

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL LIAISON MEETING  
HELD AT 6.30PM, ON  
WEDNESDAY, 2 FEBRUARY 2022  
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM**

**Present:**

Cllr John Howard	Acting Chair of Parish Council Liaison and Cabinet Advisor for Housing, Culture and Communities, Peterborough City Council (PCC)
Parish Cllr Dawn Magnus	Eye Parish Council
Parish Cllr Jason Merrill	Bretton Parish Council
Parish Cllr Neil Boyce	Castor Parish Council and Co-opted Member, Communities Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Vince Moon	Werrington Neighbourhood Council
Cllr June Bull	Orton Longueville Parish Council and Co-opted Member Children and Education Scrutiny Committee and Adults and Health Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Henry Clark	Peakirk Parish Council
Cllr Chris Taylor	Newborough and Borough Fen Parish Council
Debbie Lines	Clerk, Barnack and Pilsgate Parish Council
Cllr Tracy Thomas	Northborough Parish Council
Cllr Joe Dobson	Helpston Parish Council
Cate Harding	Co-ordinator, Good Neighbours – Rural Peterborough
Matt Oliver	Head of Think Communities
Elaine Matthews	Think Communities Manager
David Beauchamp	Democratic Services Officer

**13. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for Absence were received from the Chair, Cllr David Over (Cllr John Howard in attendance as substitute) and Parish Councillor Michael Samways, Ailsworth Parish Council and Co-opted Member, Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

**14. MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL LIAISON MEETING HELD ON 1 DECEMBER 2022**

The Minutes of the Parish Council Liaison (PCL) Meeting held on 1 December 2021 were agreed as a true and accurate record subject to the inclusion of Parish Cllr Bull's Scrutiny Co-opted Member titles.

**15. REVISITING ITEM DEFERRED FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING – FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS FOR PARISH COUNCIL LIAISON**

The Head of Think Communities introduced this agenda item, which invited parish councillors to make a decision on how Parish Council Liaison meetings should be administered in the future, as per the options paper circulated at the previous meeting. PowerPoint Slides may be found in Appendix 1.

The Co-ordinator, Good Neighbours – Rural Peterborough added that she hoped the sides helped to address concerns raised about the proposals from the previous meeting.

Parish Councillor Boyce raised examples of successful projects being undertaken by the Good Neighbours Scheme, e.g. improvements to community transport and liaison with the Langdyke Countryside Trust.

The Parish Council Liaison meeting debated the item and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members asked if Peterborough City Council had produced an alternative proposal for Parish Council Liaison, as requested at the previous meeting. Officers responded that PCC would struggle to provide greater support than was offered at present. The proposals from the Good Neighbours Scheme would provide additional capacity at no extra cost. Checks and balances would be put in place, such as a memorandum of understanding and a time limit, to help provide reassurance.
- Members questioned the motives of the Good Neighbours Scheme in wanting to support Parish Council Liaison free of charge, noting that the organisation received funding from the City Council and parish councils.
- Support was expressed for the proposals, noting that the Liaison meetings were no longer effective and were in need of revitalisation by someone who was familiar with the needs of communities. The assertion that the Good Neighbours Scheme had ulterior motives was challenged.
- Members suggested that the Good Neighbours Scheme could be a participant of the meeting rather than the organiser.
- Members commented that the proposed tripartite 'levelling up' model would improve the capacity and focus of the meeting.
- Parish Councillor Boyce commented that he would be abstaining from the vote.
- Parish Councillor Bull, seconded by Parish Councillor Henry Clark proposed that the Parish Council Liaison meeting adopt the tripartite model set out by the Head of Think Communities, the Co-ordinator – Good Neighbours Rural Peterborough and Parish Councillor Boyce. A vote was taken (5 in favour, 4 against, 1 abstention) and this proposal was therefore **AGREED**.
- Members asked why some people in the call had not voted. The Democratic Services Officer responded that some participants were not eligible to vote, e.g. the Chair and supporting officers.

## **ACTIONS AGREED**

The Parish Council Liaison meeting **RESOLVED** to adopt the tripartite model set out by the Head of Think Communities, the Co-ordinator – Good Neighbours Rural Peterborough and Parish Councillor Boyce.

## 16. BRIEFING ON PHASE 2 OF THE PCC BUDGET

The Head of Think Communities introduced this agenda item. PowerPoint Slides may be found in Appendix 2

The Parish Council Liaison meeting debated the item and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members asked how sensitive and achievable the £300k surplus was and how this would affect the opening of the 2023/24 Budget process. Officers responded that the Budget had been subject to significant oversight from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and an independent panel. Individual departments had undergone a rigorous process to identify savings and risks had been clearly set out. Officers across the Council were keen to make sure this surplus was achieved and that Government control of PCC could be avoided. A more detailed answer would be provided by the finance team outside the meeting.
- Members asked if it was sustainable for the Council's finances to be so dependent on grant funding. It was agreed that an answer would be given by the Finance team outside the meeting.
- Members commented that they felt the presentation was intended more for the City Council than Parish Councils. Officers responded that this presentation had been sent to all consultees and all Heads of Service had been asked to deliver it. The presentation provided the facts of the Council's current financial position.
- Members responded that it was not clear how this position would impact on communities. Officers responded that there were impacts across the City Council's services.
- Members requested that a senior member of the Finance team delivers Budget presentations to Parish Council Liaison going forward, as has been done in the past. Officers acknowledged that this would have been preferable and would seek to ensure this took place in the future. This meeting would have had to have been deferred to facilitate the attendance of a Finance colleague.
- Members commented that it impressive that the City Council had delivered a balanced budget in light of the reduction of the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) to all Principal Councils by the Government.
- Members felt the increase in City Councillors' allowances was inappropriate given the current financial situation. The Chair responded that this that sat uncomfortably with him but delaying the increase would have resulted in increasingly large increases being given in future years when the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel were eventually implemented.
- Members commented that it was proving difficult for Newborough and Borough Fen Parish Council to get responses from the City Council in light of its staffing issues, especially the Highways and Planning Teams. It was agreed that the Head of Think Communities would chase this issue up on behalf of the Parish Council.
- Members raised concerns around the impact of the loss of brown bin collection and fly-tipping of garden waste and that poor service delivery would not be well received by parishes in light of higher levels of Council tax. Officers responded that the Council had a strong focus on addressing fly-tipping and there was a need to find creative solutions.
- Members suggested that the Council could allow residents to exceed the 12 visit limit for the Household Recycling Centre (HRC) if they were assisting someone

who did not have access to a vehicle. Officers responded that this was a good suggestion.

- Members commented that a cross-party working group had already made recommendations to tackle fly-tipping including the use of CCTV cameras but these had not been deployed in rural areas. It was agreed that the Chair would chase this up with the Cabinet Member for Waste, Street Scene and the Environment.
- Members suggested that Parish Councils could be given passes to access the HRC in order to assist residents.
- Members commented that many Parish Councils operated their own bulky waste collection services and suggested this should be taken on by the City Council.
- Members expressed frustration that recommendations made by working groups were not always implemented.
- It was clarified that the Council offered a bulky waste collection service to individuals but this did not extend to parish councils.
- Members requested that the Democratic Services Officer send parish representatives a link to the Fly Tipping Task and Finish Group Report.

#### **ACTIONS AGREED:**

1. PCC's Finance team to provide detailed answers to the following questions
  - a) How sensitive and achievable the £300k surplus was and how this would affect the opening of the 2023/24 Budget process
  - b) If it was sustainable for the Council's finances to be so dependent on grant funding.
2. The Head of Think Communities to chase up issues experienced by Newborough and Borough Fen Parish Council in contacting the Planning and Highways Teams.
3. The Chair to request more information from the Cabinet Member for Waste, Street Scene and the Environment on the use of CCTV cameras to tackle fly-tipping in rural areas. The response to be distributed as a briefing note before the next meeting.
4. The Democratic Services Officer to send parish representatives a link to the Fly Tipping Task and Finish Group Report

#### **17. UPDATE ON LOCAL COUNCIL CONFERENCE**

The Think Communities Manager introduced the agenda item, commenting that suggestions received for speakers under the agreed 'Environment' theme for the conference included the John Clare Countryside Project and Stagecoach. 'Up the garden Bath' was also suggested. This is a local organisation who improve the environment through recycling, renovating gardens and green spaces and helping children to understand the importance of their environment. Parish Councillor Boyce had offered to work in partnership with the City Council to co-design the conference. It was felt this could be a great event, despite the lack of budget.

Members were asked to make two decisions:

- 1) When should the meeting be held, noting that it had been delayed due to COVID-19?
- 2) Should the meeting be held in person or virtually?

The Parish Council Liaison meeting debated the item and in summary, key points raised

and responses to questions included:

- There was a consensus that the meeting should be held in-person, in the spring or summer. A fully virtual conference could be arranged as a backup at short notice if required by COVID-19 restrictions.
- There was general agreement that the chosen venue should have access to outdoor space to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 if required. The Peterborough Environment City Trust (PECT) building at Nene Park was suggested as a possibility.
- A Nene Park Trust facility was suggested as a possible venue. The appropriate person to contact would be Andrew MacDermott.
- It was suggested that the meeting could be held in a location that hosted a nature recovery project and that one-way livestreaming could be considered.
- A suggestion was made that the meeting could be hybrid; held both in-person and virtually simultaneously. Officers commented that the cost and complexity of hybrid arrangements could pose a challenge.
- It was agreed that the Think Communities Manager, the Co-ordinator – Good Neighbours Rural Peterborough and Parish Councillor Boyce would collaborate to develop plans for the conference further based on the ideas above and report back to parish councils via email.

#### **ACTIONS AGREED:**

1. Parish Conference to be a physical meeting in a venue with access to outdoor space and held in the spring or summer.
2. The Think Communities Manager, the Co-ordinator – Good Neighbours Rural Peterborough and Parish Councillor Boyce to collaborate to develop a forward plan and agenda for the conference based on the ideas raised at this meeting and report back to parish councils via email.

#### **18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- Members commented that there were no pedestrian paths between Newborough and Peterborough and asked if this could be discussed at the next Parish Council Liaison meeting. The Chair responded that the Council was developing a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and suggested that parishes contribute to this process and contact Lewis Banks – Transport and Environment Manager with their requirements. A presentation on the LCWIP was suggested for a future agenda of Parish Council Liaison
- Members commented that the relevant ward councillors should be making representations regarding the issue raised above.
- Members requested that the Head of Think Communities discuss Combined Authority Funding for walking and cycling infrastructure with Lewis Banks – Transport and Environment Manager.
- Members commented that they used to contribute to the Local Access Forum regarding walking and cycling infrastructure concerns and would engage with the LCWIP now they were aware of it.
- Members made various suggestions for future Parish Council Liaison agenda items as follows:
  - Tommy Kelly – Armed Forces Covenant Officer. It was suggested he could also attend the parish conference.
  - Update on the new funds to revitalise the City centre and improve the culture and heritage offer

- Opportunity Peterborough and upskilling workers, especially in areas with high unemployment.
- Peterborough's new university.
- The Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)
- Impact of flooding on low-lying areas of the City. It was suggested that this could also be discussed at the Parish Conference.
- Members suggested that Energy could be a topic for discussion at the Parish Conference.
- The Chair thanked Members for their contributions.

**ACTIONS AGREED:**

- Various possible agenda items for Parish Council Liaison suggested (please see bullet points above)
- Members requested that the Head of Think Communities discusses Combined Authority Funding for walking and cycling infrastructure with Lewis Banks – Transport and Environment Manager.
- Members suggested that Energy could be a topic for discussion at the Parish Conference.

CHAIR

6.30pm – 8.02pm