

Peterborough Parish Council Liaison Meeting

**Minutes of the Parish Council Liaison Meeting
Held at 6:30 PM on Wednesday 5th July 2023 Virtual Meeting via
Zoom**

Hosted by Good Neighbours Rural Peterborough CIO

Present:

Cllr David Over		Chair Parish Liaison Group
Cllr Keith Lievesley		Ufford Parish Council & Vice Chair Parish Liaison Working Group
Cllr John Bradshaw		Wittering Parish Council
Cllr Henry Clark		Peakirk Parish Council
Cllr Irene Walsh		Bainton & Ashton Parish Council
Cllr John Stannage		Wansford Parish Council
Vince Moon		Werrington Neighbourhood Council
Cllr Sue Welch		Marholm Parish Council
Cllr Margaret Long		Thorney Parish Council
Cllr Roland Pickett		Orton Waterville Parish Council
Cllr Chris Lester		Eye Parish Council
Cllr Neil Boyce		Castor Parish Council, Co-opted Member Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee
Lewis Banks		Peterborough City Council
Cllr Chris Wiggin		Hampton Vale Ward
Rowan Rumball		Peterborough City Council
Cllr Dorothy Halfhide		Thorney Parish Council
Cllr Florence Otim		Hampton Parish Council
Cate Harding		Good Neighbours-Rural Peterborough

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from, Richard Clarke Wansford Parish Council

2. Minutes of the Parish Council Liaison Meeting held 8th March 2023

The Minutes of the meeting were approved as a true record.

3. Blanket Speed Restrictions in Rural Areas with PCC Officer Lewis Banks – Transport & Environment Manager, Peterborough City Council (Peter Tebb not present)

Lewis began provided a PowerPoint presentation; the main points were as follows:

Current approach

- Parish Councils
- Fund 20mph
- Fund traffic calming measures
- Peterborough City Council
- Focuses resources on where accidents are happening
- Includes reduced speed limits (New Cut)
- Other traffic calming measures (speed cushions on section of Elm Road)

Blanket speed restrictions: Considerations

- Which roads?
- What is the rationale/criteria? (Average speeds, accidents, some people driving too fast?)
- Compliance (Rural roads do not lend themselves very well to lower speed limits, shops, houses, DfT guidance – difficult to introduce a speed limit and get compliance unless there is strong evidence that most drivers will comply with it.
- DfT Guidance – speed limits should not change regularly along a route: national speed limit, buffer zone, village speed limit.
 - There will be a requirement of Police support/enforcement
 - Public consultation must evidence support as it would impact on longer journey times, including buses.
 - Implementation would be a council key decision as it would impact on 2 or more wards
 - There would be cost implications, including signage and traffic management systems.

Q. Cllr Bradshaw specific to Wittering – We have previously talked about the Wittering flyover being included in the 2025 road improvement strategy, as the deadline is fast approaching, please can I have an update?

A. Lewis responded that he had a meeting with Cllr Elsey tomorrow to discuss this, he said that they were interested in putting a response to DfT and National Highways to emphasise the importance and the need for this flyover and either Lewis or Cllr Elsey would feedback to him. He said that there was some historic evidence that they had but extra information from the Parish would be useful. The deadline consultation was around the 13th July.

Q. Cllr Walsh – The Parishes in Barnack Ward have come together to raise concerns over speeding and are proposing reduced speed limits within and between their villages. She asked for the reaction from PCC.

A. Lewis responded that there is not a lot of progress from Peterborough, he understands the desire from this cluster of rural villages to see a decrease in speed limits and it opens up the door to other rural roads in rural communities and villages. The council needs to be cautious in agreeing a rationale for doing so because this could potentially set a precedent for other areas. If something like this would happen, we would need to justify why we do this for one area and not another. The council is currently looking at the network from an accident perspective.

Q. Cllr Walsh wanted to know how this could be progressed.

Lewis took an action to produce a report with more detail on all the discussions with a full response

Cllr Over asked for a guarantee for this response and was assured on this. Lewis stated that the change to head of service had affected previous discussions.

Q. Cllr Walsh asked if there was any support from the Police if villages purchased speed cameras? Lewis stated the police are currently trialling this via Speed Watch in the Cambridgeshire area. Lewis took an action to chase up on this. Cllr Over suggested the measures in Bainton are useful but speeding is an issue. Cllr Lievesley stated the ward had already mapped out a way forwards, he asked Lewis what they could do to get repeater 30mph signs in Ufford, they had been told that they could not have them if streetlighting was spaced according to the rules. He also asked about accident data for King Street Junction, which has repeatedly been promised but not received to date. He has also been asking for a stop sign on the north side of the cross roads since a fatal accident over 25 years ago.

A. Lewis suggested having a discussion outside of this meeting to get some heads together to find solutions and apologised that the accident data had not already been provided – action to provide this data.

Q. Cllr Clark wanted to see traffic restrictions in Peakirk but this needed to be enforced by police. There has been a fatality in the Parish. The speed cameras in the village record data and this is sent to the Combined Authority but there has not been any response to this data. How can we work together to get a solution to get the result we need?

A. Lewis responded that the authority was challenged on how to prioritise and they currently focus on accident hot spots but he is happy to discuss with individual Parishes where there were concerns

Q. Cllr Lievesley asked if speed cushions would be provided free by the council

A. Lewis responded that this only happens by priority. The challenge is on how to fund these cushions.

Q. Cate Harding stated that there had been historically a cross party working group to address these matters and wanted to know if this could be resurrected?

A. Lewis said it could but his understanding was that the constitution asks for members to request for this to be set up but has not heard a request – Cllr Over thought this should be councillor led. The issue being it would need to be all councillors and while the urban councillors were keen on this but didn't see the issues with the rural councils' and suggested there was activity that could happen in the next month or so.

Q. Cllr Long asked how a 20mph limit in Thorney would affect the through road?

A. Lewis said this would be an issue for additional signage, but his colleague Peter was working on costings for this. Lewis asked Cllr Long to contact him directly to put her in touch with Peter.

Lewis was thanked for his valuable input.

4. Biodiversity with Rowan Rumbel PCC Biodiversity Officer

(Slightly interrupted due to internet issues so working group updates happened around this report)

Rowan Rumball MCIEEM, Senior Wildlife Officer June 2023

Rowan gave an overview of previous experience working with wildlife protection. His main areas of expertise are in surveying and protection of protected species, also with development of biodiverse and eco rich habitats. He shared 'The 25 Year Environment Plan' which the government created with the ambition of leaving the environment in a better state than we found it. It aims to deliver cleaner air and water in our cities and rural landscapes, protect threatened species and provide richer wildlife habitats. It calls for an approach to agriculture, forestry, land use and fishing that puts the environment first. This requires everyone to make better decisions.

Manage the environment based on national capital to do so.

Manifest through the ten goals.

25-year goals to achieve:

- Clean air
- Clean and plentiful water
- Thriving plants and wildlife
- Reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards such as flooding and drought
- Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently
- Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment

Managing pressure on:

- Mitigating and adapting to climate change
- Minimising waste
- Managing exposure to chemicals

- Enhancing biosecurity

Policies will focus on:

- Using & managing land sustainably
- Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes
- Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing
- Increasing resource efficiency and reducing pollution and waste
- Securing clean, productive, and biologically diverse seas and oceans
- Protecting & improving the global environment

He advised that within his job description, his primary role is to provide specialist professional services in respect to ecology and biodiversity, ensuring that recommendations and actions comply with councils' policies, legal and statutory requirements. He spends the majority of his time looking at planning applications, protecting the environment. He also reviews new regulations and legislation and liaises and support with partner organisations (such as local councils) to ensure a high profile of ecological issues in the area to ensure we maximise eco diversity. He shared a table to explain biodiversity net gain contributions in new buildings. He discussed the example of new housing in the place of fields in Peterborough where the landscape will be improved by contributions from the developer (at least 10% increase). This is in addition to the existing protected species plan that is in place. This could be delivered via habitat creation or enhancement etc. through the use of credits. There is a hierarchical approach to net gain and where developers can buy the credits from. They should source land immediately adjacent to the land being developed and if not possible, Rowan advises to the next nearest place according to the Peterborough Council City area initially and if this is not achievable these credits can be bought from a BNG (Biodiversity Net Gain) bank outside of the area. This scheme is already in place in Peterborough and will be implemented across the country in November this year. The documents for this can be found online. More credits are likely to be found in the west of Peterborough but Rowan will be seeking to create a balance, so improvements are also made to the East through the planning and development process. Peterborough are currently in the top 5% of sites that qualify as good across the country for protecting wildlife sites working in collaboration with the Wildlife Trust.

He showed some images of biodiverse sites in Peterborough to share good examples in the local area. Whilst he spends much of his time working on planning, he would love to spend more of his time working with local people to enhance the environment.

Q. Cllr Welch – what are your views on the productiveness of green field v brown field sites

A. based on ecological theory; diversity is key. Greenfield sites such as managed sites are valuable, but they tend to be low diversity. Brown field sites are interesting as they are less frequent than green field sites and they are heavily disturbed. Within a brown field site there may be a wider range of habitats favouring differing rare plant species. Botany surveys are a must on brown field sites which have been left for over 10 years (gave an example of an old pet care site in Peterborough).

Q. Cllr Welch went onto ask if there was a policy regarding verge cutting to push the city council to be less vigorous

A. Botany surveys have been carried out across the John Clare areas and identified diverse areas to be protected. Parish Councils can lobby the city council to take over the verges and manage them in a way that they want to. There is also a trial of specific seed mixes of flowering species which favour very low cuts.

Q. Cllr Clark said they had tried not cutting the grass and leaving for a year, there was a lot of resistance from residents perceiving this to be untidy, is there any way we can increase education?

A. Yes, if you have any ideas, get in touch with me, I'm happy to come and do a walk and talk with your village or identifying any areas to develop in biodiversity.

Q. Cllr Walsh, as Parish councillors, we are all on board, in Bainton, we are cutting the verges in a way to encourage biodiversity as much as possible but we are in a battle with residents about keeping the village tidy. Can you come up with a way to communicate the benefits to everyone? How do we do that? Please come and help us out.

A. Feel free to email Lewis to meet you and do a walk around your local area. Advertisement is key, as many people as possible need to be aware that I am coming. I am happy to walk around with 30-50 people if necessary.

Q. Cllr Lievesley, when you were showing us the map, you were concentrating on the county wildlife sites but the crown jewels in Peterborough are the statutory sites e.g. national nature reserves SSI's etc. If Castor were developed for housing the Hanglands would be under severe threat. I hope in addition to offsetting, you would give consideration to our leader that as Peterborough is an environment city that we shouldn't trash our crown jewels. To the East of Peterborough are the Nene Washes; we mustn't accept that trees are the only indicator of where biodiversity occurs.

A. I agree, it's difficult when it comes to developments. There is still a feeling that biodiversity gets in the way. We are currently fighting hard to protect Dogsthorpe Star Pit near the A16 alongside Natural England and the Wildlife Trust. We kick back as hard as we can and try to make our voices heard in the local planning team. SSSIs tend to fall under Natural England rather than Peterborough City Council. I do have connections with them and if you have any concerns with particular sites, please get in touch and I will pass them along.

Q. Cllr Boyce asked about mitigation in Peterborough. As Peterborough is running out of green spaces so how is this managed? If a developer goes to a farmer in Fenlands, how long does that last?

A. The minimum time frame secured is 30 years; any credit has to be maintained for the habitat that it was created for, if it was a woodland or waterbody, I would be making a strong argument for it to be in place for 100 years. The cost of the credit is between 30-35 thousand pounds. Monitoring is complex. The final body responsible is me. A failure to comply as described on the documentation would result in a planning enforcement issue. As this scheme has only been in place for 6 months, none of the developments have come into force yet. We are looking to employ another officer shortly to work in this area.

Q. Cllr Over said an owner in one of his Parishes has cut down a willow tree and drained a pond, what protection do these small developments have?

A. The first thing is to establish what is in the Local Authority purview and what is a legal issue. The trees are on private land with no conditions attached. However, they had an ecological report which stated that one of those trees had a moderate to high potential bat roost in it; that means that the tree wasn't necessarily hosting bats but the Countryside Acts states it is illegal to destroy an active known bat roost. This is where wildlife law becomes tricky. This site had been known to the police and that they have attended on site but I don't know strictly what was said by the police, only that the police know that a potential crime has occurred. The Local Authority Planning Department has a statutory responsibility not to grant any planning application which looks like it might break the law. I have outlined in my consultation all the ways which this site could potentially break the law and also policy. I believe there were things that could have been overcome, some of my objections were that they could have done that but had not. My

personal opinion, the most difficult situation to overcome is ancient woodland. It is an irreplaceable habitat. In this example, you may irreversibly damage the environment. I will wait to see what their report says.

Rowan was thanked for his very good report which was extremely interesting.

4.1. Working Group Update covering:

- **Climate Change Summit –**

No report from the working group at this time

- **PCC Scrutiny Committee Co-opted Membership updates –**

Cllr Boyce reported that he was representing Adult & Health with Mark Ormston as a substitute; Children in Education Cllr Katie Howard with Cllr Terrance Young as a substitute, Climate Change Cllr Mike Samways with Cllr Neil Boyce as a substitute, Growth and resources represented by 2 co-opted members as it is a large area Cllr Mark Ormston & Cllr Terrance Young.

AOB

Cllr Boyce brought up difficulties with getting Neighbourhood Planning officers from the City Council, I've spoken to Adrian Chapman and we now have a neighbourhood Planning Lead Officer - Marie Saleme. Cate will circulate her email address

Cllr Over thanked everyone for their time, wished everyone a happy holiday and especially thanked our 2 guests and to Cate Harding from Good Neighbours Charity for hosting.

7. Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday 15th November 2023 6:30pm via Zoom

Peterborough City Council Committee Members:

All Parish Councillors and Parish Clerks

Councillors: D Over (Chair)

Substitute: Councillor Ishfaq Hussain

Further information about this meeting can be obtained from:

Cate Harding, Good Neighbours Rural Peterborough on:

Telephone: 07735 810139 or email: coordinator.gnrp@gmail.com