of staff working in an office/work setting, with testing to be carried out in the workplace. The Parish Councillors agreed it was not appropriate.

The Rocklander. The Parish Council thanked the group of villagers that had taken on the production of the Rocklander after the previous printer decided to stop production of this monthly village magazine. This was much appreciated and those councillors that had seen the recent 'first' issue said it was an improvement. Previous volunteers and some new volunteers were continuing to deliver the Rocklander to homes. The Clerk would receive a soft copy. The Clerk would provide a list of Parish Councillor contact details for the next issue. Karen Roseberry mentioned an advert in the magazine asking for 'crisp packets to be collected as a fundraiser. Karen and Pauls' phone box outside their house would be the collection point. Karen needs to be validated as a 'Terracycle' member.

Signed

Date

Phone Box Library. Thank you to Sue Steel for maintaining the 'Library' which has been particularly important to people during the pandemic.

19. **AOB** There was no AOB.

20. **Date of next Meeting** - Monday 8 May 2021, 7pm (A virtual ZOOM meeting)

The meeting closed at 21.25

County Councillor's report March 2021 (Ed Connolly)

Budget for investment and recovery agreed

A budget for recovery has been agreed by Norfolk County Council to support communities, the economy and the environment. A £439 million net revenue budget, a £102 million boost for roads and infrastructure and a 3.99 per cent Council Tax rise have been agreed, at the full council meeting on 22 February. The decision means the council will:

- Raise general Council Tax by the Government's guideline figure - 1.99 per cent - and raise the adult social care precept by two per cent in 2021/22 and one per cent the following year. This would raise the county council's element of Council Tax by 3.99 per cent, increasing the share of band D bills by £56.43 to £1,472.94 for 2021-22.
- Invest £45.7m to meet cost and other pressures in services, including £28.2m in adult social care, £7m in children's services and £10.5m in community and environmental services.
- Set aside £18.8m for Covid-19 costs in 2021-22.
- Make savings of £41.2m, including a net £20.4m of new proposals.
- Invest £102m in the capital programme, taking the total infrastructure programme to £537.66m. New items include £11.5m for supported housing for young adults, £4m for children's residential homes and investment in the Long Stratton bypass and new libraries.
- Invest £2m in new funding to respond to flooding, including an additional £350,000 in revenue budget provision, £235,000 in highways spending to reduce road flooding risks and £1.5m for the creation of a new flood reserve to fund urgent works, repairs and to enable recommendations from flood investigation reports.
- Increase by £4,000 each councillor's Local Member Fund, taking the total to £10,000 to be made available to local parishes and communities to fund environmental projects.
- Provide £3m for improvements to greenways, footpaths and the national and Norfolk Trails network in the county.

New service from Norfolk Libraries helping families learn from home

Families that are struggling with home learning have a new place to turn to for advice and support. Norfolk Libraries has set up a phone line which serves as a first stop for parents and carers in the county using new devices to teach their children.

The phone line aims to provide a friendly voice to families that aren't familiar with home learning technology, including those that have received a new laptop or tablet as a result of Norfolk County Council's 'Every Child Online' campaign. If anyone needs help using online services, they can speak to a member of library staff on 01603 774777 from 10am-6pm Monday to Friday and 10am-4pm on Saturdays.

Two new special schools announce public consultations ahead of opening

Plans are progressing at speed for two new special schools currently being built in Fakenham and Great Yarmouth by Norfolk County Council as part of its £120 million programme to transform special education. Both schools have announced their new name and confirmed the appointment of new headteachers.

And six-week public consultations have launched for both settings. These aim to give local people including parents, residents, community groups, school leaders, parent/carer organisations and others, the chance to express their views, and ask questions about a range of issues including plans for the site, access and transport, how the school will operate within the local community, and the vision and ethos.

Signed

Date

Have your say about the future of rural Norfolk

Norfolk County Council (NCC) and Collison and Associates Limited are working in partnership on a review of the Norfolk Rural Strategy. The partnership is inviting people who live and work in Norfolk to have their say and help shape the future of Norfolk.

Previous versions of the Norfolk Rural Strategy have been used to secure funding, such as the £9m of LEADER funding awarded to hundreds of community and small business projects across Norfolk since 2016. The previous strategy also initiated campaigns to improve rural digital connectivity and the work to develop the Norfolk Natural Capital Assets Evidence Compendium, which provides a detailed evidence base on our natural environment.

The aim of this survey is to ensure that rural Norfolk continues to thrive, setting out a blueprint to deliver a positive change for its rural communities. NCC believes that to create this positive change, partnership with the community is important and feedback from residents vital to its success.

If you would like to have your say on the future of rural Norfolk you can complete the online survey.

Encouraging children's return to school

Schools and academies across Norfolk are looking forward to welcoming back thousands of children and young people from Monday 8 March. Norfolk's 422 schools are well practised in their range of extra hygiene and safety measures to support pupils' safe return to the classroom, including one-way systems, staggered start times, regular testing for school staff, and extra cleaning to help protect children and teachers. And these measures have been boosted by new testing regimes for students in secondary schools and further education colleges and the ongoing national vaccination programme, which is immunising thousands of people each week.

Norfolk libraries to scrap late fees for children as part of post-pandemic reading push

The Norfolk Libraries and Information service have put forward ambitious plans to improve children and young people's reading skills which have been diminished nationally as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The proposals, to be considered at the Council's cabinet on 8 March, include the removal of overdue charges for everyone under the age of 16, universal membership of the county's e-library through Norfolk's schools and the introduction of a new '1000 books before school' reading challenge.

Bereaved families reminded of advice and support available and the importance of registering a death and organising a funeral in a timely manner. Additional support is available to help bereaved families to make the necessary arrangements and to offer a listening ear. To book a death registration appointment call Norfolk County Council Registration Offices on 0344 800 8020. Further information about the registration service. Further information about support including links to specialist organisations.

Signed

Date

Rocklands SID - The Street, Vehicles from Village Hall		
Start	03/01/2021	04/09/2020
Finish	03/02/2021	04/10/2020
Total Vehicles	6,557	10,757
Average Vehicles/day	212	360
Morning Peak	11:15-12:15	08:00-09:00
Afternoon Peak	12:00-13:00	15:00-16:00
Max Speed (date)	50 (04/01/21, 18:05)	65 (30/09/20, 14:05)
0-30 mph	5,060	8,016
%	77.17	74.52
30+ mph	1,497	2,741
%	22.83	25.48
35+ mph	340	671
%	5.19	6.24
35-40	302	562
%	4.61	5.22
40-45	30	100
%	0.46	0.93
45-50	8	7
%	0.12	0.07
50-55	0	1
%	0.00	0.01
55-60	0	0
%	0.00	0.00
60-65	0	1
%	0.00	0.01
65-70	0	0
%	0.00	0.00

Rocklands SID - Vehicles from Great Ellingham Direction							
Start	08/02/2021	04/10/2020	03/01/2020	08/04/2020	06/05/2020	12/09/2019	
Finish	04/08/2021	02/11/2020	04/08/2020	04/05/2020	05/02/2020	11/09/2019	
Total Vehicles	35,237	44,434	44,605	24,131	40,654	41,427	
Average Vehicles/day	1,215	1,532	1,399	773	1,653	1,483	
Morning Peak	07:15-08:15	08:00-09:00	07:30-08:30	07:00-08:00	07:15-08:15	08:00-09:00	
Afternoon Peak	15:00-16:00	15:15-16:15	16:45-17:45	16:30-17:30	15:30-16:30	17:00-18:00	
Max Speed (date)	85 (28/02/21 - 21:10)	75 (10/10/20 - 06:30)	75 (10/07/20 - 19:10)	75 (10/04/20 - 17:45)	80 (17/01/2020 - 21:45)	75 (07/10/2019 - 07:05)	
0-40 mph	27,054	34,808	33,509	14,900	38,267	32,681	
%	76.78	78.34	75.12	61.75	77.07	78.89	
40+ mph	8,183	9,626	11,096	9,231	11,387	8,746	
%	23.22	21.66	24.88	38.25	22.93	21.11	
45+ mph	3,022	3,487	4,062	4,357	3,932	3,088	
%	8.58	7.85	9.11	18.06	7.92	7.45	
45-50	2,047	2,385	2,749	2,667	2,802	2,105	
%	5.81	5.37	6.16	11.05	5.64	5.08	
50-55	720	790	943	1,156	865	705	
%	2.04	1.78	2.11	4.79	1.74	1.70	
55-60	199	237	281	389	186	210	
%	0.56	0.53	0.63	1.61	0.37	0.51	
60-65	41	57	70	121	63	59	
%	0.12	0.13	0.16	0.50	0.13	0.14	
65-70	11	14	16	20	13	8	
%	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.08	0.03	0.02	
70-75	3	4	3	4	1	1	
%	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.00	
75-80	0	0	0	0	2	0	
%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
80-85	1	0	0	0	0	0	
%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	

Signed

Date