**MINUTES OF SANTON DOWNHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**HELD ON TUESDAY, 27th JUNE 2023 AT 7.00 PM**

Present: Mr Michael Mackender (Chairman) Mr Andrew Butcher (Vice Chairman)

Mrs Sylvia East (Parish Clerk) Mr Adrian Baugh (Parish Councillor)

Mr Paul Brown (Parish Councillor) Mrs Ann Landells(Parish Councillor)

In attendance: Cllrs Victor Lukannuik (County Councillor) Phil Wittam (District Councillor)

and Joules Savage (District Councillor)

Members of the public: Mrs Leanne Holden (Resident) Mr Duncan Slade (Assistant Area Land Agent) and Ms Nicky Russell (Leisure Manager) from Forestry England

1. Chairmans Welcome
2. Apologies received from Mrs Cock and Mr Daplyn
3. Declaration of Interest there were none

It was agreed to open the meeting by welcoming the two representatives from Forestry England and allow them to bring forward a request they wished to raise.

As we are all too well aware, St Helen’s Picnic site is becoming a ‘party site’. There have been incidents spilling over to nearby residents on occasion with the issue of car parking an ongoing problem and one that has at times caused issues not only along the Church Road to St Helens but also all along the road from the village. There have also been reports of anti social behaviour. Nicky Russell clarified the site is a scheduled monument area with Heritage England involvement and it would be sad if this was not available for those who have an interest in the history.

Forestry England asked if Santon Downham Parish Council can send a letter to Norfolk County Council supporting their request for either red or yellow lines along this route. This would then give the Police a better chance of imposing restrictions. After some conversation it was unanimously agreed the Parish Council can do this. Nicky Russell asked if the Parish Council could await her email clarifying the situation before this is dealt with.

Whilst having Forestry England representatives with us the Parish Council used the opportunity to ask a few questions. Cllr Lukannuik asked why the parking area at St Helens had been reduced by some 50% and Nicky Russell replied that this was all to do with the changes Forestry England felt necessary for the future as although they wanted the site available for some leisure activities the problems of this becoming ‘party city’ were clear. The toilets are shut because there are major drainage issues. Cllr Lukannuik said there would undoubtedly be a very long procedure in making changes but he felt sure there would be some budget.

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The Parish Clerk mentioned the ‘jungle’ around the toilets at the Forestry England office site. Nicky Russell said she is currently trying to get something sorted out here and that there are other problems with the toilets requiring attention.

Cllr Wittam asked a question about who is responsible for maintaining the path that runs from the Santon Downham Bridge through to Brandon. Nicky Russell advised Forestry England deals with the trees, Norfolk County Council have the responsibility of cutting the vegetation but that fallen trees very often cause problems. Nicky Russell promised to send Cllr Wittam details of any ownership issues, ie trees, land. Cllr Savage made the comment the path is a designated bridle path but is currently only accessible by foot

Andrew Butcher advised Forestry England that Exit 17 had a gate broken by vandals.

Duncan Slade said he would be more than happy to attend Parish Council meetings in future and the Parish Council said this would be welcomed. The Chairman said Nicky and Duncan were welcome to leave the meeting or stay if they wanted. It was decided they would leave at this point.

The Parish Council then returned to the items on the Agenda.

4)Minutes of the AGM held on the 15th May 20223 were signed as a true record.

5)Parish Clerk’s Report:

 **Financial Issues**

* A current Bank Statement was issued to all Councillors, this shows a balance of £15,477.11 with a cheque for £300 still to be deducted (a cheque for this was signed by the Chairman relating to the Internal audit for 2022/23.) Therefore once this cheque is cleared the balance will be £15.177.11.
* The Internal audit is now completed and the Exemption Certificate sent to the External Auditors. The Accounting Statement for 2022/23 was signed by the Chairman and the Responsible Financial Officer. The accounts will be placed online along with the Notice of Public Rights.
* The Parish Clerk advised the Parish Council of the dangerous branches on the Norway Maple which had been pointed out to her when obtaining a second quotation for the more heavy pollarding necessary to try to save the tree. A quotation of £700 has been given. The Parish Council were asked to vote on whether to go ahead with this work, with the realisation further expenditure was necessary during this coming Winter. It was unanimously agreed the work must be carried out given this area is often used for cars to park. Whilst on the subject therefore the Parish Clerk stated a notice should be put up warning the public that if they park in this area they do so at their own risk. ARW Horticulture will be given the job of removing dead and dangerous branches. It was further agreed that any wood derived from this job would be offered with the provision a donation be given to the Parish Council.

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**General Issues**

* The Parish Clerk gave an update on the situation regarding problems experienced with traffic on the road leading to the bridge. Highways have now agreed to changing the signage which hopefully will make a difference overall. A picture of the intended changes was handed to the Parish Council and the Parish Clerk thanked Councillor Lukannuik for his assistance with regard to the matter.

6) **Parish Councillor’s Reports**

* Ann Landells advised she had been asked about the ‘fly tipping’ incident quoted in the last Minutes. It was asked why if this was a fly tipping issue, why then is this not reported for the untidy state of the lane running at the back of the houses on the top of the Village Green? Keeping areas clear outside of residents gardens, unless a health or safety issue should be down to individuals. The prior reported incident has been sorted out by the properties concerned and it is now a question of neighbour speaking to neighbour. The Parish Council can only do its best within its resources and therefore would hope our residents will where possible assist in keeping the village areas such as these tidy.
* Andrew Butcher advised the ragwort situation on the Village Green is getting out of hand. The volunteers on the new re-wilding project will be advised.
* Adrian Baugh reported that ‘boy racers’ were charging about in the village for about 2 hours recently between 10pm and 12midnight. The Chairman stated the only thing that can be done is to report this to the Police and if they then receive several complaints, they will investigate.

7)**County Councillor’s Report**

* Cllr Lukannuik made the comment that he had been approached by a member of the public in Brandon who asked why you never saw the police anymore but there were plenty of parking officers. He then went on to say that following a traffic survey carried out 5 days in February, 46,000 vehicles came through Brandon, 2,000 HGV’s over 18 tonnes and that it was worked out only 20% of the traffic was local. The reason for Cllr Lukannuik’s comment is to warn that Santon Downham may well see more traffic!

8)**District Councillor’s Report**

* Cllr Wittam formally introduced Joules Savage to the Parish Council. Ms Savage is a new Brandon Town Councillor who has a rapport with Santon Downham.

9)**Chairman’s Report**

* The Chairman commented that probably now would be the right time to sort out the situation with the hedge at Edgewater. It was agreed a working party needed to be raised to tackle this.
* The situation continues with No. 7. Mr Riding a neighbour has raised the issue of the new kerb that has been put in. This is outside of the boundary for No. 7 and will cause problems for Mr Riding. It was noted also the kerb does not run straight and the Chairman produced plans showing where the original boundary exists and

another clearly showing that the kerb is outside of the boundary. The Parish Councillors were asked to walk over to the property to see what the issue was.

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On their return the consensus of opinion was that the kerb needs to be removed and if the property owner wishes to have any kerbing, then this must run in line with

their boundary. There were several comments raised about the issue of the manhole cover that has been covered. The Chairman very clearly advised Anglian Water were okay with the situation as long as some form of identification existed..

The Parish Clerk was advised to communicate this to the property owners in writing.

The Chairman mentioned Mr Riding’s criticism of the Parish Council in not discussing the changes in the plans to this property, the only answer here is that these were not seen and it was believed there were several alterations. This will be followed through for future planning applications.

* Whilst on the subject of this stretch of Marks Lane, complaints have been received about the parking of a trailer on the corner at the bottom of the road. This of course is illegally parked and given there would be no comeback on Insurance should anyone either hit this with a vehicle, or indeed walk into this in the dark, it must be removed. The Parish Clerk was asked to write to the owner of this trailer and advise it must be parked on said persons own property.
* The Chairman then advised the Parish Council that this will be the final year when he will undertake the Village Green cut. The Parish Council will therefore need to find a Contractor to do this which of course will come at a higher cost.

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm.

SADPC27/6/23(4)