

# Girton Parish Council

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The Pavilion  
Girton Recreation Ground  
Cambridge Road, Girton  
Cambridge CB3 0FH

## Minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday 18 April 2007

**Present:** M Wilson (Chairman), D de Lacey (Vice-Chairman), W Barrett, E Bullman, J Ford-Smith, V Godby, R Gordon, R Hiley, R Hodgkinson, R Martin, J Mayfield, A Meek, P Starling, M Taylor

**Action/Power**

Also present were two members of the public, Wayne Powell, Jane Thomas, Geoff Dodgson and 3 members of BASF (left the meeting after item 60.5), Cllr Reynolds and Cllr Bygott (left the meeting after item 62).

Cllrs Ford-Smith and Taylor left the meeting after item 67.

### **07/58 Apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received from Cllr Tutt.

### **07/59 Members' declarations of interests**

None were declared.

### **07/60 Open Session for Public**

Cllr Godby prop to suspend Standing Orders, sec Cllr Bullman, carried unanimously.

- 1. Members of the Public.** A member of the public said she was keen for a pharmacy to open south of the A14 because currently she has to travel over a mile to the nearest pharmacy. She said she considered a pharmacy located in Thornton Way would be well-used because there were a lot of elderly people in the area and more residents would be moving into Wellbrook Way.
- 2. Police report.** The Clerk read out the report supplied by the police which said it had been a calm month in Girton with no reported burglaries. The former Littleton House School site is being regularly patrolled both by the police and a security company. The GM potato march in the village had passed without incident.
- 3. District Councillors' reports.** Cllr Bygott reported he had recently attended a meeting at Girton College regarding Girton Corner where they had discussed some potential changes. He said the College were interested in providing funding if the costs were reasonable. He said the County Council are preparing costings. He had also attended a meeting held for parties interested in taking over the running of Milton Country Park. He said the running costs had been lowered by 50% which made it a more attractive going concern to take over. Cllr Bullman reported that efforts were continuing for the derelict caravan on Oakington Road to be removed by its owner.
- 4. County Councillor's report.** Cllr Reynolds reported that the County Council were in the process of evaluating bids for the Littleton House School site. Cllr de Lacey said that the Council/the Clerk received the air pollution report for the A14 and asked how the report related to the proposed widening of the A14. Cllr Reynolds replied that the upgrade would be in consultation with the Highways Agency. Cllr Martin asked for reassurance that there would be serious consideration of noise pollution. Cllr Reynolds replied that this issue had been raised. Cllr Martin also said he understood that there was a proposal to reduce the number of mobile libraries in the area and asked how would this affect Girton? Cllr Reynolds replied that he believed the mobiles were to be reduced from 8 to 6 to make more effective use of them. He said that preliminary work suggested that this would mean limited changes to timings and length of stops. He said the County Council were also looking at how to expand the door-step service for individuals.

- 5. Presentation from representatives from NIAB regarding GM potato trials.** Wayne Powell, the Director of NIAB, thanked the Council for inviting them to the meeting. Professor Powell gave a brief outline of the history of NIAB. He said he wanted to ensure an open dialogue with the public and encourage visitors to the trials.

Jane Thomas, Senior Research Pathologist at NIAB, continued the presentation. She explained that potato blight was a very aggressive disease and also very variable and that in the past as soon as plant breeders have come up with a resistance the blight has quickly overcome it. There followed a Q & A session with questions that had already been supplied to Professor Thomas.

Q: Is the modification only the addition of potato genes or is there also insertion of genes from other species? If more than one, for what purpose is each gene added? A: In the normal biological process they need a method to select those that have been effectively transformed. One way to do it is to try and make the individuals survive on an agar plate using a herbicide agent. This doesn't confer herbicide resistance to potatoes outside the laboratory – this is a laboratory tool. Cllr de Lacey asked if this was a non-potato gene. Robert Storers of BASF replied yes, a mutation from a cress plant.

Q: What tests have been done on the stability of the inserts? A: These tubers have been through several cycles of multiplication and have been stable through these stages. They need to be trialed in the field to see how stable they will be. All plant varieties go through the process of "Distinctive Uniformity Tests". Because potatoes are clonal it is easy to run them through a number of tests/generations so we believe it is stable.

Q: What environmental and health impact studies (including non-human animals) have been undertaken? A: These potatoes have been trialed in other European trials (Sweden, Germany, Holland). ACRE have reviewed all the data and state that they believe there is no risk to humans or the environment. Cllr Mayfield asked why trial them in more than one country? A: because potato blight has many strains so it needs to be tested under a lot of agricultural regimes. Cllr Martin asked for confirmation that these were field trials rather than laboratory trials. A: yes, they are small scale field trials. What are the risks of cross pollination? A: In theory potatoes could cross-pollinate with another commercial potato but potatoes are principally self-fertile or sterile and are not a particular favourite of bees so the changes of pollen being transferred was slim. The normal propagation of potatoes is by tubers; he did not think volunteer plants from a cross-fertilised berry would survive in the wild, and it is unlikely that domestic gardeners would allow them to survive under cultivation.

Q: What precautions are being taken to prevent spread to neighbouring crops and land? What assurances can be given to members of the Soil Association in the village that their own crops are safe from contamination? A: It is implicit in terms of consent to release these plants issued by Government. The view of the authorities which grant consent is that the risk is vanishingly small. They have to make assurances to the Soil Association. He said the distance to the nearest allotment was about 1km which was a long way for pollen to blow and the risk of fertilization very small. Cllr Hiley enquired if the Consent was a public document. The reply was yes and it would be sent to the Clerk for circulation. Cllr Gordon asked if cross-pollination could be overcome if the flowers were picked off and would this be practical for the trials? R Storers replied that he did not think it was practical and that they are also evaluating yield and removing the flowers could affect the physiological mechanisms of yield. The Consent does not require them to remove the flowers. Potato pollen wind dispersion was around 5-10 metres and there would be a 20 metre buffer zone around the trials. Cllr Hiley asked if there was any plan to run a secondary experiment to measure any contamination. The reply is that they have no plans to do that.

Q: How will spread to neighbouring crops and land be monitored? A: Professor Thomas said that monitoring after trials is very intensive and once the trials are complete, 'volunteer' plants are sought out and destroyed for 2 years. Cllr Barrett asked how potato blight moves around. A: It moves by rain and wind but every year for the past 30 years they have had blight trials on the trial grounds without any reports of problems to neighbouring plots. Cllr Starling asked whether cross-pollination had occurred during any of the trials in Europe. R Storers replied that he was not aware of any and that if it had been a concern it would have been revealed in the application to DEFRA.

Q: Is there a compensation scheme for owners of local gardens/plots if there is any spread

of GM material and if so what is it? What are the criteria for claiming? A: A compensation scheme has not been considered because the possibility is considered to be so remote. DEFRA has been looking at compensation schemes generally in relation to GM crops but this is only a trial.

Q: How are the trials themselves, and the results of the trials, going to be publicised? A: All notification is public but results data is commercially confidential to BASF. The results will eventually be summarised on the DEFRA website. Professor Powell ended by inviting anyone interested to a Stakeholder meeting on co-existence of GM and conventional agricultural production held on 23 May.

Cllr Wilson thanked the group for their presentation.

**07/61 Standing Orders reinstated**

Standing Orders reinstated prop Cllr Wilson, sec Cllr de Lacey, carried unanimously.

**07/62 Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on 21 March 2007**

The Minutes for the meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman, Cllr Martin prop, Cllr Gordon sec. Carried unanimously.

**07/63 Matters arising from the minutes**

1. The Clerk has taken action on all the items arising from the minutes (marked HB).
2. Item 07/53 Cllr de Lacey attended a meeting of various local parish councils at which a series of questions to be put to the Planning Lawyer was discussed. The list will be discussed with lawyer Philip Kratz at a meeting on 19 April at Cottenham.

**07/64 That the minutes of the Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 13 March be received**

The minutes were received. Cllr Godby commented on cars parking on Smithy Green.

**07/65 That the Parish Council proceed with a Parish Plan to be presented initially to the Annual parish meeting**

Cllr Wilson suggested the Council publicise the process of the Parish Plan at the Annual Parish meeting. He suggested preparing our own documentation and put to the village that we would be interested in getting other interested parties involved. He asked if any Councillor in particular was willing to take this forward with him. Cllr Ford-Smith said he would like to.

**07/66 That the Council write to the Major Development Manager at SCDC requesting that when Section 106 monies are discussed the case be put that coherent bridleways/ cycleways/footpaths to provided from Northstowe through Girton to provide access to Cambridge; and that the bus services connect to Northstowe, Oakington and Girton for mutual benefit**

Following discussion Cllr Starling prop removing the last sentence from "and the bus services...". Sec Cllr Gordon, carried 12 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention. Cllr Wilson prop the motion, sec Cllr del Lacey, carried 13 in favour with 1 abstention.

MW/JFS

**07/67 That the Council respond to the NHS concerning the Preliminary Consent Application for a pharmacy in Thornton Way**

Councillors were asked to approve the proposed response previously circulated. Following discussion Cllr de Lacey prop to accept the draft response (see below) with no amendments, sec Cllr Hiley, carried 10 in favour, 3 against, 1 abstention.

HB

Girton is a village with a comparatively large elderly population: nearly 20% of our population is of retirement age. The 2001 census reveals the following profile:

Age 0-4	160	4.27%
Age 5-14	410	10.95%
Age 15-24	675	18.03%

HB

Age 25-34	336	8.97%
Age 35-44	488	13.03%
Age 45-54	536	14.32%
Age 55-64	421	11.24%
Age 65-74	339	9.05%
Age 75+	379	10.12%
Total	3744	100.00%

Source: 2001 census results at <http://egov.scambs.gov.uk/geoReveal/South%20Cambs%20&%20City%20Age/Main.html>

For the past 23 years the village has been served by a branch surgery of the Huntingdon Road surgery (Dr Toase and partners) which also runs a dispensary with a qualified pharmacist who generally delivers medicines to housebound patients. 2949 residents of Girton (79%) are registered with this practice and 2303 (over 61%) are classified as being dispensing patients. In the older age groups 88% (632 out of 718) of patients over 65 years are registered with the practice and 98% (368 out of 379) of those over 75 years. (Source: private communication from Dr Toase.)

The Dispensary is however permitted only to dispense prescription medicines, and only to residents in the half of the village to the north of the A14. It is open for limited hours.

The Parish Council is concerned that no decision made about this application for a pharmacy should harm our most vulnerable residents. It is apparent that the elderly rely heavily on the branch surgery. Many of these patients live in St Vincent's Close (164 residents) and Orchard Close (43 residents), to the north of the A14, and would lose the ability to have medicines dispensed at the surgery if a chemist were to open. Many walk to the branch surgery, which also lies on a frequent bus route, but the new pharmacy would not be as accessible to them either by foot or by bus. Conversely, elderly residents of Thornton Court (57 residents), and of Thornton Road/Thornton Way/ Thornton Close are likely to find a local chemist much more convenient. If the chemist were to be persuaded to collect repeat prescriptions from the surgery and to deliver medicines some of these problems would be mitigated.

There is the added possibility that without its dispensing income the branch surgery would no longer be viable and might close.

While there may be clear benefits to the village as a whole of a dedicated pharmacy within an existing commercial district the Parish Council urges that all factors be carefully considered, and that wide-ranging consultations with residents of the village should be undertaken, before any decision is made.

**07/68 That the Council respond to the Consultation from SCDC on litter and dog bins**

Cllr Hiley prop, sec Cllr de Lacey, carried unanimously, the following response: We accept that there may be budgetary limits on the number of types of bins that may be emptied therefore we would welcome discussions between SCDC and each parish council to ascertain the most cost-effective way of dealing with the real problem of littering. Together they might identify the number and types of bins that might be economically emptied in each village. Of the Options offered we believe Option 3 is the closest to but not fully meeting our concerns.

**07/69 That reports from Parish Councillors be received**

1. Cllr Godby reported the problem of littering by the benches in Washpit Lane.
2. Cllr Starling proposed hiring the Cotton Hall for future parish council meetings. The Clerk was asked to look into this.
3. Cllr Hodgkinson reported that the hedge at Thornton Way had still not been cut back.
4. Cllr Hiley reported that the bicycle pass at the Wellbrook Way roundabout were dirty and asked how and by who they were to be maintained.
5. Cllr Meek said he would be handing his notice into the Clerk as he was moving away. He thanked all concerned for their support and wished the Council well. Cllr Starling asked the Clerk to record a vote of thanks to Cllr Meek for his many years of service to the Council. HB
6. Cllr Barrett reported that Cllrs Meek, De Lacey, herself and the architect had met with SCDC Planning officers to discuss the community land at Wellbrook Way. She said they HB

had agreed on a way forward with the layout of the land that the Officers were happy with. The next step was to produce a design for the site (LEAP, building and bowling green) and liaise with Wimpey. Cllr Barrett also reported the problem of littering in Washpit Lane saying she had removed a number of syringes and broken glass. The Clerk was asked to report the problem of drug dealing here to the police and contact Highways to clean up the area. She also reported that the hedge at Duck End was encroaching onto the road. She also said she had received complaints from residents of St Vincent's Close about the mess with grass clippings all over the footpaths after recent mowing.

**07/70 That reports from other groups be received**

HB

**1. Girton Town Charity.** Cllr Hiley reported:

(a) That Wimpey have now got planning permission for the 72 houses in Phase 2 of Wellbrook Way but without the Section 106 being finalised. This means that they can't sell more than half the number of houses until this is done but the PC will need to be vigilant to see that this deadline does not pass before the S106 is finalised since it affects the PC's interest in the Community Land.

HB

(b) That the Town Charity have received outline planning permission for 4 dwellings on the SCDC land which abuts the Wimpey Phase 2 land at the rear of council houses and former council houses in Girton Road. They have also received reserved matters consent for an entrance into that site directly off the Wellbrook Way spine road. It is likely that this will discharge the obligation to provide access over the Wimpey land which, in that area, is designated for the Community Land which will be made available to the PC. One other implication is that a condition of this agreement is that a fence must be installed and maintained by GTC - which they will pass onto the parish council.

(c) That the site on the opposite side of the spine road to Phase 2 is still under negotiation with Abbeyfield.

**2. Youth Works.** Nothing to report.

**3. Footpaths and Rights of Way.** Cllr Starling said he had been in touch with Peter Duthie (Liaison Officer for public access in relation to the Guided Bus) to discuss footpath no. 1 (Girton to Histon). He said they still hadn't agreed to make it a bridleway and that objections had been raised by the immediate neighbours who were concerned about the gate. Cllr Starling said he was arranging a meeting between County farms, P Duthie and the concerned residents.

**07/71 Correspondence**

1. Highways Agency – A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton
2. Highways Agency – Cambridge Crematorium
3. Andrew Lansley – South Cambridgeshire's Housing Revenue Account
4. Audit Commission – Appointment of external auditor
5. SCDC – Grounds Maintenance contract
6. SCDC – Provision of litter and dog bins
7. Aon – Insurance documents
8. East of England Regional Assembly – Regional Gypsy and Traveller Engagement Event Consultation
9. CALC – details of training courses
10. CCC/Peterborough City Council – Minerals and Waste Plan – changes to the timetable

PS

**07/72 That payments for the period 15 March – 11 April 2007 be approved**

Payments	GPC 18 April 2007				
Cq no.	Paid To	Description	Gross	VAT	net
1815	NALC	Direct Information Service subscription renewal	105.00		105.00
1816	Linda Miller	Stationery and office pin boards	197.09		197.09
1817	Gee Tee Bulb Company	Bulbs for Open Spaces	223.25	33.25	190.00
1818	British Telecommunications plc	BT Internet services	95.13	14.16	80.97

1819	Inland Revenue	Tax and NI month 12	106.53		106.53
1820	Helen Bracey	Clerk's wages (month 12)	589.35		589.35
1821	Girton Youth Works	Clearing footpaths	121.00		121.00
1822	Aon Limited	Insurance premium 05/03/07-05/03/08	2,263.92		2,263.92
1823	J Wells	Hanging of noticeboards at office	65.00		65.00
1824	Laurence Letchford	Computer support	126.00		126.00
1825	Cotton Hall Foundation	Donation to Cotton Hall	5,000.00		5,000.00
			8,892.27	47.41	8,844.86

<b>Payments</b>	<b>GRC 18 April 2007</b>				
<b>Cq no.</b>	<b>Paid To</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Gross</b>	<b>VAT</b>	<b>net</b>
300580	J Wells	Repairs to tiles in changing rooms	103.76		103.76
581	Peter T Round	Grounds maintenance for Feb 07	514.06		514.06
582	P A Collacott & Co	To attend to external lighting	261.60	38.96	222.64
583	Graffters Limited	Burco water boiler	121.75	18.13	103.62
584	C M R Wilson	Work on Recreation Ground + petrol expenses for roller	325.10		325.10
585	Linda Miller	Bookings Administrator wages + expenses	513.96		513.96
586	Norman Lewell	Security/Maintenance Officer fees	336.00		336.00
587	Stuart Turnock	Cleaner's fees	360.00		360.00
588	Scott Morley	Litter picker's fees	60.00		60.00
589	Cambridgeshire County Council	Cut back brambles at Recreation Ground	329.00	49.00	280.00
590	Turfcare	Spray cricket square and hard courts	80.00		80.00
591	Histon Hardware Ltd	Pavilion supplies	15.29	2.28	13.01
592	Peter T Round	Grounds maintenance for Mar 07	514.06	76.56	437.50
593	P A Collacott & Co	Replacement lights in Pavilion hall	1,151.78	171.54	980.24
594	Cambridge Tree Surgery Co	Tree work at Recreation Ground	540.50	80.50	460.00
595	Cannon Hygiene	Sanitary disposal	106.00	90.21	15.79
			<b>5,332.86</b>	<b>527.18</b>	<b>4,805.68</b>

Payments were approved, prop Cllr Hodgkinson, sec Cllr de Lacey, carried unanimously.

The meeting closed at 2145hrs.