**Acle Parish Council**

**Clerk’s report for Parish Council meeting on 22nd February 2021**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **1.** | **Agenda items:** |
| 1.1 | **Acle Foodbank and Christmas Parcels** |
|  | Sally and Angela will update you on this.  Freethorpe Parish Council have sent us a donation of £250. I’ve also had private donations of £60. Sally has also reported that she is sometimes handed cash donations when people drop off food on Thursdays. |
| 1.2 | **Plastic-free Acle**  Anna will update you on this. |
| 1.3 | **Dr Bike Day** There will be a report on this. |
| 1.4 | **Parking Restrictions** The report is going to NCC Committee for them to sign it off and to show that they have considered the objections raised by residents and have either addressed those concerns or decided that safety concerns overrule those concerns. It should then be approved and then we will be waiting for a lining crew to be in the area at the right time. |
| 1.5 | **Damgate Wood and Cadent** Cadent’s (ex-National Grid for gas) contractors have been in touch with Acle Lands Trust about closing the footpath through Damgate Wood while they carry out works, as they will be digging a pit at the entrance. Acle Lands Trust are trying to get them to allow access outside of work hours, but Cadent want to shut the access for the duration of the works. Cadent will pay our legal fees for the agreement of an easement. |
| 1.6 | **Dates for 2021** I have emailed our MP, Jerome Mayhew, to request he support the request for the legislation to be extended to permit online meetings, which currently expires on 7th May. Jerome said that this is under active consideration by the Cabinet Office and he will let them know of the views of many parish councils which have got in touch with him.  I had pencilled in 19th April for the **Annual Parish Meeting** (ie the meeting of the parish) as we usually hold it on a separate night to the April Parish Council meeting. I discussed it with Angela and we propose that we move this parish meeting to 26th April and hold it at 6.30pm, on Zoom, before starting the Parish Council meeting, at 7.00, or after, if the parish meeting is still going on.   Depending on what happens with the possible extension to the legislation to permit online meetings, we could also consider holding the **Annual Parish Council Meeting** (ie the meeting of the parish council where the Chair is elected) before the 7th May, to ensure we can hold it via Zoom. It has to be held in May. This can be kept under review until we know more. |
| 1.7 | Sarah attended an online talk on the **Armed Forces Covenant**, under which local authorities have signed up to support veterans in whatever way necessary. I have looked at various websites but have not spotted anything that we, as a parish council, can do, but I have asked Sarah to give a short report on Monday. |
| 1.8 | Barry Brooks told me that the builders at **Herondale** were unloading large lorries with a fork-lift, on the Rec Centre car park. I asked Crocus about this and they confirmed that some lorries are too large to drive round the bend to the site, and back again, so they would be using the car park, with a trained banksman to manage this safely. I emailed Crocus to explain that the car park is privately owned and asking if they have done a precondition survey so that we can be sure that they pay for any damage done. I have also mentioned the mud on the road while all those lorries are carting spoil off site and have asked how often they are cleaning the road. I think it does no harm to keep showing an interest!  I’ve just had an email back to say that they have just done a precondition assessment. The roads are cleaned at the end of each day. |
| 1.9 | The **Acle Primary School** headteacher invited us to get involved in her review of the school’s aims. Angela is keen to be involved with this and is in contact with the headteacher. If you have any thoughts on this process, please let Angela know. |
| 1.10 | I have put the **Norfolk Rural Strategy** on the shared drive. My first thoughts were:  If this is a revised policy and this has already been in existence for some time, why are there not enough litter bins at beauty spots, why are public toilets being closed, why no improvements to rural transport, why did the funding for health walks cease? The problems for people accessing the N&N from here, for vaccines, has shown the weakness in the public transport system… and impossible to get to Hoveton for vaccines as there is only one bus to Wroxham and back… I also think local roads are unsafe for cycling…  Let me have your comments so that I can write more in my reply…. |
| 1.11 | I have put up details of Floating Pennywort on our website for information. It is highly invasive. |
| 2 | **Matters Arising from the Meeting of 25th January** |
| 2.1 | Anna has planted up the old **concrete litter bins** in New Road. |
| 2.2 | I reported to the Broads Authority that the **caravan** had not been removed, as they had suggested. A planning application is expected. |
| 2.3 | The BDC tree officer has said that 1 Sycamore and 4 Corsican Pines are missing from the group of trees protected by a TPO on the boundary of **Horners** and the old station road. The Planning Enforcement Officer has obtained ownership details from the Land Registry and will be writing to the owners to ask some questions before they decide what action to take. |
| 2.4 | Following comments about silt escaping from building sites into the watercourse, I contacted BDC about concerns re the **Acle Garden Machinery** site. The officer has reviewed the planning permissions for the site and has contacted the Internal Drainage Board who had advised during the planning application process that the applicant might need consent under the Land Drainage Act 1991.  Jackie has contacted District Councillor Lana Hempsall about the work being done on the site and Lana will come back to us when she has found out more. |
| 2.5 | Angela and Tony carried out my **staff review**. It was agreed:   * That I will let you know month by month how much overtime I am doing * That I will take some time off in lieu of overtime * That the Council will consider the employment of a deputy clerk when setting the budget next December * That we will meet again in April to review my hours worked |
| 3 | **Planning:** |
| 3.1 | **7 Peter Avenue 20210183 –** extension and car parking space **Land at Norwich Road 20210261 -** surface water drainage basins. |
| 3.2 | **The Draft Greater Norwich Local Plan:**  The consultation on the Plan is now open for comments on the legal compliance and the soundness of the plan. (Called a “Reg 19” consultation)  “Plans are sound if they are:   * **Positively prepared** – providing a strategy which, as a minimum seeks to meet the area’s objectively assessed needs, and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring authorities is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development; * **Justified**– an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence; * **Effective**– deliverable over the plan period and based on effective joint working on cross boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and * **Consistent with national policy**– enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the NPPF.”   I have spent some time looking at the hundreds of pages of documents on the website. Generally I think we should object to the lack on consultation on the increased numbers proposed for the site, but I don’t hold out any hope for any result. Also that the proposed suggestion to increase the number of houses was put forward as an attachment to the proposer’s comments on the plan.  Obviously everyone is very welcome to send your comments as individuals and residents.  Otherwise the same comments apply as last month:  The **draft Greater Norwich Local Plan** has been published. I sent you the details, but we should note that the proposal shows an additional 140 homes on the fields west of the Norwich Road site and west of Acle Academy, but does state that plans should include land for a link road able to cope with HGVs and agricultural traffic, and should leave land available for any future extension to Acle Academy. The public right of way from the top of Mill Lane would be protected.  The website says,  “We have already consulted three times on the contents of the plan.  The next stage of the plan-making process allows for **comments to be made on the legal compliance and soundness** of the Local Plan before submitting it to the Planning Inspector for independent examination in public.  This means:   * Has the plan been prepared in accordance with all legal and procedural requirements? * Does the plan meet the prescribed tests of soundness?”   Back in February 2020, Acle PC objected to both sites being developed:  “Acle Parish Council objects to this site being developed. The councillors do not feel that there is sufficient infrastructure in the village to support this size of development and that the impact on the village as a whole would be unacceptable; doctors' surgery, traffic movements etc. There are concerns about the carting away of waste from the sewerage plant in Damgate Lane and the impact on local residents if this were to increase.” |
| 3.3 | **Neighbourhood Plan** Acle’s Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in 2015 so it is about 6 years old. We discovered shortly afterwards that a NP becomes out-of-date fairly quickly as any Plan adopted by the local authority, or a Government decision, can overrule a NP and a NP becomes of less importance over time.  When we looked into it a while ago, we were told that we could either look to update our NP with minor changes, or could re-do it.  Acle’s Neighbourhood Plan is available on BDC’s website. |
| 4 | **Finance Report and Grants to Mental Health Charities**  It was suggested that Acle PC might give some grants to some more charities. So far this year we have given grants to:  Norfolk Accident Rescue Service  Citizens Advice  EACH  Priscilla Bacon Hospice  Air Ambulance  Red Cross  NHS Charities  Surfers Against Sewage (Plastic-free)  Nflk and Norwich Blind Ass’n  Leonard Cheshire Homes  AgeUK  Scotty’s Little Soldiers  RBL Poppy Appeal  I have come across MIND, Samaritans, Anna Freud Centre for Children, Norman Lamb’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Charity, but you will have other suggestions. |
| 4 | **Recreation Centre** |
| 4.1 | The Rec Centre have asked for a grant of £10,250 towards replacement lighting in the Indoor Bowls. The Indoor Bowls Club are putting in £1,500 towards the cost. This work could very conveniently be done while the club is in lockdown.  The Rec Centre hope to do the works to drain the football pitches later in the year, so they will be back in touch to ask for a grant from the S106 monies towards that work at a later date. |
| 4.2 | Simon Darter sent some more information on solar panels |
| 5 | **Chocolate Box:** Since the last meeting, the fire extinguishers in the shop and in the office spaces have been replaced or checked and refilled. A fire risk assessment has been done. Paul Kelly showed an electrical contractor round. |
| 6 | **Barclays:** I have just had a reply from BDC about planning permission for the site:  Use of the site as a café/bakery does not need planning permission as it is the same Use Class as a bank  Use of the site as a pre-school does require permission.  The formal feasibility study was completed, summarising the discussions we had with Fraser and showing the 3 drawings that you looked at, and the preference for Plan 6.  These projects made me think that we should have some sort of **corporate branding** and colours for our signage around the village. Angela has asked Jamie to give this some thought as he was so good at sorting out our Shop Acle banners. |
| 7 | **Land at Acle Primary School** Norfolk Property Services have replied to say that NCC will not sell us the land at the Fletcher Room site but are prepared to extend the lease to 25 years, either by a variation to the existing lease, or by a new lease. From correspondence in earlier emails, I think this means they would extend the lease to 25 years from now, rather than adding on 25 years to the current lease, which ends in 2026, so it would result in an extra 21 years.  They did point out that a rent review is due this year. |
| 7 | **Highways:** |
| 7.1 | I’ve had no more information about the flooding at Beighton Road. |
| 8 | **Environment:**  Richard has sent you all a detailed proposal for a Beeline for Acle. |
| 9. | **Councillors’ training:**  Angela is attending a 2-session Chairmanship training in early March. Sarah has attended the introductory training and training on GDPR (data protection), and has booked onto an end of year finance course, and would like to do the CiLCA course (Certificate in Local Council Administration) which takes 6 months and costs £250. |
| 10 | **Financial Policies:** The Financial Policies have been amended to take into account the current internal controls on payments.I am happy to take any questions on these before or at the meeting. |
| 11 | **Any Other Business:** |
| 11.1 | Jon Walshe, Chair of Acle & District Men’s Shed, has been very busy and has been awarded grants from Clarion Housing (£1,000) and , as well as being supplied with some second hand laptops for the group to use. The grant monies will be banked with Acle PC and held as an earmarked reserve until they can get a bank account opened. |
| 11.2 | UK Power Networks wrote to let us know that they will be turning off the power for homes in the Beighton Road area to enable the connection of the power for the Leffins Lane development. The date is not yet known. They do write to all residents and will offer a voucher to buy hot food and drink with, and supply mobile internet. |
| 11.3 | Our solicitor continues to work on the removal of the charge on the plots at Springfield and Oaks Lea, now that all the overage has been paid to us. Crocus will pay our legal fees for this. In exchange we will pay the legal fee to transfer to the adjacent landowner the ownership of the little piece of land that was incorrectly left with us, adjacent to our flower bed, that actually forms part of the private access road. |
| 11.4 | I have received several emails copied in from emails between residents in St Edmunds Road and Lovells about the boundary of their land. Since this is a civil matter, I am monitoring these but not taking any action at present. |
| 11.5 | Lana brought to my attention the proposal at BDC to increase the paid hours for the S106 officer, from 2.7 to 3.2FTE (full time equivalent). I have written to BDC to support this increase in hours for this role. I took the opportunity to request that parish councils be consulted before s106 agreements are determined, to ensure that the sums agreed are actually of some use to the parish councils in the area. |
| 11.6 | I shall be dipping in and out of training sessions from Tuesday to Thursday, as part of the annual Practitioner’s Conference. I shall report back on anything particularly interesting. |
|  |  |
|  | Pauline – 19th February 2021 |