

# Langley with Hardley Parish Council

Minutes No: 2023/3

## Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 4 July 2023 at 7.30pm in Langley with Hardley Village Hall

<b>Parish Councillors (6) present</b>	Nigel Sullivan (Chair), Michael Caston, Garry Moore, Stuart Adcock, John Wheeler and Rob Baldwin.
<b>County Councillor</b>	None.
<b>District Councillors</b>	None.
<b>Also in attendance</b>	Emma Webster (Clerk).
<b>Members of the public</b>	Eight.

### 1. To receive and approve apologies for absence.

Valid apologies were received from Cllr Tibby Bunn.

### 2. To receive any declarations of interest from Members & consider requests for dispensation.

3. *Members are invited to declare Disclosable interests and other interests in items on the agenda as required by the Langley with Hardley Parish Council Code of Conduct for Members and by the Localism Act 2011.*

None.

### 4. To approve minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 6 June 2023.

In item 5 (2) Poplar Farm should read Poplar Farm, with this change **It was resolved** that the minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and will be signed when the DRAFT watermark is removed.

### 5. Adjournment for Public Participation (15 minutes allowed for).

*This provides an opportunity for members of the public to raise questions about and comment on items on the agenda before the Council make decisions.*

The Chairman welcomed eight members of the public who had attended to listen and contribute to the discussion on the public footpaths on land owned by Langley Abbey Estates. The Chairman then suggested and it was agreed that item 10 on the agenda would be discussed at this point.

### To discuss and agree on a course of action resulting from the minutes 5 (1) and 5 (3) from the last meeting, in relation to public footpaths on land owned by Langley Abbey Estates Ltd.

Minutes 5 (1) The Clerk reported that an e-mail had been sent to Highways requesting a copy of the letter purported to be from Langley with Hardley Parish Council to the District Council Highways department, and no response has been received.

Minutes 5 (3) Persistent number of trespassers on land owned by Langley Abbey Estates Limited. The Parish Council and the Landowner are in agreement to the public rights of way across land owned by Langley Abbey Estates, as shown on the <http://maps.norfolk.gov.uk/highways/> map by typing NR14 6DG into the search bar. Cllr Wheeler summarised the key issues as a lack of signage, obscured signage, and members of the public being ordered off public footpath by Langley Abbey Estates staff. The Parish Council had received two e-mails from members of the public unhappy about how they had been treated while using the public footpaths through the Langley Estates land. The Council supported the Landowners right to protect his land from trespassers. It became apparent from the public discussion that it is not clear where the path runs over the property, particularly with maize crops high at present. One resident said she was shouted at last year when walking with her dogs by a member of the Langley Abbey Estate staff on horseback for being on private land, when in fact, she was on the public right of way, known as The Gallops, which runs diagonally across the land. The Landowner stated that he didn't want anyone to be shouted at and will make sure that all his staff know where the footpaths are. Equally it was important that walkers took responsibility themselves for where they should and should not walk, and should use a map. Cllr Wheeler suggested a strip cut in the crop to mark the path across the Gallops would be more likely to be used by walkers as not all carry Ordnance Survey maps with them. There was general agreement that this would be

a good idea, and after discussion the Landowner agreed to cut a diagonal strip in the crops to mark the footpath. He was thanked for his offer.

Another resident said that you would need a machete to walk through an area known as Hazelmere Wood (part of a Wherryman's Way circular path). The Landowner ascertained that the resident did walk Hazelmere Wood recently, without a machete, and there was a need not to open up the path too much, just enough for people to walk through but not, for instance, wide enough to allow off road vehicles to pass. The Landowner said that if a walker couldn't walk through the path it would be cut, and said he would ask a member of his staff to check Hazelmere Wood path regularly, and take any action required. A lack of signage has been addressed. Cllr Wheeler said that missing signposts have been reported to Highways, and a sign part obscured by an overgrown hedge pointing diagonally across the Gallops would be cleared. A sign at either end of the diagonal of the Gallops was discussed but with the dip in the field this would not be visible from one end to the other.

The Landowner asked if everything had been covered by the discussion and Cllr Wheeler raised a further point that on occasion, in the past, some Langley Estates staff have given people wider flexibility in using some paths that are not officially public footpaths, which has led to confusion now. The Landowner quite agreed and said that he/his staff have done this but could not see why it would lead to any confusion. A member of the public commented that it is much like your own garden, you may allow some people in but not others. The Landowner said that those people he has given permission may walk on his land, but all others must stick to the public right of way across the land. There was no shared agreement between Cllr Wheeler and the Landowner on this particular part of the discussion, and the Chairman moved the meeting on to the next item.

Moving on with other public items for the public participation session;

A member of the public asked why voting by a show of hands was not used regularly in Langley with Hardley Parish Council meetings. The Chair replied to say this wasn't necessary when a consensus was reached on topics and **it was resolved** to use voting by a show of hands more regularly at each meeting. It was noted this will be particularly important when a decision is made by Council on setting the Parish precept.

A member of the public asked when the rent on the Parish Pit was due. This wasn't immediately known so the Clerk agreed to find out and report back at the next meeting. **Clerk to action.**

A member of the public asked who is responsible for the War Memorial as they would like to volunteer to paint the kerb around the memorial in white paint to smarten it up and make clearer to drivers where to drive. The resident offered to provide both the labour and materials for the project. The Chairman said that the Parish Council are responsible for the upkeep of the War Memorial. It was agreed this would be a good idea and may even make maintenance easier for the Parish if motorists visibility is improved by the white paint and there are less crashes into the posts. This will be added as an agenda item for the next meeting for permission to be formally given to the resident to do this work.

A resident made the Parish Council aware that all the moorings at Langley Dyke are now privately owned. This was noted.

A resident asked Council if they were aware of the CHET Neighbourhood Plan, and Council stated that they had been sent the details on e-mail and informed of the public consultation events. Langley with Hardley Parish Council are not proposing to send in a formal response to this consultation but will await the outcome with interest.

## **6. To discuss moving the Parish banking from Barclay's to Unity Bank.**

The Chairman asked Councillors if they had had the opportunity to look into the banking services provided by Unity following the Clerk's report at the last meeting, and it was agreed that Councillors had done so, and noted the £6 per month fee. The Chairman said that he had tried to contact Barclays five times in the last week for assistance in authorising payments but had not been able to resolve the issues. After a very short discussion **it was unanimously agreed to move to Unity bank.** The Clerk said that there would be one current account. A savings account could then be opened at a later date to get paid interest for the Parish. As agreed at the meeting on 16 May Cllr Moore will be added as a signatory. **Clerk to action.**

## **7. To discuss the draft Parish Council Action Plan and agree on a course of action.**

There was discussion on the Parish Council Action plan which had been circulated in advance and it was generally considered to be a useful document, however it would need to be kept up to date as a 'live' document to be of use going forward. Cllr Baldwin said it would be improved if the actions were given to named individuals rather than just, for instance, the Council as a whole. The 'Actions recommended' column should be renamed 'Ownership'. The Clerk offered to make this a shared document in 'Google docs' so all Councillors could go in and update/amend the action points, then the document would be presented at each meeting for further updates. This was agreed. **Clerk to action.**

**8. To discuss the success of 'Now mow May'. Agree on a course of action.**

A feedback report on this initiative was circulated with the agenda for the meeting. The Parish had received three public comments (one with photographs) relating to the length of the grass making the play area unusable in the May school holiday and one comment from the contractor. There was a good discussion on the topic, with the following points made; it was a well intentioned initiative that could have been better implemented, the Parish Council were somewhat naive of the implications, there was no communication to local residents to say why the grass wasn't being cut, the contractors should not have been on the receiving end of local residents frustration that the grass wasn't being cut, any benefit to wildlife that had taken up residence during the month would be negligible, the visibility at junctions was hampered due to the long grass, in general verges were untidy. After these points had been taken on board the Chairman summarised and **it was resolved** not to continue with No Mow May in 2024. **Clerk to inform the contractors.**

Cllr Adcock said that he had voluntarily strimmed around the trim trail in the play area, and the Chairman thanked him for this.

Cllr Baldwin asked if grass cutting could be brought forward for discussion at the next meeting. Grass cutting forms a large part of the budget and at present there is no visibility of the contract, and therefore no monitoring of work, nor indeed no planning for the next tender process. It was agreed that this will be on the agenda for the next meeting. **Clerk to action.**

A member of the public asked what areas of land the Parish Council own that are included in the contract and the Chairman replied; the grass around Langley with Hardley Village sign, and in front of the houses there, the rear and side of the village hall, the playing field/play area, the roadside bordering Langley Street and Gentleman's Walk (not Parish Council owned but in the grass cutting contract) and the hedge around the playing field.

**9. To discuss the RoSPA Play Area Inspection June 2023. Agree on a course of action.**

Councillors discussed the inspection report dated 15 June 2023 which was circulated with the agenda. The signage information, on page A2 of the report, indicating ownership and dog ban should also have the operators name and contact information, these signs will be ordered by the Clerk as soon as Unity Bank is set up and on-line payments can be authorised. The Zipwire was inspected and replaced earlier this year. One of the main findings of the report was the bird fouling that was present across the whole site. There was discussion, with input from members of the public, on how this could be tackled included using bird scarers and various plastic additions to equipment like spikes and guards. There was general agreement that the number of birds (doves) had increased recently. Cllr Baldwin said that residents were being put off using the play area because the equipment was so dirty with bird fouling and suggested a Parish get together to clean up the equipment. Cllr Adcock offered to help with a pressure washer. This was agreed by all to be a good idea and one the Parish Council would support. The alternative was to pay a contractor to clean the equipment, however the Parish Council felt this would be too expensive. There was talk about the inspections, and whose responsibility it was to do the weekly checks and were they being carried out? Clerk to check. Cllr Wheeler does the monthly inspections and these are recorded, however there is no mechanism in place to remedy issues from these checks, which is why the bird fouling has built up over a period of time. The Council's insurance requires weekly checks, the Clerk has previously sought clarity on this point from the insurers who replied to say weekly checks can be visual, and a full recorded check monthly will meet their requirements. The details of the parish get together project will need to be worked out.

**10. To discuss and agree on a course of action resulting from the minutes 5 (1) and 5 (3) from the last meeting, in relation to public footpaths on land owned by Langley Abbey Estates Ltd.**

This item was discussed earlier in the meeting.

**11. To discuss dates for whole Councillor in-person training. Agree on a course of action.**

The Clerk said that dates were not yet available from Norfolk ALC and asked Councillors if they would be happy to receive these by e-mail, which was agreed. **Clerk to action.**

**12. To discuss a request for the no parking sign on Hardley Street next to Fish's Lane to be made larger. Agree on a course of action.**

At the meeting on 7 March 2023 the Parish Council agreed to investigate the provision of a new, larger, sign for Fish's Lane in the hope that it will deter parked cars on this public byway which is open to all traffic (BOAT). However, it was noted that the Parish Council has no powers of enforcement. Cllr Adcock showed the Parish Council a sign he had had made for this purpose, and Council agreed that it would do the job as intended. Council asked Cllr Adcock if he would place the sign on Fish's Lane, which he agreed. Cllr Adcock said that he did not require reimbursement for the sign and would also pay for the fixing and mounting. This resulted in the sign being purchased and erected at no cost to the Parish Council, for which the Chairman passed on his thanks to Cllr Adcock.

**13. To discuss a request for a litter bin on Hardley Staithe. Agree on a course of action.**

The costs for a litter bin were provided in advance of the meeting, with the agenda. This request had come from a member of the public who had sent the Parish Council a photograph of an overflowing dog waste bin at Hardley Staithe full of general rubbish at the end of a bank holiday. The Clerk said that to meet Norfolk County Council criteria for the siting of bins the land the bin was on would need to be owned by the Council, and Hardley Staithe is privately owned. One Councillor said that the Council did not want to commit Parish funds to providing a refuse point for boat owners, another Councillor said that it was visitors and users of The Wherryman's Way who would use the bin. Cllr Moore offered to talk to the owners of The Staithe and ask their opinion, and if they would be happy to purchase, install and empty a general waste bin on The Staithe. This was agreed and the Chairman thanked Cllr Moore. **Clerk to put on the agenda for the next meeting.**

**14. To discuss joining the Norfolk ALC .gov.uk pilot scheme. Agree on a course of action.**

Cllr Moore said that he had spoken to IT support at Norfolk ALC and this pilot scheme is now closed, however there would be an opportunity for the Parish Council to sign up in the future if this was agreed.

**15. To discuss the preservation of heritage road signs. Agree on a course of action.**

Cllr Baldwin said that there are at least two wonderful antique black and white road signs in the Parish and these should be adopted by the Parish Council to repair and maintain. The Clerk agreed to draft a letter to Cllr Kay Mason-Billig in this regard, with the Chairman and Cllr Baldwin to check over before it is sent.

**16. To follow up on the request to lower the speed limit at Langley Green. Agree on a course of action.**

Cllr Wheeler said that Cllr Kay Mason Billig has agreed to put forward a project to reduce the speed limit from 40 to 30 throughout the village through a Norfolk wide road minor safety scheme, and he is hopeful the Parish will hear more in October when all bids will be considered. Successful schemes will be implemented in 2024. Council agreed that this was very welcome news.

**17. Reports from the Parish Clerk,**

The Clerk had been made aware of fake e-mails purporting to come from Cllr Sullivan, asking initially for help, then for iTunes gift cards. These were scam e-mails and should be deleted.

The Town and Parish Forum is taking place on zoom on 1 August, all are invited.

The Norwich Western Link update has been sent to all Councillors via e-mail.

The tree plaque and stake for the tree planted in honour of the late Queen is expected to arrive next week, could anyone please put in place? Cllr Wheeler offered to do this.

The Parish Council now has a Ordnance Survey PSGA license, this is a Public Sector Geospatial Agreement which relates to the use of on-line mapping tools, and this is available to all Councillors to use on Parish business should they require it.

The Parish Council Insurance has been auto-renewed, the third year of a three year term. The Clerk said that it was likely a saving could be made on renewal, based on what other similar sized authorities are paying.

SAM2 – Claxton PC have agreed to keep the SAM2 sign until the end of September.

Broken noticeboard. The noticeboard lock has failed on the board opposite the Village Hall. Cllr Adcock agreed to look at this with a view to fixing it. **Cllr Adcock to action.**

**County and District Councillor Kay Mason Billig.** None.

**District Councillor, Jeremy Rowe.** Circulated by e-mail.

**Police.** None.

**Tree Warden.**

Cllr Wheeler said that he was still looking to relinquish this role and a new Tree Warden is being sought for the Parish. Cllr Wheeler asked if there were any areas for tree and hedge planting in the Autumn to let him know so this can be planned. Cllr Baldwin asked if this is something that could be put on the Parish Face Book page, this was agreed and the **Clerk will action.** Cllr Adcock mentioned that there was some filling in of hedging required around Hardley Church and agreed to send Cllr Wheeler some photographs so this can be actioned. A member of the public said that she had recently attended a Tree Warden Forum in Broadland, and there was low representation from South Norfolk Councils.

#### 18. Planning:

**To receive new planning applications and make comment, To receive results and updates on outstanding applications.**

None.

#### 19. Highways:

**To receive a report on outstanding highways issues.**

Cllr Wheeler oversees all the highways issues on behalf of the Parish Council. There was mention by residents of significant erosion of verges on Monks Loke by the new houses and sand on Cock Road, which the Parish Council encouraged the residents to report to Highways using the on-line system.

#### 20. Finance

a. To consider any grant applications received in accordance with Langley with Hardley Parish Council Grant Awarding Policy. None.

b. To receive the income and expenditure figures;

The Clerk reported the following figures as at 3 July 2023;

Barclays Community Account £8,720.53

Barclays Business Premium Account £2,052.08

Barclays LWHPC SSB account £158.98

Councillors thanked the Clerk for the up to date spending against budget that had been circulated by -email prior to the meeting, which was considered useful when being asked to make purchasing decisions.

c. To agree the payment of invoices and other expenses. The following expenses were agreed to be paid via BACS when the new Unity Bank account is set up;

To/For	Amount £
NBB Recycled Furniture (picnic table)	684.00
Clerk salary and expenses	301.85
SLCC Arnold Baker book (13 <sup>th</sup> edition)	141.80
RoSPA Play safety (annual inspection)	106.80
Dean Baldry (grass cutting)	162.50
GS Tractor Services (grass cutting)	162.50
SLCC (The Clerks manual 2023)	52.30

d. To note any monies received. None.

#### **21. To receive updates from individual Council Members (for information only)**

Cllr Adcock asked when the dog bin agreed for Fish's Lane will be purchased and the Clerk replied when the Council had the facility to make on-line payments the bin would be ordered (as she had been unable to find a supplier who could provide a bin that meets the Norfolk County Council criteria on credit). Cllr Adcock went on to say he has asked a local contractor who was in the area to trim trees along Fish's Lane, which they had done, however a plan was needed by the Parish to sustain the cutbacks on an annual basis. The Chairman passed on his thanks to Cllr Adcock for doing this and the clerk will draft a thank you letter to be sent to the contractor.

Cllr Baldwin said that he had been out with loppers and worked on Fish's Lane and it is now looking much improved, and is passable to all traffic as intended. Clerk to celebrate this on the Parish Facebook page. Cllr Baldwin also said that he had taken delivery of the picnic table for the play area today and would make arrangements to get it erected and placed on site.

Cllr Sullivan said that the 'Go for it' grant application for materials to repair and repaint the telephone box community library had been turned down as the funding was intended for start-up projects. He knew of a local resident who had volunteered his time and expertise to do the work. A member of the public representing Langley Abbey Estates said that they would purchase materials up to a maximum of £400 so this project can go ahead. Cllr Sullivan said that this was very generous and much appreciated. The details of this project will need to be worked through and costed.

#### **22. To receive any items for inclusion on the next Parish Council meeting agenda.**

In addition to items discussed during the meeting the following items were agreed;

- ❖ To discuss the Langley with Hardley Parish Trust (registered with the Charity Commission). Agree on a course of action.
- ❖ To discuss a report from the Clerk on the Council as an employer and agree on a course of action.
- ❖ To discuss progress on the Council's Action Plan and agree on a course of action.
- ❖ To discuss progress on the Council's missed payments to HMRC and agree on a course of action.
- ❖ To discuss scope and monitoring of the grass cutting contract and agree on a course of action.
- ❖ To discuss and agree on a litter pick.
- ❖ To discuss meeting frequency and agree on a course of action.

#### **23. To confirm date of the next Parish Council Meeting as Tuesday 5 September 2023 in Langley with Hardley Village Hall at 7.30 pm.**

Confirmed.

**The meeting closed at 9.22pm**