



Minutes of Reach Parish Council meeting held on; Wednesday 7th May 2014.

Attendance

Michael Aves	Vice Chairman	Present
Ross Clark	Councillor	Present
Rita Dunnett	Councillor	Present
Hilary Fielding	Councillor	Present
Joyce Harrison	Councillor	Present
David Thomas	Chairman	Present
Diana Ward	Councillor	Present
Susan Bailey	Clerk	Present
Allen Alderson	District Councillor	Present
David Brown	County Councillor	Not Present

1. Forum for Members of the Public

Eight members of the public attended, to discuss the Reach Community Solar farm planning application, item 7.

2. Election of Officers

The following officers were elected: Chairman – Councillor Thomas,
Vice Chairman – Councillor Clark,
Play Spaces Officer – Councillor Dunnett,
Rights of Way Officer – Councillor Fielding,
Swaffham Prior Parochial Charities Officer – John Robinson,
Village Centre Officers – Councillors Dunnett, Ward & Harrison,
Amenity Fund Officers – Councillors Clark & Dunnett.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the previous Parish Council meeting were reviewed and signed as correct.

5 (1) Amenity Fund Committee

There was no activity during the previous month.

5 (2) County Councillor's Report

April saw the last meeting of Cabinet at the County Council in advance of the change to a committee system. The meeting had a lengthy agenda, with 31 items for determination covering a wide range of topics. These included strategies for highway maintenance and household recycling sites as well as more specific items such as authorising the disposal of a number of properties deemed to be surplus to requirements in the Council's property portfolio.

I had a number of items to present including: joint commissioning arrangements with the Clinical Commissioning Group for Children's health services; the creation of a new Voluntary Adoption Agency in partnership with the adoption charity Coram, and the statement of sufficiency for Looked after Children (a legal requirement to say how the County Council will ensure we adequate resources to look after children coming into care of the Council).

April also saw an announcement by Cllr Martin Curtis that he would not be seeking re-election as Leader of the Conservative Group or as Leader of the Council. Cllr Steve Count, who represents March North, was elected as Leader Elect of the Conservative Group, to take effect from the Annual Meeting on 13th May, when a new Leader of the Council will also be elected.

I attended a meeting of the Constitution and Ethics Committee. This meeting agreed further amendments to the constitution in advance of the committee system and also considered formal complaints against 3 County Councillors. It was agreed to forward one of these complaints to a formal hearing for further investigation, whilst the other 2 were resolved on the day.

5 (3) District Councillor's Report

Ely Southern By-Pass. A joint letter from Sir Jim Paice MP, James Palmer leader of ECDC, Rev. Mark Bonney the Dean of Ely, and Paul Day the MD of Turners of Soham, has been sent to Mr. Eric Pickles the Communities Minister calling for him to have the final say on the £30 million scheme.

An objection is being lodged by English Heritage, who argues that the by-pass will spoil the views of Ely Cathedral, and that lowering and widening the existing underpass would be a better option.

New Committees. ECDC has two statutory regulatory committees & five other committees. From the next municipal year this will be reduced from five to three. This should result in a reduction in officer and councillor times, leading to financial savings.

Meeting. I attended a full Council meeting where we discussed the possible reduction of ECDC Councillors from 39 to 27. The Chief Executive is now submitting a request to the Boundary Commission.

Thefts. On the evening of May 2nd there was a burglary in Reach, where money & jewellery were stolen. Plus four burglaries in Swaffham Prior. Please be vigilant.

5 (4) Financial Report

Based on unaudited accounts YE 2014.

The Parish Council has achieved a very good financial result this year and expects to provide a surplus of approximately £1,400 from its normal business, for the year ending March 2014. (This excludes projects).

5 (5) Parish Council Members Meetings

Councillors Fielding & Ward attended the National Trust User Forum meeting. It was reported that Lode & Wicken villages are having problems with increased parking. There is a future plan to provide parking by Tubney Fen. The Parish Council do not feel Reach has a parking issue at present.

The National Trust has a new Strategic Manager – Joan Childs.

5 (6) Play Spaces

The Health & Safety inspection was carried out in April and we are awaiting the report.

5 (7) Rights of Way

Nails have been found, several times, at the end of the byway at the back of Ditchfield. The problem has now stopped but should it happen again the police will be contacted.

Part of Devils Dyke has not been cut back and it will soon be impassable. **Councillor Clark** to contact Karen Champion at Cambridgeshire County Council.

5 (8) Village Centre

Reach Fair went very well this year, there was to be a report and meeting on the 8th May.

5 (9) 24Acres Committee Report

A committee has been formed to arrange the official opening on the 1st June.

The access road will be repaired, starting on 12th May and a culvert will also be installed over the central ditch. The previously discussed improvements to the byway, with earth, are not practical and therefore not presently going ahead.

6. Village sign refurbishment

It had been previously agreed that the village sign should be refurbished. **Councillor Aves** to contact John Holmwood, to arrange the moving of the sign, to allow this work to be carried out.

7. Planning Applications – Reach Community Solar Farm

Last year's meeting with the village suggested that Reach residents were generally supportive of this project. Councillors are concerned that this could set a precedent to allow larger solar farms around the village. Concern was also voiced with regard to the negative visual impact the site will have on the village. The Reach Community Solar Farm representatives believe the farm will be hidden from view.

Investment into the Reach Community Solar Farm can come from anyone, not just Reach residence. The Reach Community Solar Farm project, by being set up as an industrial and provident society, means that the only thing they can do with the profits is to distribute them to the village -- after, that is, a return of around 4 per cent has been distributed to investors.

Reach Parish Council have made the following comments on this application.

"We are happy to support the above application but request the following planning conditions:

1. That the farm is only allowed to be operated by an industrial and provident society, and that it is not to be sold on to any other type of owner.
2. That the farm may not be extended. We are anxious that this planning application should not set a precedent for any larger development in the area.
3. That permission is granted only for a period of 20 years, which is the expected life of the solar farm."

8. Information Items

There were none.

9. Payments

Durant Cricket	£ 97.73
E.ON – street lighting	£ 331.28
CR Contracting	£ 291.00
CAPALC membership	£ 127.82
D. Blocksage	£ 70.00
N&G Marsh	£ 180.00
Ross Clark – 24Acres	£ 71.35
Amey Cespa – 24Acres	£ 442.39
Andrew Trump	£ 455.40
David Parr	£ 48.50

The date of the **next meeting** will be Wednesday 4th June 2014 at 7.30pm. The Agenda for the meeting will be issued by the previous Wednesday and can be accessed from the Parish Council area of the Reach website (www.reach-village.co.uk).

Chairman:

Date: