

ORTON WATERVILLE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Parish Council: Mrs A Brown
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Minutes of the Orton Waterville Parish Council Extra-Ordinary meeting held virtually via Zoom on Tuesday 5th January 2021 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors J. Farnham (Chair), T. Rouse, D. Sandles, J Howell, J. Goode, B. Warne, B. Fearon, S. Dallimore, K. Knight, M Barrows and Mrs A. Brown (Clerk).

Members: 13 Quorum: 5 Members of the public: 2

7.00pm Public Question Time

Public Bodies (admissions to meetings) Act 1960 s 1 extended by the LG Act 1972 s 100.

None.

154/01-21 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Proudfoot and Dr Sridhar.

155/01-21 Declaration of Interests and Dispensations

None.

156/01-21 Cherry Orton Road Allotments

1. Collapsed drainage pipe on northern boundary

Cllr Farnham addressed the meeting and explained that as agreed at the Parish Council meeting on 16th September 2020 agenda item 89/09-20.2, the Parish Council contractor had been preparing the area on the northern boundary of the allotment for the new section of boundary fencing by clearing the accumulation over the years, of cut back trees and shrubs which had been placed in the area - not by the Parish Council, when the ground and drainage pipe collapsed beneath him. Up to this time, an allotment tenant had been using this area as an access point from their property onto the allotment site. It was noted that the Parish Council did not create this access point across the drainage ditch and it is not known who put the drainage pipe in.

Cllr Farnham stated that she and the Clerk attended the site to look at the damage and decided to contact the Peterborough City Council (PCC), structural engineer for advice. The PCC structural engineer visited the site the next day to inspect the damage and access the best course of action. After taking advice from other PCC departments the engineer brought several problems, including associated health and safety issues, with the drainage ditch to the attention of the Parish Council. On receipt of this advice it was decided to arrange a meeting of all councillors on site to look at the problems prior to discussing the way forward. This took place with Cllrs Farnham, Goode, Dallimore, Rouse, Fearon and Chambers. The Clerk, allotment site representative Mr Woodhouse and the allotment tenant and owner of the neighbouring property also attended the site visit.

After the site meeting of councillors Cllr Rouse agreed to investigate the matter further as he had some prior professional knowledge relating to drainage issue. Cllr Rouse reported that he had been to look at the site again with the Parish Council contractor Richard Harding and again on his own after the large rain fall the previous week. He stated that the collapsed pipe had insufficient capacity and was incorrectly laid; however the capacity of the ditch was more than sufficient to cope with the water coming through and recommended that the best way forward was to open up the drainage ditch to become an open stream again. This would mean that all the debris built up over the years and the access point would need to be removed. Cllr Rouse also recommended that the new fence should now be erected on the allotment boundary and run from the corner and up to hedge as there would be no stability across the ditch on which to site a fence. With regards to the clearance of the remainder of the ditch, Cllr Rouse said that as the water was flowing, it could be cleared at a later date even though the ditch contained a large log which has been cut down and left there by someone unknown to the Parish Council. Cllr Rouse stated that as Richard Harding had already been contracted for the works and this was classified as an unforeseen circumstance, the additional works would be an extension and modification to his existing contract. Richard Harding has subsequently quoted £2000.00 for the required works to open up and clear the drainage ditch to become free flowing again.

7.18 pm - Cllr Farnham suspended the meeting to allow members of the public to speak on the matter.

7.49 pm - Cllr Farnham re-opened the meeting.

Following further discussions and taking into account questions and comments from members of the public, it was RESOLVED to accept the quotation of £2000.00 from Richard Harding to carry out the necessary works to clear and open up the drainage ditch to become free flowing again and remove all debris in this area away from the site. It was also agreed to ask Richard Harding to remove the log from the drainage ditch.

2. Location of security fencing on allotment

Taking into account the earlier information received and resolved action in the above agenda item it was RESOLVED to erect the new section of security fence from the corner post, along the end of the allotment site and up to the existing hedge. There will no longer be any access into the allotment site at this point from the property on the northern boundary.

3. Accesses onto allotment site from private properties

As all allotment tenants should be using the main gate to access the site, the blocking off of other access points onto the allotment site was discussed to ensure that the site is secure as there are several more gated accesses from private properties; however it is believed that only one tenant is currently using their own access via a bridge from the rear of their property which they built themselves over the drainage ditch. Earlier in the meeting, the tenant of this property had stated that they have a right of way over the bridge to access the allotment site and cut through to the village - this is one of the reasons as to why they purchased the property 23 years ago. To fully secure the site, a fence needs to be erected on the Parish Council side of the drainage ditch or alternatively plant more hedging to fill in gaps however it is not possible to do this at this moment in time due to this bridged access point.

Cllr Farnham stated that the PCC Structural engineer had also noted health and safety concerns regarding the access bridge built across the drainage ditch by an allotment tenant. Following his visit to the site, he emailed the Clerk with concerns that it was:

- A private bridge accessible by the public.
- In poor condition.
- Should have handrails to both sides.
- Designed by whom? Structural calculations needed to prove it is fit for purpose.
- It must comply with Building Regulations-part K. Was there Building Control or Planning approval for this bridge from either?'

The allotment tenant who uses this access point was made aware of these concerns in an email sent by the Clerk on 12th December 2020.

It was RESOLVED in principle to block off the gated access points which are not being used by any current allotment tenants and the Clerk will write to the property owners to inform them of this action, however to resolve the situation where there is an access point into the allotment site via a bridge, it was agreed that the Clerk will seek legal advice regarding Rights of Way on to the allotment site before the matter is discussed further.

It was also reported that the Clerk had been advised on several occasions of unknown vehicles on both Cherry Orton and Gostwick allotment sites. As a further security measure for both sites, the Clerk will be asking all allotment holders for their car make and registration number so that permits can be issued to the holder which must be displayed when on the allotment site.

157/01-21

Date of next meeting

Tuesday 26th January 2021.

The meeting closed at 8.01 pm.