



Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council Liaison Meeting held at the Bourges/Viersen Room - Town Hall on 21 September 2016

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors:

Councillor Irene Walsh, Peterborough City Council
Councillor Raymond Wood, Thorney Parish Council
Councillor Ann Sylvester, Peterborough City Council
Councillor Jane Hill, Deeping Gate Parish Council
Councillor Sandra Hudspeth, Deeping Gate Parish Council
Councillor Phil Thompson, Deeping Gate Parish Council
Councillor Vince Moon, Werrington Neighbourhood Council
Councillor Peter Lee, Sutton Parish Council
Councillor John Brooks, Thorney Parish Council
Councillor Sarah Rodger, Castor Parish Council
Councillor Henry Clark, Peakirk Parish Council
Councillor Richard Clarke, Wansford Parish Council
Councillor Jason Merrill, Bretton Parish Council
Parish Clerk John Haste, Glinton Parish Council

OFFICERS PRESENT:

Cate Harding, Community Capacity Manager
Debbie Forde, Governance Advisor
Peter Garnham, Highway Services, Local Access Forum

OTHERS PRESENT:

Diane Lane, Community Engagement Programme Manager, Cambridgeshire County Council
Wendy Lansdown, Community Engagement Programme Manager, Cambridgeshire County Council

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Parish Councillors Denis Batty, Catherine Franks, Keith Lievesley, Margaret Long, James Hayes, and Kim Aitken.

Apologies were also received from Ian Dewar, CAPALC.

2. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 27 July 2016

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2016 were approved as a true and accurate record, subject to the amendment of 'Brian Tyler' to 'Bryan Tyler'.

2. Committee Review Group – Scrutiny Arrangements

Debbie Forde, Governance Advisor presented this item, which outlined the proposal put forward by the Committee Review Group in relation to scrutiny committee arrangements.

Key points raised:

- Following a recommendation from Full Council, the Committee Review Group was set up to review the Council's committee arrangements in two stages.
- The first stage related to regulatory committee arrangements, and reported back to Council in June 2016.
- The second stage related to the scrutiny committee arrangements, and intended to report back to Council in October 2016.
- Currently the Council had five scrutiny committees. It was proposed to have four scrutiny committees aligned to Cabinet and Director Portfolios: Children and Education Scrutiny Committee, Adults and Communities Scrutiny Committee, Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee.
- The Committee Review Group considered that the work of the Scrutiny Commission for Rural Affairs fell into two main areas:
 - (a) scrutinising mainstream policies of the Council such as the Housing Strategy; and
 - (b) matters relating to rural issues, such as developing the Rural Vision and Parish Charter.
- Whilst the work of the Commission was invaluable, many of the strategies were reported to other mainstream scrutiny committees, and therefore duplicated the work of other scrutiny committees.
- Other matters such as developing a Rural Vision and Parish Charter duplicated the work of the Parish Council Liaison meeting.
- It was proposed that rural issues should be dealt with differently to strengthen the role of the role of Parish Council members in the decision making system by:
 - (a) co-opting parish councillors on the new scrutiny committee mainstreaming rural affairs within the work of the scrutiny committees,.
 - (b) Strengthening the role of the Parish Council Liaison meeting by ensuring the meeting was a consultee on rural matters as well as other parish council policies and making recommendations directly into Cabinet, Scrutiny Committees or other Regulatory committees.
 - (c) A further suggestion was to change the name of the Parish Council and Rural Affairs Liaison Committee

Discussions, comments and responses were as follows:

- It was questioned whether the co-opted Parish Councillors would include urban Councillors as well as those from rural areas. It was proposed that the Parish Council Liaison Committee would nominate Parish Councillors from rural areas. Any co-opted position would be for the entirety of the municipal year.
- It was a concern the proposals would not allow rural matters to have the same level of strategic impact as previously enjoyed.
- It was noted that Scrutiny committees could co-opt up to four Members. Some committees were required to co-opt a number of statutory members.
- It was considered that the consultation period, with an expected decision to be taken by Full Council on 12 October, was too short a timeframe.
- It was advised that the proposed structure if agreed by council would come into effect on 1 January 2017. Therefore, feedback from Parish Councils on the role of the Parish Council Liaison Meeting and further discussions on its role could take place over a longer timescale prior to and beyond the 1 January 2016 implementation date.
- Following questions it was advised that although it was the decision of the scrutiny committees whether or not to co-opt members, the proposals to strengthen the role of the Parish Council Liaison Committee was supported by both a cross party of senior members on the Working Group and the Leader of the Council. The recommendation to co-opt Parish Councillors on to the committees would also be included in the report to Council.
- It was suggested that the proposals had not been thought through and that the timeframes were not practical.
- It was requested that further information the parameters of the consultation be provided to all the Parish Councils.

AGREED ACTION

The Parish Council Liaison:

- 1) Was not currently in favour of the abolition of the Scrutiny Commission for Rural Affairs;
- 2) However, if the proposals were agreed, each Scrutiny Committee would co-opt two rural representatives, as nominated by the Parish Council Liaison group; and
- 3) More time should be provided to consult with their Parish Councils on the proposals to strengthen the role of the Parish Council Liaison meeting.

3. Maximising the use of Community Assets

Parish Councillor Henry Clark provided the Meeting with a presentation on maximising the use of community assets. The presentation would be attached to the minutes at Appendix A.

Discussions, comments and responses were as follows:

- A free copy of 'A practical handbook for people running buildings in local communities' was available [online](#).
- A review of Community Assets was currently underway, providing the opportunity to explore the transfer of assets to community groups of Parish Councils. The Council adopted a [Community Asset Transfer Strategy](#) in September 2013. As such, a dialogue would be opened with each of the Parish Council's as to the future of community assets. It was advised that the ambition of the Council was to keep as many open as possible.
- It was advised that most community assets were managed by voluntary community associations. If the building was in a parish area, the Parish Council would be the first point of contact. All options would be available for negotiation.
- It was highlighted that a 'Trust Model' was being developed in order to investigate the prospect of collective management.
- It was noted that the Department for Communities and Local Government had published a [consultation](#) into capping parish precepts. It was considered that this went against the increasing expectations on parish councils.

4. Local Access Forum

Peter Garnham, Highway Services, Local Access Forum, presented this item, which outlined the main role of the Local Access Forum, and provided answers to the most frequently raised questions.

Key points raised:

- The Local Access Forum (LAF) was a statutory body which provided advice on matters affecting public access. The Forum was made up of users of local rights of way, owners and occupiers of access land, and other interested parties.
- The LAF advised the Council and were consulted on planning applications affecting rights of way.
- Representatives from parish councils were welcomed to apply to become members of the Forum.
- As a highway authority, Peterborough City Council had a statutory duty to ensure that rights of way were maintained in a reasonable condition and kept clear of obstructions.
- SKANSKA were the Council's Highway Service Provider, and the rights of way service had been outsourced to SKANSKA as part of the contract.
- The majority of rights of way in Peterborough were public footpaths and bridleways.
- New rights of way could be formed through creation agreements, where the highway authority enters into an agreement with the landowner, or presumed dedication, based on the principle of long use by the public without challenge.

- Two new rights of way were being developed, led by The Northern Footpaths Forum in Peakirk, and Barnack Parish Council in Pilsgate. These were funded by the Paths for Communities grant scheme.
- It was noted that adding historic footpaths to the Definitive Map would closed after 1 January 2026.
- In order to reinstate a right of way, or to report blocked and overgrown paths, users should report issues to the Council on 01733 747474 or email PROW@peterborough.gov.uk, who would then contact the landowner.

Discussions, comments and responses were as follows:

- A question was raised in relation to a block right of way in Helpston. It was advised that while the Council would use the Highways Act to address the issue, it would first open up communication with the landowner to allow them to co-operate.
- It was noted that problems face with the Council's website and reporting right of way issues were being addressed.

AGREED ACTION

It was agreed that the Parish Council Liaison would provide any nominations from Parish Councils to the Local Access Forum to Peter Garnham.

5. Feedback from Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities

Parish Councillor Joseph Dobson introduced this item, which provided feedback from the Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities meeting held on 6 September 2016.

Key points raised:

- The Housing Strategy was discussed, with particular emphasis made on its rural implications.
- The Housing Strategy and Local Plan were expected to be released on 25 October 2016. Consultation would close at the end of November 2016.
- The Strategy comprised four priorities: (1) supporting substantial and sustainable growth, (2) improving housing conditions to support health and wellbeing, (3) ensuring the provision of a range of supported and specialist accommodation, and (4) meeting housing need and ensuring affordability.
- It was suggested that how rural housing needs were assessed and what consultation had been undertaken with rural communities was not addressed.
- The second item discussed was the new Prevention and Enforcement Service (PES).
- This represented a cross-boundary response to Prevention and Enforcement, under one single management structure.
- The service was evidence based and incorporated a number of Council services, including response to anti social behaviour, CCTV, parking, and community safety.
- Within the service there were 14 Police Constables and 29 Police Community Support Officers, which complimented the Police's Rural Crime Action Ream.
- Information on the meeting was available on the [Council website](#).

6. Parish Conference

Parish Councillor Henry Clark introduced this item, which provided an overview of what to expect from the Parish Conference on 15 November 2016.

Key points raised:

- John Connell from the Department for Communities and Local Government would be in attendance. If there was a particular topic that Parish Councillors wished to be raised, this could be addressed.
- There would be a question and answer session following his presentation.

- Topics for discussion included community engagement, and digital connectivity with Ed Sanders from Athene.
- A workshop would be held on local best practice and innovative ways of working.
- A map to the venue would be included within the information circulated.

The date of the next Parish Council Liaison Meeting was 21 December 2016.

CHAIRMAN
6.30PM - 8:15PM

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