# Minutes of the Meeting of Upton with Fishley Parish Council held on Thursday,

# 7th December 2023 in the Village Hall at 7.30pm

## Present:

Philip Armes (Chairman)

Debbie Durrant (Vice-Chairman)

Ian Cook, William Leonard-Morgan and Lee Smith

Also present: Pauline James (Parish Clerk)

Adam Houlgate and Steve Collin from the Norfolk Wildlife Trust attended the meeting and talked about the management plan for the land in Upton, which is set out in a stewardship scheme established by DEFRA.

The land in Upton fen is spring-fed and therefore botanically important. There is a series of ditches which take the water from the area, some of which are looked after by the Broads Internal Drainage Board. The water is eventually pumped into the River Bure. The pump was powered by overhead electricity cables, but these were constantly being brought down in bad weather so they have been removed by UKPN who plan to put in underground cables instead. The pump is powered by diesel meanwhile. There has been a lot of rain, with October 2023 having the greatest rainfall for 3 years.

The councillors asked several questions about the management of the area and the water levels in the ditches. There was concern that, with flooded land and high water levels in ditches, the capacity to hold water in times of heavy rainfall and/or tidal surges was reduced.

There were two members of the public present. Matters raised included flooding in the village and the provision of allotments on Keith’s Meadow.

Norfolk County Councillor Fran Whymark sent his apologies and a report including the decision to proceed with the Norwich Western Link. The Cabinet backed the County Deal, and there will be an election in May 2025 for the Directly Elected Leader. NCC is promoting the Warm and Well Scheme this winter.

**Apologies:**

Nigel Brennan (also district councillor) and Laura Davey.

## Declarations of Interests in Items on the Agenda and Requests for Dispensations:

None.  
  
**Minutes:**  
The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 2nd November 2023 were agreed to be correct, and were signed by Philip Armes, as Chairman of the Parish Council.

**Matters Arising:**

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| 1. | NCC sent a reply to the Parish Council’s question about installing posts on verges to protect land in Marsh Road (amongst others) and a request for signage to warn drivers of articulated lorries that turning is very difficult once past the crossroads at Cargate Lane/Church Road: *The use of markers posts is normally limited to warning drivers of a hazard they would not normally expect to encounter. They should not be used to protect verges but are sometimes used to allow soft verges time to re-establish themselves. They should then be removed.  There are no NCC Highway work orders within the Mayrise system for the installation of any/timber bollards within this location/along Marsh Road. Google Street View also does not portray any such piece of street furniture from 2008 – 2021. Any installation would have been private and not authorised by the authority. Liability for damage and subsequent claims will potentially be at the responsibility of the landowner/installer. NCC Highways would request for removal.  I’m afraid use by large vehicles is to be expected as they go about their local, or the local leg of their journey to the surrounding farms. Church/Marsh Road is also not considered to be a rat-run in respect to HGV movement. It may be that in certain instances or at certain times of the day that a vehicle may be able to safely negotiate the road and, indeed, this may be necessary in order to carry out deliveries, for example. Given the businesses, it would be difficult to sign from the main C875 Acle Road. The section in question will be monitored by the area team. We appreciate that pictures, videos and registration numbers of HGVs using the road at any given time is not always viable, but these are very helpful, and can be traced back to the owners/companies involved for discussion. These can be sent to*[*highways@norfolk.gov.uk*](mailto:highways@norfolk.gov.uk)  The clerk persisted with a request for signage at the crossroads and the following was received:*Given the highway layout at the junction with The Green/Cargate Lane and limited (there is a black & white finger arm post, however, placing a different sign on here would not be in keeping with the area) street furniture, a 'Unsuitable for HGV's' sign could be placed on the existing 30mph repeater sign post (opposite No 19) along Church Road. A local officer will programme and order this accordingly.* |
| 2. | NCC sent a reply to the Council’s repeated concerns about flooding and standing water in the village: *The drainage systems are obviously not designed to cope with such a significant event and in some cases were obviously exceeded. There has also been in an element of flooding to the highway in such a rural area by run-off from surrounding fields. The ditch/grip network throughout Church Road was last completed on 15/12/22 and this will be repeated as part of the ongoing cyclic works. During these works, the kerb off-lets at the pond o/s Hall Farm will also be implemented. Such cyclic grip works will also include Marsh Rd and the* *surrounding areas.*  *A further order is with the drainage contractor to check and survey the highway gullies between the pub and 1 Marsh Road. The adopted/private part of the outfall system will need to be confirmed. The target date for this is currently 27/11/23.*  *The ditch/grip network throughout Church Road was last completed on 15/12/22 and this will be repeated as part of the ongoing cyclic maintenance works.*    *The local N2 Highway Inspector reports that the private pond (opposite Cedar Farm) is at its capacity and water is now back-falling into the carriageway. Not sure if this has been cleaned out in the past, or if there is scope to extend.* |
| 3. | The owners of 15 Prince of Wales Road confirmed that they have maintained the ditch beside their property for 18 years. They suggested that the issue is the narrow culvert under the road towards the fen. The clerk will contact the Broads Internal Drainage Board and NCC to ask that the culvert and ditch to the north of the road be cleared out. |

**Correspondence:**

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| 1. | It was agreed to apply for a Pride in Place Clean Up and Bloom grant of £300 towards the planting at Keith’s Meadow. |
| 2. | Acle PC is considering nominated Pedro’s at Acle Bridge as an Asset of Community Value. This is technically in the Upton parish. The councillors had no objections to this. |

**Treasurer’s Report:**

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| **Receipts:** | £ |
| Mooring fees | 240.80 |
| Allotment rent | 1,920.00 |
| Grazing x 2 | 213.86 |
| Reimbursement water costs | 26.72 |
| Burial fees | 700.00 |
| NCC – recycling credits | 134.48 |
| Bank interest – quarterly |  |
| **December payments:** |  |
| Gallagher – insurance for mower | 118.83 |
| Barry Hales – mooring post | 25.99 |
| Pauline James – clerk’s fee and expenses | 176.11 |
| Standing order | 300.00 |
| Norfolk Pension Fund – E’ers and E’ees | 162.45 |
| HMRC – PAYE | 106.00 |
| BDC – dog bin emptying | 795.60 |
| D Starkings – hedge cutting | 144.00 |
| Acle PC – share of costs | 123.76 |
| Simon Taylor – marking spray | 21.68 |
| George Taylor – various works | 1,505.00 |
| Garden Guardian – cutting Keith’s Meadow for season | 756.00 |
| Balance c/f as at 7th December 2023 | 226,969.13 |

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| The reserve for the boat dyke is £117,114 and earmarked reserves are £106,097. General, unallocated reserves are therefore £3,758.13.  Ian Cook had checked the November online payments to the relevant bank statement and the clerk’s bank reconciliation dated 7th December 2023. There were no questions on the Actual v Budget report to date. The payments were approved. |

## Planning:

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| 1. | i) Broad House, Prince of Wales Road – replacement of existing sub-standard rear single storey extension with new single storey extension 2023/3487. The councillors had no objections to the plans. |

## Cemetery and Churchyard:

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| 1. | There had been complaints about the entrance to the churchyard path being slippery. The councillors agreed that if it is dangerous due to the wet weather, then the path should be closed to the public.  The clerk was asked to contact another contractor for a quote for the work to improve the access. |
| 2. | Now that the residents in the neighbouring property have moved away, there is no one to take the refuse bin from the cemetery to the road for collection. Lee Smith offered to speak to the Parochial Church Council about sharing this role. |

## Boat Dyke and car park:

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| 1. | Philip Armes reported a very high price to replace the wooden edging to the car park. It was agreed to contact other contractors for quotes. |
| 2. | As mooring posts often rot and pull out of the grass it was agreed to consider concreting in plastic posts. |

**Village hall, car park, play area and playing field:**

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| 1 | The clerk read out a report from the Village Hall group. This was noted. |

**Keith’s Meadow (Old School Playing Field):**

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| 1. | The application for a grant from Broadland District Council was successful, for £595 towards new trees and hedging. |
| 2. | Simon Taylor sent a report. The broken chainlink fence will be removed shortly and new hedge planting done in late January or early February. |
| 3. | A second application has been received for an allotment. It was agreed to provide three allotments to the west end of Keith’s Meadow. |

**Highways and Pond:**

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| 1. | Nothing to report. |

**Biodiversity Policy:**

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| 1. | Under the 2021 Environment Act, public authorities (including town and parish  councils) operating in England must consider what they can do to conserve and  enhance biodiversity.  Government guidance published on 17 May 2023 clarifies that, as a public authority,  town and parish councils must:  - consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.  - agree policies and specific objectives based on their consideration.  - act to deliver their policies and achieve their objectives. It was agreed to adopt the model policy and to decide on the action plan in the new year. |

**Budget and Precept for the year ending 31st March 2025:**

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| 1. | The clerk presented estimated accounts for the year ending 31st March 2024 and draft budget for the year ending 31st March 2025, together with movements into and out of earmarked reserves.  After some discussion it was agreed to increase the total precept to £10,328, which is a 10% increase. Because there are two additional properties in the village for 2024, the precept is shared between 264 equivalent Band D properties such that the precept will be £39.12 for the year for a Band D property, an increase of 9.16%. |

**Any Other Business:**

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| 1. | The parish clerk has deposited old minutes and cashbooks at the Norfolk Archive Centre:  Signed Minutes  Sept 1959 - 15.3.1984  17.5.1984 - 31.3.2000  1.4.2000 - 31.12.2009  1.1.2010 - 31.12.2015    Manual cashbooks:  1.4.1981 - 31.3.2005  1.4.2005 -31.3.2012  1.4.2012 - 31.3.2015  This was noted. |

The next meeting will be on Thursday, 4th January at 7.30pm, in the village hall. All residents are very welcome to attend, to raise local issues.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 10.25 pm.

Signed:………………………………………. Dated:………………………………..

Chairman