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Minutes of **MEETING of RENHOLD PARISH COUNCIL** held on **Wednesday 2nd September 2009** at 7.30pm in the Committee Room of Renhold Village Hall.

PRESENT:- Parish Councillors Mr. Slater (Vice Chairman), Mr. Gurney, Mr. Stapleton, Mrs. Brunsdon, Mrs. Dean Mr. Morgan, Borough Cllr. Carole Ellis, Zaria Bettles (Rights of Way Officer), the Clerk Mrs. Barnicoat & 7 members of the public.

- 1. WELCOME BY CHAIRMAN AND APOLOGIES:-** Mr. Stewardson and Mr. Andrews
- 2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTEREST: -** None received.
- 3. PARISH COUNCILLOR CO-OPTION UPDATE:-** To date the Clerk had received two expressions of interests from prospective candidates, each had written a statement which had been circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting. Cllr. Slater welcomed both candidates. Cllr. Stapleton proposed the nomination of Mr Leydon, seconded by Cllr. Gurney. Cllr. Dean proposed the nomination of Mr Bernard, seconded by Cllr. Brunsdon. As two nominations received, Cllr. Slater welcomed in alphabetical order both to introduce themselves to the Councillors. Mr Leydon read a statement (attached to the end of the minutes) and withdrew his application to stand for co-option. All Councillors present expressed sorrow at loss of a candidate. Cllr. Slater proceeded, asking for vote on the nomination of Mr Bernard to be co-opted, all Councillors voted unanimously to co-opt Mr Bernard, agreed, resolution passed.

Cllr. Slater welcomed Mr Bernard to the Council, and Declaration Of Acceptance of Office and Register of Interest signed by Cllr. Bernard.

- 4. RIGHTS OF WAY OFFICER, ZARIA BETTLES:-** Newly appointed Officer to Renhold, Zaria Bettles, introduced herself and her role within the parish giving an informative overview. The priority is to ensure all public rights of way are passable and access is available, discussion included the new pathway from the Polhill Arms along Norse Road through to Cardington and Willington. An update on how residents can get involved in P3 projects and information was circulated to those present. Clerk received copy of all rights of way within the parish, Councillors expressed an interest to have a copy, Clerk to contact Yvonne Gregory and request additional copies.

Cllr. Slater thanked Mrs Bettles for her time, and the useful information she had circulated.

- 5. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:-**
The minutes of the meeting held on 29th July which had been circulated, proposed by Cllr. Slater, and seconded by Cllr Gurney to be approved, unanimously agreed, resolution passed and signed by the Vice Chairman.

Cllr. Slater noted that the Council wished to express sadness at the recent loss of Mr Branston, the Mayor of Bedford, and a minute of silence was held.

- 6. MATTERS ARISING:-**
 - a) Litter pick –** this event has been re-arranged for Saturday 5th September meeting at Village Hall.

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b) Temporary Closure Bridleway – number 26 temporary prohibition of through traffic for the bridleway, closure continued until 8th February 2010.

7. HIGHWAYS: -

a) Traffic Regulation Order and HGV ban implementation update – letter received from Cllr. Royden explaining why the HGV ban has been placed on hold, circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting. Clerk had spoken to Cllr. Royden and invited him to the meeting, he felt it more appropriate to attend in November when it is expected that more accurate and up to date information can be conveyed, noted that the Highways Officer undertaking the review is Brian Hayward. Still concerns expressed over the legality of the decision. Clerk to write to Chief Executive and other officers at Borough Hall to express Council's thoughts.

Clerk received notice from Highway's Officers that the signage for the TRO signage will be handed over from Highways to the Network (who undertake the actual installation) next month, so expected erection of signage is October/November.

b) Relocation of Vehicle Activated Sign in Church End update – Cllrs. Stewardson, Slater, Gurney and Dean met with Highways VAS Technician on Hookhams Lane to discuss most suitable site. Following meeting, it was agreed location to be immediately opposite the Post Office facing oncoming traffic traveling up from Ravensden Road. A letter was circulated to residents of properties along Hookhams Lane that could be affected by the relocation of the sign and the Post Office, encouraging their thoughts and view. To date no feedback received. Clerk to action the relocation of the VAS to the agreed location. It was noted expected time scale is 6 to 8 weeks.

c) Church End road surface – following recommendation from Mayor at previous meeting to contact Andrew Prigmore at the Borough, Clerk has been trying to organise a meeting to discuss the road falling away, awaiting a date from Mr Prigmore.

8. BOROUGH COUNCILLOR REPORT: - Cllr. Ellis reported the main priority at present is ascertaining the legality of Cllr. Royden's decision concerning the HGV ban and whether he has acted outside his remit as Portfolio Holder. The Borough is currently seeking legal council advice on the matter, so felt that it is being taken seriously. Cllr. Ellis gave assurance to keep Clerk updated. The majority of meetings for Borough Councillors have been cancelled, until new Mayor formally elected, which is expected to be done in October. Cllr. Ellis to contact Clerk when she has more information regarding the Ward funding.

9. REPORTS ON MEETINGS COUNCILLORS HAVE ATTENDED:- Cllr. Slater attended a recent meeting with Alistair Burt MP and Chief Super Inspector Andy Street regarding policing in northern part of Borough. Cllr. Slater reported that concerns were expressed over problem of rural crime and speeding of motorists along highways. The Police noted that due to resource problems they are limited to what they can do.

10. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT: -

PLANNING APPLICATIONS DECIDED: - None

PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED: -

a) 09/01841/MAR proposed erection of 323 dwellings with associated infra structure at land north of Norse Road – Cllr Slater circulated a detailed report, and in particular the following was noted: the request by Sport England for a recreational facility within the development, 90 affordable houses to be located throughout the development, the number and location of the play areas within the development and the peripheral vegetation along the northern side of the

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development. Cllr. Stapleton thanked Cllr. Slater for his methodical report and proposed that the Council submit the recommendations therein:

- a) Objects to the development of the site at 35 dwellings per hectare, which is inappropriate for a site on the urban fringe adjoining an area of special restraint, and that gives rise to a potentially cramped form of development leaving little room for meaningful landscaping both within and around the edge of the site.
- b) Objects to the proposal to remove a significant part of tree group TG3 in order to create a view towards All Saints Church. TG3 should be retained in its entirety as a limit to the spread of development towards Renhold Church End, and should be reinforced by planting of larger specimens within the northern edge of the proposed housing.
- c) Welcomes the provision of a range of play areas at strategic locations around the housing.
- d) Welcomes the provision of a material recycling facility, but is concerned that its location is accessed by way of a residential road fronted by more than 30 dwellings.
- e) Is concerned that many of the proposed parking areas will create a large expanse of hard surface largely unrelieved by landscaping.
- f) Supports the proposed treatment of the diversion of Renhold Brook to facilitate the access road, as it has potential to create a variety of habitats.
- g) Is concerned that the location of the football pitch and pavilion requires access by way of a residential road fronted by more than 30 dwellings.
- h) Welcomes provision of the proposed seats, litter bins and dog bins, but requests that an additional litter bin and dog bin, together with a Parish notice board, be provided on the main access road near the bridge over Renhold Brook.
- i) Objects to the planting of woodland and woodland mix around the perimeter of the cemetery extension being implemented in Phase 2. It should be implemented as part of Phase 1 in order to reinforce the boundary between the cemetery and Renhold village at the earliest opportunity.
- j) Is concerned that the additional dwellings will increase the numbers of children attending Renhold Lower School, so exacerbating the already unacceptable traffic conditions caused by parents taking their children to school. The Parish Council recognises this falls outside the current planning application, but the increased problem will be caused by the development proposed. The Parish Council calls on the Borough Council, as Education and Highway Authority, to use all powers available to it to address this problem.

Seconded by Cllr. Gurney, all unanimously agreed, that Clerk to submit above comments.

Cllr. Bernard took leave at this point of the meeting.

OTHER PLANNING MATTERS: - Planning Briefing regarding Planning Policy Statement on Eco-towns received from Bedford Borough.

11. VILLAGE OF THE YEAR COMPETITION: - Cllr. Slater gave an update, following the Council agreeing to support an application in principle, Cllrs. Stewardson and Slater had met with

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some residents to discuss a way forward. It was felt the most useful way to progress would be by individuals focusing on particular areas of the application. Regular updates to be reported to the Council.

12. PLAYBUILDER PROJECT: - Clerk attended meeting and outlined the Borough's proposed project in regards to funding for play areas in detail. At present outside of the Norse Road developments the only play areas are at Polhill Arms and The Three Horse Shoe Public Houses, which are privately owned and not community areas, which is one of the criteria for the Playbuilder project. Following discussion, it was felt that at present there are no suitable sites to put forward, and that as the new developments have adequate play areas and are accessible to all residents of the village, the Council felt it not appropriate to pursue an application.

13. MODEL PUBLICATION SCHEME: - Cllr. Slater noted following recent requests from residents under this Scheme and Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Council had noted that a significant amount of the Clerk's time was being used dealing with such requests. The Finance Committee were concerned that this could have an impact on the precept, and therefore the Clerk had been requested to research the schedule of charges in order to minimise any possible impact on the Council's future budget/precept. Information from the Information Commissioner's Office was circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting, and it was agreed that when the annual review of the Model Publication Scheme is undertaken in November, the cost per sheet would also be reviewed in line with the Information Commissioner's Office guidelines.

14. UNITARY AUTHORITY ELECTORAL REVIEW OF BEDFORD : -

This consultation had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting, discussion centered on ensuring a fairer spread so that there are an equal number of constituents per elected Councillor. The former County Council operated with approximately 70 Councillors, and the Borough currently operates with 36 Councillors. It was felt that this number should not necessarily change, just the distribution of in order to maintain an even representation, 3,000-3,500 electors per Councillors approximately. Clerk to submit Council's comments.

15. MAINTENANCE OF OPEN SPACES WITHIN CRANBOURNE GARDENS: - Cllr. Brunsden and Cllr. Dean had recently received concerns from some residents regarding some areas that are not being maintained within the estate. As meeting with James Wallbank, Lead Ranger, from Borough being organized shortly to discuss the location of the new dog waste bin, it was felt that the meeting should also be used to include walk round and highlight areas of concern.

The Vice-Chair adjourned the meeting for the next item.

16. OPEN FORUM: - Topics raised included: grass maintenance issues along Water Lane, Church End highway and school parking issue, Norse Road access, and HGV ban.

The Vice-Chair re convened the meeting.

17. CORRESPONDANCE AND INFORMATION RECEIVED:-

East of England Plan 2031 public consultation event information - invite received for 29th September at Harpur Suite, focusing on Bedford Borough. Cllrs. Brunsden, Dean and Slater expressed an interest in attending, Clerk to book.

BBC letter from Cllr Royden regarding the weight restrictions for HGV's Borough Assembly Conference 27th November agenda and information

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BBC Planning Briefing – Planning Policy Statement on Eco-towns
NALC Clerk’s pay claim
Town and Parish Council Service Bulletin
Current Roadwork’s Bulletin
Letter from resident request for documentation
Bedford and MK Waterways update
CPRE campaign updates
NALC Mailbox subscription offer
Letter from resident regarding traffic concerns within the village
Common tree magazine
Victim Support information
CPRE Fieldwork magazine
Saltex brochure

18. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:-

None received

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: - Wednesday 14th October 2009 at 7.30pm

Meeting closed at 9.50pm

Signed

Dated

Statement: Jim Leydon.

2nd September 2009.

As a founder member of the Focus Group, since 2007, myself and others worked extremely hard to make the concept of the traffic lights, the TRO and the HGV ban a reality for the safety and wellbeing of this village.

For the record, none of this would have happened had it not been for the due diligence, effort and sheer determination of both the Focus Group and I to overcome all the obstacles we faced.

In my application letter, I stated:

I passionately believe that all elected or co-opted members exist to serve one purpose only; the interests of parishioners. They should be devoid of any political influence, effectively utilising all available resources for the welfare of the community.

For this reason, I wish to be considered for the role.

Over recent months, I have felt increasingly uncomfortable regarding the due process exercised to fill the co-option vacancies for Parish councillor.

In my opinion, I feel that despite the direct evidence regarding my capabilities presented before you in my application and the fact I have proved my competencies in delivering benefits for the village as a whole, what has occurred over recent months lead me to conclude that as a parish council, I am not the candidate you are willing to consider for both the recent and current vacancy.

More recently, at your meeting 29th July 2009 when, at the time, I was the only candidate that had applied within due process, you took the decision not to appoint me, instead, you decided to trawl for additional candidates.

I concede that no matter what happens, your determination not to have me on the council is plainly apparent.

As a consequence, you leave me no other option but to withdraw my application forthwith.

For the record, I request this statement be entered, in its entirety, within the minutes of this meeting, dated 2nd September 2009.