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Minutes of **MEETING of RENHOLD PARISH COUNCIL** held on **Thursday 26th November 2009** at 7.30pm in the Main Room of Renhold Village Hall.

PRESENT:- Parish Councillors Mr. Stewardson (Chairman), Mr. Slater (Vice-Chairman), Mr. Gurney, Mrs. Brunsdon, Mrs. Dean, Mr. Morgan, Borough Cllr. Carole Ellis, Borough Cllr. Royden, the Clerk Mrs. Barnicoat & 54 members of the public.

- 1. WELCOME BY CHAIRMAN AND APOLOGIES:-** Mr. Stapleton and Mr. Andrews
- 2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTEREST: -** None received.

3. HGV BAN CLLR. ROYDEN IN ATTENDANCE:- The Chairman welcomed Cllr. Royden and Highway representatives Mr. Brian Hayward and Mr. Simon Deards to the meeting, and read statement (attached to minutes) highlighting that meeting was foremost a Parish Council meeting to conduct such business.

Cllr. Royden gave background on the HGV ban process the previous County Council had gone through, including the Development Control Committee, and outlined that objectors had not received the correct procedural correspondence that they were legally entitled to at the time. The Borough Council as the new authority instructed their Legal Department to investigate and find out whether the ban was implemented if it would be a legal Order, in conclusion they felt it could not proceed as the Order could be deemed illegal. This information was conveyed to the Parish Councils that were within the original proposed ban area. Mr. Hayward gave updated details of progression of the Traffic Regulation Order for Renhold and Mr. Deards outlined that the Borough are currently looking at the freight strategy for the whole of the Borough, and this includes the north east villages. The strategy will consider the actual implications of imposing a HGV ban, including the volumes of vehicles involved and where displaced vehicles will go. Details of Parish workshops were discussed outlining that a comprehensive review would be taken, expected to take place in January, so by spring Highways anticipate to be able to have a better understanding of the needs of all areas within the Borough, then any formally proposed strategy would need a period of public consultation.

Cllr. Royden then welcomed questions from Councillors, the Chairman raised the point that the Council and residents felt 'cheated'. Cllr. Slater enquired whether funding was available for the original HGV ban, Cllr. Gurney noted that some residents felt that the decision had been made due to party politics, and great concern that the Borough will not support the rural areas.

The Chairman gave Cllr. Royden the opportunity to receive questions from members of the public, he noted he felt it inappropriate due to the volume of attendees and welcomed residents to contact him directly. The Chairman thanked Cllr. Royden and the Highways representatives for their attendance, and they took leave of the meeting.

Following this item the Chairman adjourned the meeting for five minutes while some members of the public took leave, and then reconvened the meeting.

4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:-

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th October which had been circulated, proposed by Cllr. Stewardson, and seconded by Cllr. Gurney to be approved, unanimously agreed, resolution passed and signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record.

5. MATTERS ARISING:-

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- a) **Play ranger sessions** – Clerk received copies of rangers CRB checks and term time programme of events, starting November through to April 2010
- b) **Letter from Police regarding school parking** – this was reported and informed by PCSO Paul Jones he would attend to.
- c) **Parish Plan** – following the information evening held Cllr. Slater had prepared report and circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting, article had been submitted to village magazine to raise awareness.
- d) **Baldur Close** – Cllr. Dean noted that resident had expressed that the issue still to be addressed, Clerk had reported to maintenance team at BPHA, therefore to chase.

6. BOROUGH COUNCILLOR REPORT: - Cllr. Ellis had taken leave, however, had informed Clerk that current focuses are the HGV ban and school re-organisation debate.

7. HIGHWAYS:-

Clerk been informed by Highways that on the 6th November the TRO scheme was handed over to Network for programming and construction, 14th December work to begin on site, expected to be completed by Christmas.

Cllr. Gurney had reported to Andrew Prigmore the lineage previously agreed along Church End had not been carried out, assurance received that line painting will be done as soon as possible, expected in the next two weeks. Cllr. Gurney agreed to monitor and report again if work not completed.

Noted that the Vehicle Activated Sign had been relocated to Hookhams Lane, the site was slightly different to previously agreed, though Council had been mindful of this during initial discussions as informed technicians would need to place where most suitable without interfering with existing underground items.

8. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT: -

PLANNING APPLICATIONS DECIDED: -

09/02208/TPO remove dead wood and crown reduce Willow tree at 67 Church End – consent granted

09/01283/MAO residential development, extension to adjacent cemetery and access to include new roundabout junctions on Norse Road, renewal of outline planning permission 05/03325/OUT pursuant to Regulation 3 (3) of the Town and Country (Applications) Regulations 1988 at land north of Norse Road – disposed of 5th November

Resident had informed Clerk that currently two fallen trees within the village that need attention, Clerk to report to Borough and feedback.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED: -

a) **09/02579/FUL** porch extension to form WC and utility area at Waterend Cottage, 3 St Neots Road – following discussion of application, the Council concluded no objection.

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b) **09/02494/FUL** construct new vehicular access with associated hardstanding at land adjacent to 56 Top End – following discussion of application, the Council concluded no objection.

c) **09/02561/FUL** single storey rear extension at 66A Hookhams Lane – following discussion of application, the Council decided it was beneficial to hold a site visit, following feedback from visit Clerk to submit Council's comments.

d) **Electoral Review of Borough** – Cllr. Slater had prepared report updating Councillors that Boundary Committee decided that there should be 40 councillors on the Borough Council, and the

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current figures of each voting area and estimated figures for Renhold up to 2013. The Council discussed this, and agreed unanimously that they feel very strongly that Cranborune Gardens and the new Spires estate are included in the voting ward of Renhold, as they are within the parish they must be represented as such. Norse Road acts as a natural physical barrier, as it was agreed does the Great Barford bypass, so it would be logical to be linked with the parishes of Ravensden and Wilden. The Clerk to submit comments and to be considered again at next meeting.

OTHER PLANNING MATTERS: - Application previously discussed regarding 37 Green End, following site meeting the Parish Council had no objection as many of the nearby dwellings have had substantial extensions and proposed extension will not seriously affect adjoining properties.

9. REVIEW OF COUNCIL DOCUMENTS: -

a) Council Standing Orders - Clerk had circulated current adopted version to all Councillors, Cllr. Slater proposed that due to the importance of the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations that Councillors consider both documents in detail in their own time to enable this to be done thoroughly, and comments/amendments to be forwarded to Clerk to collate, and to be considered at next meeting. Cllr. Dean seconded, and it was unanimously agreed by all present, resolution passed. Clerk to include on next meeting agenda.

b) Council Financial Regulations – Clerk had circulated current adopted version to all Councillors, to be discussed at next meeting further as agreed above.

c) Model Publication Scheme – Clerk had circulated current adopted version to all Councillors and a draft amended version, which included a more detailed breakdown of documents and whether available electronically or only by hard copy. It was proposed by Cllr. Gurney that the new detailed scheme be adopted, seconded by Cllr. Dean, unanimously agreed by those present, resolution passed. Where documents available electronically it was noted that this would save Clerk's time when circulating, and that the Clerk to upload the document onto the website, and where specified the individual documents too over the coming months.

d) Council's co-option of Parish Councillor guidance notes – the edits previously recommended had been updated by the Clerk and circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting, proposed by Cllr. Brunsdon that the guidance notes be adopted, seconded by Cllr. Morgan, unanimously agreed by those present, resolution passed.

10. WORKING GROUP REPORTS TO COUNCIL: -

a) Employment Working Group – Cllr. Andrews had collated report of meeting held, Cllr. Slater read and the following recommendations were made:

1. Following a review of the Clerk's timesheets to continue with the agreed working hours of 9 per week. It was proposed by Cllr. Slater that the Council formally agree that the Clerk's hours remain at 9 per week, seconded by Cllr. Dean, unanimously agreed by all those present, resolution passed.
2. Following the review of the timesheets the Group noticed a considerable increase in resident request/enquires, and proposed that £500 be included in the forthcoming budget to allow a contingency to cover such increased workload, proposed by Cllr. Slater that this be done, seconded by Cllr. Gurney, unanimously agreed by those present, resolution passed.
3. Consideration of a provision for £500 to be included in the forthcoming budget to cover any training the Council sees fit to ask the Clerk to attend, proposed by Cllr. Slater that such contingency be included, seconded by Cllr. Stewardson, unanimously agreed by those present, resolution passed.
4. The Clerk's priority when not managing the day to day running of the Council to be the development of the website, proposed by Cllr. Slater that this be accepted, seconded by Cllr. Gurney, unanimously agreed by those present, resolution passed.

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5. Recognising the work that the Clerk has done for the Council over the past 13 months and that the Clerk has attained her CiLCA qualification the Clerk is moved from scale point 20 to scale point 22, proposed by Cllr. Slater that this be accepted, seconded by Cllr. Stewardson, unanimously agreed by those present, resolution passed.

b) Parish Website Working Group - Cllr. Gurney read report highlighting the areas that the Group felt in particular on the website should be developed as well as documents that it would be useful to have uploaded to the site, also noted that Cllr. Gurney and the Clerk had attended recent website training.

11. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ENQUIRIES BEING RECEIVED AND REQUESTS FOR DOCUMENTATION:- Clerk read report detailing over recent months the Council has received a large number of enquiries and requests for both documentation and information from residents of Renhold. The Council welcome comments and input from members of the parish and encourage residents to bring important matters to the Council's attention.

The Clerk has maintained a log of correspondence sent to the individuals and the time involved in dealing with them. Since September to date 46.25 hours (August 5.75, September 10.5, October 16.75, November 19) has been spent dealing with resident requests, therefore including August it has cost approximately £500 of public monies provided through the precept to deal with this continuous volume (2.5% of the precept). Much time is being taken by the Clerk and the Council in collating responses, undergoing research and processing of payments received for documentation, all of which could be spent instead on conducting parish council business of benefit to the residents of Renhold.

To give Councillors and residents an overview of the current situation the figures are at present:

Emails sent to Renhold residents in September: 7 emails, 3 letters and a total of four Council documents sent

In October: 11 emails, 9 letters and one Council document sent

In November: 13 emails, 15 letters, nine Council documents sent and request of cost to send a further nine documents

To date numbers of outstanding correspondences are:

Email sent 29th October regarding Clerk's Annual Appraisal

Emails sent 5th and 15th November regarding Code of Conduct

Emails sent 6th and 15th November regarding request to address Council

Email sent 8th November regarding Remembrance Day Wreath

Emails sent 12th, 16th (two sent), 17th and 23rd November regarding information request

Email sent 17th November regarding information request Code of Conduct

Emails sent 18th and 21st November regarding precept document

Email sent 25th regarding Finance Committee

On average 90% of correspondence is being received from one individual resident, the Council has responded always answering in full, each time in a courteous manner. Over the past 3 months this is continuing to increase, and therefore the Council have sought advice from external organisations, the BATPC, Bedford Borough Monitoring Officer, the SLCC and the Information Commissioner's Office on how this may be resolved so that the Council can move forward and use the time on parish matters rather than dealing with continuous requests.

The Clerk had circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting information supplied by the Information Commissioner's Officer regarding repeated or vexatious requests. All Councillors expressed sadness that such requests were detracting the Clerk and Council from progressing with other aspects of parish business. Cllr. Morgan raised that the level of correspondence being received could be classed as harassment, and Cllr. Gurney noted that it is difficult to determine whether enquiries and requests are genuine or not. The Chairman drew the Council's attention to

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Freedom of Information Act 2000 section 14(1) and the Council considered the questions that are referred to in the document. Cllr. Slater proposed that the Clerk respond to all the outstanding correspondence with residents and to review at the next meeting if appropriate where further action could be discussed, seconded by Cllr. Gurney, unanimously agreed by all Councillors present, resolution passed.

12. FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT ON WORKINGS TO FULL COUNCIL:-

All Councillors had received a copy of the draft minutes from the October meeting, and an up to date transaction report. The Chairman welcomed Councillors to raise any questions, none received.

13. PARISH COUNCIL BUDGET CONSIDERATION 2010/11: -

All Councillors had received a copy of a draft budget collated by the Clerk, each item of expected expenditure was talked through in detail and Councillors invited to ask questions. Following resolutions made earlier in the meeting, it was noted that contingency of £500 had been added to Clerk of the Council expenditure for additional hours/resident enquiries, and also £500 for Clerk's training. It was noted that with the tabled draft budget it was likely that a reduction in the Council precept from last year would hopefully result. Cllr. Stewardson proposed, and Cllr. Slater seconded that the Finance Committee at their next meeting discuss the budget in further detail and full Council to consider recommendations at January meeting, prior to precept formally being set.

The Chairman noted that the meeting had lasted currently over two hours, and if further business on the agenda could be carried forward to the next meeting, proposed that the meeting be adjourned. Cllr. Dean proposed that the Council allow members of public the opportunity to address the Council as it may only be relevant to business that had been conducted at the meeting, seconded by Cllr. Brunsdon, unanimously agreed by those present as good idea, resolution passed.

14. HIRING OF SPEED INDICATOR DEVICE FROM POLICE AND POLICE REPORT:-

As agreed above, to be carried forward to next meeting.

15. WORK AT WILLINGTON QUARRY AND EFFECT ON PARISH:-

As agreed above, to be carried forward to next meeting.

16. REPORTS ON MEETINGS COUNCILLORS HAVE ATTENDED:-

As agreed above, to be carried forward to next meeting, to include: quality status seminar, police joint action group meeting, Bedford Borough Partnership Town and Parish Network.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting for the next item.

17. OPEN FORUM: - Topics raised included: the Council's discussion of vexatious enquiries, and acting illegally.

The Chairman re convened the meeting.

18. CORRESPONDANCE AND INFORMATION RECEIVED:-

Letter update regarding HGV weight restrictions in North East Bedfordshire
BBC Electoral Review of Bedford Borough letter
BBC Town and Parish Conference invite 1st December
BBC Request for notice of events in 2010
Police letter regarding Abbey Close
Town and Parish Council Service Bulletin

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Current Roadwork's Bulletin
BBC Rural Affairs Committee agenda and minutes
BBC Standards Committee agenda, minutes, vacancy notice
Resident letters requests for documentation
Resident correspondence regarding Remembrance Day wreath
Resident correspondence regarding Code of Conduct
Resident correspondence regarding Clerk's appraisal and Working Groups
Resident letters regarding finance committee
Resident letter regarding Willington quarry effect on parish
CGM Landscaping Service letter
BBC Admissions for Lower Schools information
BBC Temporary Signing of Community Events letter
BBC Events in 2010 letter
CPRE campaign updates
Beds Bugle
BBC No Cold Calling Zone article
Bedford Parent Partnership Service newsletter
BRCC Newsletter
Pride in Bedford magazine
Play Areas brochure
Tuttles maintenance information
BATPC Plunkett Foundation survey
Arien signs information leaflet
Countryside Voice magazine

19. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:-

Standing Order and Financial Regulations review and other items carried over from meeting

20. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: - Monday 4th January 2010 at 7.30pm

Meeting closed at 10.10pm

Signed

Dated

Proposed Area Weight Limit

As representatives of this Parish Council Jim Stapleton and myself attended meetings of “The East Bedfordshire Communities Liaison Forum” hosted by Councillor Tom Wooton, Portfolio Holder for Highways at Bedfordshire County Council, which were held at Keysoe Village Hall every three months, and at one such forum a Freight Operator, himself a Parish Councillor, informed us of an Area Weight Limit operational in a certain area of Cambridgeshire and suggested that perhaps such a scheme would work in Bedfordshire.

On the 6th November 2008 Councillor Tom Wooton circulated to ten local Parish Councils an email stating that he had been approached by a number of Parish Councils and individuals in his Division over a period of time with concerns regarding the use of local roads by Heavy Goods Vehicles. To this end he instructed officers from the Bedfordshire Highways to undertake a thorough investigation of the issue. Analysis of these figures has shown there was a sensible proposal to limit the use of country roads and the County Council drew up a plan to cover the Area affected. A series of meetings took place which resulted in the proposal going to the Development Control Committee.

Grave concerns from the residents of Renhold and the neighbouring Villages with the problems of HGV's destroying the road conditions, had been expressed in letters of support for the ban. When the problem was discussed and voted on by the Development Control Committee of the County Council held at County Hall, which I attended, there were I am led to understand 235 letters of support for, and 34 letters against the proposal, the committee of 7 sitting on that committee voted by a majority of 5 for and 2 against in support of the ban

I first of all need to reassure everybody that this support of the ban on HGV's has nothing to do with NIMBY ism. I know of nobody in truth, that welcomes the passage of HGV's trundling past their front doors, either in a Rural or Urban situations, but, and it's a very important but , the Lanes and Roads being used by these monster vehicles must be suitable to withstand the assault on them by their weights.

Concerns were expressed even before the Great Barford A421 bypass was completed, that Renhold would be used as a rat-run by vehicles of all description, some remedial measures have already been taken, an agreed TRO restricting through traffic at peak times of the day is soon to be put in place, but the HGV problem is in fact destroying our roads, making them a danger to pedestrians, cyclist and even motorist.

As most of you are aware, very few of the rural roads are Kerbed, or built to a standard that will withstand the weight of these vehicles and many of them are very narrow, we therefore have to look at other roads that were built to a better standard/ construction and are wider , and therefore more durable and suitable to accommodate the vehicles referred to.