

COLTISHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held at the Village Hall 29th February 2012 at 7.00pm to discuss Highways issues arising from the Parish Plan

Present Vice-Chairman Mike Warren, Doreen Snelling, John Harding, Michael Spinks, Keith Childerhouse, Phil Reilly of Norfolk County Council Highways department, 19 residents/business owners.

1. Apologies

Apologies were presented by Robert Watson, Mark Rischmiller, Sue Brodie, Dave Smith, Alan Mallett, and James Carswell, and duly accepted.

2. Speeding and speeding restrictions

Speedwatch has operated successfully in the village for several years, and some vehicles reported to the police who then issued follow-up letters. One major concern is that Speedwatch is not allowed to operate in a 20 mph zone; Police do not follow up those speeding in a 20 mph zone as they consider there to be little chance of injury below 30 mph. Mike Warren is prepared to raise the matter again at Police Liaison meetings, as vehicles exceed the limit in the village centre. The highest incidence of speeding is at Ling Way; a site meeting at which the case for a mini-roundabout was forcefully made by both residents and councillors was to no avail, as Highways refused the request. The Speedwatch team continues to be pro-active, building on good relationships with the Police and Highways. A Vehicle Activated Speed sign will be installed at Wroxham Road, near the Anchor Street junction, showing the start of the 30 mph zone. Speedwatch will continue as long as there are volunteers, and an appeal was made for new volunteers to join the scheme.

A wish for Zebra crossings in the village was highlighted by the Parish Plan, particularly near the pharmacy. Phil Reilly said that the current build-outs are the best achievable in that location, there being very strict regulations on the siting of pedestrian crossings, although he will arrange for reflectors to be attached to the existing posts to make the crossings more visible.

3. On-street parking

a) High Street Mike Warren reported that there are currently 26 possible parking spaces excluding the area in front of the pharmacy, plus four at the petrol station, totalling 30. There is a 30 minute limit on these four spaces, although as they are infrequently policed all-day parking is common. It was noted that the police no longer monitor parking restrictions, the work taken on by a King's Lynn company that had issued a parking ticket to a local business owner. Phil Reilly said that the restrictions could be removed; the procedure would require consultation process, and a legal order under the Road Traffic Act, and could take between 3 and 5 years to effect. The removal of restrictions was proposed by John Harding, seconded by Doreen Snelling, unanimous.

b) Business survey The results of the survey had been analysed. Thirteen responses had been received from businesses, and four from local residents. There were 34 employees at the 13 businesses, and 6 businesses had their own parking arrangements. Thursday, Friday and Saturday were the busiest days, when customers had the most difficulty in finding spaces. Businesses reported a loss of trade as a result of all-day parking by non-customers.

Standing Orders were suspended. It was pointed out that the vote to remove restrictions would make the situation worse for visitors, as all marked spaces would be occupied by business employees. The only solution was to find suitable land for a car park. The land in front of the Salvation Army hall is registered Common, not a car park, although the Commons Trust allows limited parking as a gesture of goodwill. The London Tavern site would have been ideal, but was sold as a commercial development site, and the cost would have been beyond the means of the

Parish Council. The Tavern Court development had exacerbated the parking problem, as residents park on the Common, which was previously used by visitors and customers. Again, although signs indicate a time limit, the area cannot be policed and is therefore misused. A further problem is that the air pump at the garage is alongside the parking spaces; parked cars prevent the use of the pump. It was suggested that the pump could be moved to allow access at all times. It was also suggested that parking bays could be individually marked to encourage more considerate parking thereby optimising the available spaces. Phil Reilly regretted that he could do no more than had already been done.

Following a question about available land, it was established that

- the area in front of the Chinese take-away is privately owned
- common land owned by the parish is not accessible by vehicle, even via Church Close. It is an Environmentally Sensitive Area, and designated grassland, open for all to enjoy on foot.
- the area of common known as the Salvation Army car park is subject to laws governing the use of Common land, and the driftway must be kept free. Parking on a Common without permission is illegal, and police could prosecute offenders
- there are two problems : all-day parking and provision for visitors and customers. The 22 spaces could be available for short-term parking if business employees would park away from the centre.

Several suggestions were made

- a further two spaces could be created by Top of the Crop
- land owned by the Church could perhaps be considered for long-stay parking by employees, who it is thought would be prepared to walk into the village. The Parish Council would have to discuss the matter with the Church to establish whether the idea is viable
- The Salvation Army hall may be for sale. As it is land-locked it may have a low value, and could be bought by the Parish Council as a car park, if the Commons Trust would allow access to it, or
- The Parish Council, having acquired the site, could perhaps agree with the Commons Trust to exchange it for the existing area, thereby creating a public car park
- The Village Hall car park could be used, although it was accepted that it becomes full when the playgroup is operating, and when parents transport their children to and from school. Phil Reilly mentioned the arrangement in Horning, where signs show free parking at the Village Hall while on-street spaces have a time limit. If this idea were adopted in Coltishall the decision taken earlier in this meeting would not be implemented.

It was **agreed** that the Parish Council should set up a meeting with the Commons Trust to discuss possible options.

c) Rectory Road/ Church Street junction Vehicles park close to the junction, and although not parked illegally they obstruct access to Church Lane, cause problems for buses turning into Rectory Road, and difficulties for vehicles travelling towards Church Street facing oncoming traffic. They would also present a hazard for emergency vehicles. Although obstruction is an offence, the police will take action only if it is potentially dangerous. Phil Reilly agreed that double yellow lines from the junction to the bus stop would solve the problem, and recommended that all proposed alterations to the road system in Coltishall be amalgamated into one package for local agreement, thence to Norfolk County Council for consultation, and final implementation, with the caveat that the programme could take between three and five years to implement.

d) Rectory Road one-way signage The signage is considered to be inadequate, as many motorists persist in travelling the wrong way, often in blatant disregard for the signs. Offenders should be identified, and details passed to police, although caution must be exercised as some motorists have become threatening when approached. Larger signs might help; Phil Reilly will look into this solution.

Items e) and f) discussed in item 3. a) and c) above

4. Pedestrian crossings The Parish Plan identified some 20 potential crossing sites, of which four would be most useful – Rectory Road near St John’s Close, Church Street near the church, Post Office, and Ling Way. It was noted that traffic along Wroxham Road near the Kings Road often reaches 50 mph. New developments would increase the need for safe crossings. Phil Reilly advised that there must be a minimum footfall to justify the costs. The initial assessment for an illuminated crossing is circa £25,000, total cost up to £150,000. Build-outs need careful costings; there is concern that more crossings, especially illuminated ones, increase urbanisation. He has no influence over planning, suggesting that David Higgins might provide information. He reiterated that there should be a clear consensus followed by a single bid for most-needed work throughout the village.

5. Road resurfacing Phil Reilly confirmed that surface dressing will take place this season from Kings Road to Lower Common.

6. Impact of the Northern Distributor Route on Coltishall Phil Reilly thought the NDR would be unlikely to have any major impact on Coltishall.

Any other business

It was suggested that a mirror should be placed at the junction of Westbourne Road and Rectory Road to improve visibility of traffic in the one-way section. Phil Reilly advised that mirrors on the highway are illegal.

A driveway to seven houses near the church would benefit from 20 yards of double yellow lines either side of the junction, as parked vehicles obscure oncoming traffic. The same problem exists at the junction of The Grove and Rectory Road. These should be added to the wish-list for the eventual bid.

A request had been made for a 20 mph limit near the school, but had been refused by Highways. Despite being on a bus route, Westbourne Road is not now on the gritting route. This to be investigated.

Mike Warren thanked all present for attending this meeting, and for their valuable contributions to the meeting.

Meeting closed at 8.25 pm

Next meeting is on **Monday 12th March 2012** at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.