

Girton Parish Council

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**Minutes of Girton Parish Council's Meeting of Wednesday 18th November 2009  
at St Vincent's Close Community Centre at 7.30pm.**

**Present:** Cllrs D de Lacey (Chairman), S Clift (Vice Chairman), J Ford-Smith, R Hiley (*from 09/135*), V Godby, J Thorrold, R Gordon, R Martin, B Bromwich, E. Bullman, M Wilson, L Sparling, P Starling, M Taylor & C Starling.

Cllr J Reynolds (Cambridgeshire CC) and Cllr T Bygott (South Cambridgeshire DC).  
Philip Hacker

**In attendance:** R Stone (Clerk) and Mrs N Stone (RFO)

**09/132 Welcome from the Chairman**

Cllr de Lacey welcomed all present, and in particular welcomed Peter Gibbs to the meeting.

**09/133 Apologies**

Cllr R. Martin

**09/134 Members' declarations of interest for items on the agenda**

Cllrs Chris Starling and Len Sparling declared a personal interest in Item 09/138/2 in view of their lead role in organising this year's Feast Week.

**09/135 Public Participation session on agenda items & matters of mutual interest**

1. Presentation by Peter Gibbs on the proposed Girton Bowling Green

Peter summarised key points from his paper at Appendix A. The proposed bowling green would be useable by people of all ages, and those with disabilities. The Cambridgeshire bowling leagues promoted competitions for juniors, and he hoped it would be possible to establish links with local young people. If established the bowling green would be the only non-commercial activity for older people in Girton. Village bowling clubs tended to be successful providing a social focus and an affordable activity. Some 70 people had already indicated their support for the project, and 6 people were prepared to form a Steering Group. A bowling club should not be a financial burden. Fund raising would be required. Pending the availability of a community building it was hoped that use could be made of the Abbeyfield facilities. Girton Parish Council was requested to re-affirm its support for the project.

Councillors raised queries about the drop in numbers of people using bowls clubs, the cost of construction, whether the club would be open to all, and whether local people who had indicated an interest would retain loyalty to their existing clubs. Peter held up Milton as a very successful village club, said construction costs would be approximately £80,000, and that his main loyalty would be to the new Girton Club.

2. Members of the public

No issues were raised by members of the public.

3. District Councillors' reports

Cllr de Lacey's report was circulated in advance. (See Appendix B). He added that he had just received a letter from the Highways Agency stating it wished to de-restrict the speed limit from the Girton interchange to Girton College. Whilst this recognised the reality of cars approaching the city at 60mph it did not accord with the proposed policy of pushing for a 30mph speed limit on the Huntingdon Road.

Cllr Bygott referred to the launch of the Cambridge Climate Change Charter, and announced that he had taken over the Environmental Health portfolio until December. SCDC was working towards a blue bin in October 2010 to take all hard plastics, and replace the green boxes. The issue would go before the full District Council the following week.

Cllr Hiley voiced his concerns that recycling was being driven by hitting targets rather than maximum retention of energy, and that it was important to educate people.

4. County Councillor's report

Cllr Reynolds said he had attended the NW Cambridge University Workshops. He had raised the issue of the impact on Girton of the new development. The University would discuss with Girton PC after Xmas. The NIAB site had been delayed by planning issues.

Councillors asked when the 30mph was to be introduced on the Huntingdon Road. Cllr Reynolds was unable to answer. Councillors also referred to the lack of response to a resident on speed limits on the Oakington Road. Cllr Reynolds promised to respond.

5. Police Report

This was tabled. Eight crimes were reported in the parish, three thefts, four of criminal damage, and one distraction burglary. This last category of crime is in the increase in the Cambridge area at present with offenders posing as waterboard or police officers.

6. Parish Plan

No report was received.

**09/136 To confirm minutes of the Parish Council meetings held on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2009 and 21<sup>st</sup> October 2009**

7/10 - Prop Cllr Wilson Sec. Cllr Hiley Majority approval.

21/10 – Prop Cllr Godby Sec. Cllr L Sparling Majority approval

Both sets of minutes were signed by the Chairman as a true record.

**09/137 Matters arising from minutes**

None.

**09/138 Business items requiring a decision, or consideration by the Council**

**1. To approve, subject to a satisfactory S106 payment by Wimpeys, the construction of a bowling green, storage facility, car park and essential ancilliary facilities on the public open space at Wellbrook Way. (See Appendix A)**

Prop. Cllr de Lacey Sec. Cllr Ford-Smith

Cllr de Lacey explained the background. An earlier consultation exercise within the village had identified a bowling green as the lead option for a recreational facility. Approximate costs of the green plus a small car park were £100,000. Wimpeys had yet to agree the S106 monies which with interest were calculated by SCDC to be in the order of £140,000 which would provide sufficient funds. If the green was laid in 2010 it should be available for use in 2012.

Cllr Wilson raised a number of issues: management; ownership; equipment costs; and hidden costs such as CCTV, security, fencing, drainage, equipment maintenance and reserves.

Cllr Hiley said there were two models:

- (i) Girton Parish Council owns and maintains the site; and
  - (ii) the site was maintained by the Club assisted by grants from Girton Town Charity.
- In this instance the land would remain in the ownership of the Parish Council.

Cllr de Lacey said that the Wellbrook Way Committee would need to look at the issues in detail. Cllr P Starling added that the ownership of the land would need to be safeguarded under Fields in Trust. **Action:** Wellbrook Way Committee

The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

**2. To approve the holding of a Girton Feast in 2010, and to agree a donation of up to £3000. (S.137) (Appendix C)**

Prop. Cllr C Starling Sec. Cllr de Lacey

Cllr Chris Starling said that following further consideration it may be advisable to hold the next Feast Week in 2011, and then every two years thereafter. The World Cup was being held next summer, and the Olympics in 2012. Delaying this event would provide an opportunity for fundraising.

An amendment to the above resolution changing 2010 to 2011 was proposed by Cllr Starling and seconded by Cllr de Lacey and was unanimously approved.

Cllr Chris Starling explained that an increased donation was required to enable a larger marquee to be rented, and plan a bigger and better event. The Council approved a donation of £3000 for the Feast Week in 2011.

The Chairman said that as this would be after next year's election that the new Council would need to revisit the issue and decide whether to confirm approval of this expenditure.

**3. To approve the revised Complaints Policy**

Prop. Cllr de Lacey Sec. Cllr Len Sparling

The revised policy at Appendix D was approved by unanimous vote.

## 09/139 Finance & resource management

### 1. To approve payments from 21 October 2009 to 17<sup>th</sup> November 2009

Prop. Cllr Gordon Sec. Cllr Wilson

The payments at Appendix F were approved by unanimous vote.

### 2. To approve the balance sheet from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2009.

Approval was deferred pending an explanation of the terms "Opening balance equity" and "Retained earnings".

Action: RFO

### 3. To receive the finance report from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2009.

This was tabled by the RFO who reported that a number of items were below budget: play equipment; benches; development of the village centre; open spaces maintenance and insurance. Expenditure items over budget were: building maintenance; wages; litter picking; and stationery in view of the increased costs of the parish plan.

### 4. To receive the proposed budget for 2010/2011 (for consideration by the Finance and Budget Committees for recommendation to the December Council meeting).

The draft budget was circulated as an excel spreadsheet in advance of the meeting. Councillors commented that the Finance Committee would need to consider carefully proposed expenditure which was significantly higher than 2009/10 against what would be accepted as a fair and just figure within the wider community. Prioritisation would be needed to determine what costs had to be met in 2010/11 and which could wait until the following financial year. It was also noted that SCDC was facing difficult financial cut backs and that parishes may be required to pay for local services in future.

Cllr Wilson added that he had a number of points to reflect what the S& R Committee had agreed. He was particularly concerned that the full amounts of allocated reserves be set aside for their intended purpose each year.

Cllr Hiley, as Chairman of the Finance Committee, said there was no simple formula. Consideration needed to be given to the ability of electors to pay an annual increase in precept, the rate of inflation, and the percentage increase in pensions.

Action: Finance & Budget Committees

### 5. To amend the Financial Regulations to allow the Clerk, with the consent of three Councillors to place work with contractors up to a limit of £1000 without the need to obtain three quotations.

As an amendment to our Standing Orders this motion immediately postponed to the next Council meeting to allow Councillors time to consider the issues.

Action: December agenda

### 6. To instruct the Finance Committee consider and report back to the Council on: (a) Depositing all or a portion of allocated and/or unallocated reserve funds in a higher interest bearing or deposit account.

Prop. Cllr Wilson Sec. Cllr Godby

Cllr Hiley advised that Parish Councils had very limited options to make investments in higher interest accounts although the issue could be reviewed from time to time.

The motion was approved by a majority vote of 3 in favour, 1 against, and 5 abstentions.

**(b) Whether pursuing (a) would make impossible the application of expense against allocated reserves which would be visible in the monthly financial reports.**

Cllr Wilson explained that his primary concern was the accuracy of figures of allocated reserve figures within the monthly reports.

The Council agreed that the issue should be considered by the Finance Committee.

**Action:** Finance Committee

**09/140 Correspondence received**

The correspondence listed below was circulated at the meeting. The Chairman drew attention to the items requiring a response to consultations or attendance at meetings and asked for volunteers.

SCDC consultation on community Involvement and Supplementary Planning.	Deadline: 4 <sup>th</sup> December 2009 Volunteers to consider documents & respond?
Terminal Control North Update on air routes	Revised proposals will be available in Sep 2010
CPALC: AGM papers plus Big Lottery & fund raising speakers	Sat 21 November 2009 Volunteer(s) to attend?
Copy correspondence from resident to CCC	Reclassification of cycle paths on Huntingdon Rd
Letter from Andrew Lansley MP on A14 scheme	Enclosure from Chris Mole, Minister of Transport declining invitation to attend a meeting on the noise & pollution issues.
Adoption of NW Cambridge Area Action Plan	Cambridge CC advising how to view relevant documents on their website.
Response from Cllr de Lacey to Andrew Lansley	GPC concerns on A14 scheme
Invitation to meet SCDC Cabinet to discuss S106 agreements, finance, refuse & recycling.	Wed 25 <sup>th</sup> November 2009 at 7.30pm Volunteer(s) to attend?
Cambridge CC consultation on environmental issues arising from development of land between Madingley Road and Histon Road	Deadline: 25 <sup>th</sup> November 2009 Volunteer(s) to consider & respond if appropriate?
Acknowledgement from Jonathan Djanogly MP	Recipient of Cllr de Lacey's letter to Andrew Lansley on A14.
Opportunity to comment on Cambridge CC's Core Traffic Scheme for Cambridge.	Deadline: 11 <sup>th</sup> November 2009 Volunteer(s) to consider & respond?
Letter by Clerk to Virgin Media	Queries lack of repair to damaged cable pipe near entrance to the recreation ground
Copy correspondence from resident to SCDC	Response to Gypsy and Traveller site proposals
Invitation to Parish Planning Forum on landscapes, S106 agreements, and planning applications	Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup> December 2009 at Cambourne Volunteer(s) to attend?

**09/141 To receive reports:**

- i) Chairman's Report - Circulated in advance. (Attached at Appendix E )

- ii) Girton Town Charity – Cllr Hiley reported that GTC had had extended difficulties in gaining planning permission for 7 almshouses in Wellbrook Way. The latest problem was a requirement to do an air quality assessment. SCDC appeared to have a lack of understanding of what almshouses were. The design had been changed to provide higher quality accommodation, and to make them more green.

Cllr Hiley also reported on his meeting with Abbeyfield's Chief Executive about their new development at Wellbrook Way and had learnt that they had succeeded in gaining planning permission. Some 50% of Abbeyfield's development would be for social housing. The project would go their Board in the spring.

- iii) Girton Youth Works - Cllr Hiley said that the current youth worker had just resigned after a period of ill health. It was hoped to continue the youth project in partnership with the YMCA.
- iv) Fields in Trust - Cllr Wilson said that this should have come forward as a business item, and should be on the next agenda. Legal fees may be an issue. **Action** - Clerk
- v) Footpaths and Rights of Way – No report.

**09/142 To receive unconfirmed Committee minutes for the Planning, Environment and Sport & Recreation Committees if available.**

Draft minutes of the Planning Meeting of 26<sup>th</sup> October, and Environment Meeting of 26<sup>th</sup> October were tabled for information. The Minutes of the S&R meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> November would be circulated when available.

**09/143 Matters raised by Councillors including items for the next Agenda.**

Cllr Ford-Smith feared that the Council might be neglectful of disabled people. A working party was needed to consider the issues, including access. Additional finance costs may be involved.

Cllr C Starling said that a number of drains in the village remained to be cleared.

Cllr S Clift was concerned about the lack of youth work at present. He asked Cllr Hiley to update him on new developments.

The meeting ended at 9.25pm.

### **The Case for a Girton Bowls Club**

- **Bowls can be played by people of all ages and abilities.**
- **Bowls can be played by people with disabilities, including those in wheelchairs and the blind.**
- **By linking a bowls club to the local Youth Worker, young people could be introduced to a sport they can play throughout their lives.**
- **There are local competition categories for junior bowlers, as well as Under - 21 County and national representative teams.**
- **A bowls green would be the only non-commercial outdoor sporting facility for the older people in our community.**
- **Girton has a relatively high proportion of older residents.**
- **Village bowls clubs, unlike most bowls clubs based in cities and towns, are generally a successful and important part of the local community.**
- **Bowls is a relatively quiet and peaceful game - something that would be greatly appreciated by residents living near a green.**
- **Bowls is an inexpensive sport to play.**
- **There is considerable interest among villagers in a local bowls club.**
- **A thriving bowls club would not be a financial burden on villagers, because membership fees would cover green maintenance.**
- **A bowls club would not immediately need a community building. Abbeyfield have suggested that the club could use facilities in their building.**
- **The cost of constructing a bowls green would be a significant proportion of the money allocated in the Wellbrook 106 Agreement.**
- **We understand that the 106 money must be spent on community facilities at Wellbrook, and money not spent could be lost to the village.**

- **Girton Town Charity may look favourably on requests for grants during the start-up period of the club.**

- **We ask the Parish Council to reaffirm its 2004 commitment to a bowls club.**

### **The need for a Girton Bowls Green**

A bowls green will provide a facility for a sport that, unlike most other outdoor sports, can be played together by men, women, boys and girls of all ages, and in particular by our older residents.

Bowls can be played by people with disabilities, including those in wheelchairs and by wholly or partially blind people.

Girton has a relatively high proportion of older residents. The 2001 census showed that Girton had 3752 residents, of whom 1684 were aged 45 and over. That's about 45%, which appears to be the highest in south Cambridgeshire. Given the increase in village housing for both elderly and young families, we believe that the proportions are still approximately similar.

Sports facilities for younger people in our village are rightly well provided, but there are no such non-commercial facilities for our active older villagers.

Young people could be introduced, through arrangements with the local Youth Worker, to a sport that they could enjoy throughout their lives. To emphasise the point that bowls is not just for older people, it should be noted that there are local competition categories for junior bowlers, as well as Under-21 County and International representative teams.

A bowls green will be attractive to residents of the Abbeyfield development on the Wellbrook site, which would mean a significant increase in potential membership of a bowls club, over and above that which we have already identified below.

Abbeyfield have expressed great interest in a bowls club in close proximity to their development, and have suggested that the club could use their facilities until a Wellbrook community building became available.

A dozen or more Girton residents play competitive bowls for clubs in Cambridge and Cambridgeshire, which means a lot of travelling by car to both home and away matches. We have spoken to each of these, and they all expressed a desire to join a Girton bowls club, not least because the need to travel would be reduced.

Bowls is an inexpensive sport to play, and is therefore well suited for people on fixed incomes, the less well off, and for people that do not wish to make a large outlay for an activity. Bowls is a relatively gentle game that can be played both as a leisure activity and competitively. If a club competes in certain Cambridgeshire leagues, bowlers can proceed, through competitions, to the All England Finals at Worthing. Thus bowls is admirably suited to both young and old people with varied ambitions, and emotional and physical needs and abilities.

In planning a facility on the Wellbrook community land, the effects on local residents must be accounted for. A bowls green is attractive, and bowls is generally

played quietly and placidly –things we are sure would be much appreciated by residents living close to the Wellbrook community land.

A village bowls club is normally a much different type of club than a city or town-based club. A village bowls club is generally supported in one way or the other by the whole community throughout the year, and are more successful in terms of support and membership than most city bowls clubs. To our knowledge, only one village bowls club had folded in the last 25 years. Milton Bowls Club, for example, which was founded about 10 years ago by means of a 106 Agreement, has grown rapidly since, and is now one of the most successful Cambridgeshire village clubs.

### **Support for a Girton Bowls Club**

A measure of support for a bowls club can be judged from the response to our initial meeting back in January 2004 that tested the water for interest in a bowls club. At that meeting each of the 40 attendees put their name to a list expressing interest in forming and joining a Girton bowls club.

In the years since 2004, this list of interested people has grown to about 70 people. This is comparable to the membership of most sports-related clubs in Girton. We would expect many more after a green has been established and a club has been formed. It should be appreciated that a club cannot be formed in any meaningful sense until there is full commitment towards the construction of a bowling green.

The consensus of a village survey carried out in 2004 by the Parish Council gave priority to a bowls club and a community building. We ask the Parish Council to reaffirm its commitment to this survey.

### **History of planning a Girton Bowls Club**

In 2003 we became aware that community land would become available at the Wellbrook housing development site. We felt that this site could be used for a bowling green and began to collect feasibility information. By January 2004 we had collected sufficient information from bowls green construction contractors and the English Bowling Association (EBA), and presented our findings to interested people from the village and from the Parish Council.

In March 2004, the site of the community land had been agreed, and a steering committee met to discuss future plans. In July, September and October 2004, meetings were held with representatives of the Parish Council and CHS Architects to discuss the proposal for a bowls green and a community building on the Wellbrook site.

Bowls green construction contractors were invited to assess the site and make proposals and budget costings.

In March 2005, just a few days after the contractors had visited us, we heard that the planned site for the community land was no longer available. Officers from SCDC had ruled that a hedgerow running across the site had to be preserved. It is

noted that this hedgerow has long since disappeared as land clearance has continued.

By November 2005, the community land had been reassigned to its current location. Plans were drawn up by CHS Architects for a bowls green and a community building, and submitted to SCDC in early 2006.

In spite of the apparent lack of progress, determination and enthusiasm for a Girton Bowls Club still runs high.

### **Funding of a Girton Bowls Club**

Our cost and income estimates are based upon our experience in playing bowls for, and holding official posts in, local clubs.

We do not intend to ask for subsidies from the Parish Council, but we do note that there are some small subsidies for other village sports.

If bowls is to be played competitively in EBA-affiliated leagues, the green must conform to rules laid down by the EBA and its international counterparts. Amongst other matters, these rules determine the minimum and maximum size of a green.

We have obtained quotations from three bowls green constructors. These indicate that basic construction costs will be around £80,000. Other necessary items, such as storage, fencing, water and electricity supply take the budget cost to around £100,000. Anticipated self-help among residents for work such as fencing and other non-specialist tasks will help reduce this budget.

It is anticipated that the construction of the green will be paid for by the money received for development of the community land in the 106 Agreement.

We understand that the money available under the 106 Agreement is a fund to be claimed against for community facilities at the Wellbrook site, and not a sum simply to be given to the Parish Council. Underspend could result in money being lost to the community.

Any facility on the community land will have to be maintained. In the absence of a club using those facilities and raising money, the Parish Council will have to stand the cost of maintenance, probably by increasing the contribution of residents towards the village precept. The cost of maintaining a bowls green depends on how much work is undertaken by volunteers. As is done in many clubs, volunteers could cut the green as necessary and maintain the surrounds during the season.

A new high-quality bowls green single-width-of-cut grass mower costs anything from £2,800 to £4,000. Like most things, the more you pay, the better you get. We intend to apply for assistance to the GTC for this mower and other start-up equipment. Such a mower should last for 10 years or more, given regular maintenance. We should allocate £350 per year for professional maintenance and replacement of the mower.

Specialist maintenance such as fertilising, aerating, weed killing and top dressing would be carried out by a professional green keeper.

Contracting a green keeper with his/her own specialist equipment, but who did not cut the green, would cost about £2,500 per year, according to the green keeper used by several Cambridge bowls clubs. The plan also includes the cost of green maintenance consumables such as fertiliser and top dressing, which is assessed at £600 per year.

We would need to pay fees to the various organising bodies in order to play bowls in competitive leagues. The fees are roughly proportional to the number of club members, and range widely depending on the league.

The Cambridge and District Bowls League, for example, which comprises about 55 clubs, charges about £2 per member per year, so costs for playing in this league each year will be about £100, assuming 50 competitive members.

A bowls club should take out Public Liability Insurance to protect its officials and members. Typically, this costs about £100 per year for bowls clubs.

We are not sure how much we would have to pay for insuring equipment. Much depends on the security of storage, but we will guess at £100 per year.

Summing up, we anticipate annual running costs of around £3,750 during the first few years, assuming 50 members.

Annual membership fees amongst bowls clubs not supported by local councils are around £50 per year. With 50 members, this would raise £2,500 per annum.

Commonly, there is a charge per player per competitive game, known as a "rink fee", usually £2 or so. These fees, together with the traditional raffle, cover the costs of providing refreshments after a home match. Because there will be no community building in which to entertain our visiting teams, we would expect to use a local public house or club with catering facilities as a base, at least in the early years. Rink fees are therefore excluded from our budgeting.

Thus a club would need to raise around £1,250 per year over and above membership fees to cover annual running costs. We plan to use local fund-raising events such as monthly pub quizzes, jumble sales, prize cards, bowls tournaments and so on to cover this shortfall.

Since we would be a village club, we would be active throughout the year, unlike many City clubs. The outdoor playing season extends from mid-April to mid-September. It is common for bowls clubs to play short-mat bowls indoors during the winter months. Cotton Hall would be a suitable venue. This would ensure that club members meet regularly throughout the year to discuss and instigate fund-raising events.

We would hold Open Days during the summer to introduce people to the sport and to encourage membership. Free coaching from Bowls England, the national organising body, is available to affiliated clubs.

We would hope to have a regular column in the Parish News, and we would certainly want a presence at the Village Feast to further advertise the club.

We are aware that we will not have an "instant" club with a full complement of members immediately the green is playable, some 18 months after construction begins. We therefore anticipate some additional revenue will have to be raised to cover the shortfall in membership during the first two years. We expect that a new bowls club will raise much local interest, and ensure that people are more willing to partake in fund raising events during the early years.

All this, of course, means that the club must have a determined and dedicated team of officials and volunteers to plan the working of the club. Over the past several years of thinking, discussing and planning for a Girton bowls club, we have met many such people in our village, and we are certain we can establish a thriving club of great benefit to our community.

### **Perceived Risks**

The community building, which we would be able to use for changing, may not be built at all, or may not be built for several years. Several village clubs that we have played against have little more than Portacabins with sanitary fittings for this purpose. Whilst not ideal as a clubhouse, the clubs that have them do not appear to have been affected with respect to membership or success.

Damage to a green by vandals is an ever-present risk, just as it is for other property. Suitable security, such as fences, hedges and CCTV cameras must be carefully considered. The planned site is not remote from other property, which should help to reduce the risk.

Failure to raise sufficient money to cover the club costs. We feel that this will only become a problem if the club does not attract or maintain sufficient members. There is a natural limit to the membership annual fee. If it is too high then, clearly, people will not join or may join other clubs in the area whose fees are lower. If we pitch things right and ensure that the club is an intrinsic part of our community, then the club will surely attract sufficient members and, as a knock-on effect, it will also have many people who are motivated to organise further fund raising activities.

The Steering Group: Peter Gibbs, Noel Knights, Roger Pawley, Graham Rowney,  
Doug Driver, Graham Jones  
November 2009

### **Appendix B**

#### **SCDC November 2009 Report**

Cabinet has decided that we need to cut our budget by 10% and a number of major cuts will be discussed in future months. It is not clear exactly how these will affect services, but there certainly will be savage cuts in our sheltered housing provision.

Following the release of the A14 Draft Orders last month, the Development Team held a series of displays. The best thing about these was the team of experts: for the first time I was able to meet people who understood my questions. I was amused that the noise expert challenged the noise levels we have already recorded in Girton as nigh impossible. This led to a challenge which he

has accepted: to do some proper measurements of noise from the raised Bar Hill section: my impression is that this is actually the most invasive for most of us. SCDC also hosted another A14 presentation, which was attended by 2 representatives from Atkins, 5 officers and just 5 Councillors including the Chairman of the presentation and one who slipped away after a few minutes. That left 3 of us to grill the Atkins team, primarily over the land-take (far greater than we had been led to believe), the addition of a service road between Girton and Impington (spun as a new cycle route, see below) and of course Noise and Pollution. We did not uncover much new on the last two, but received a rather shame-faced acknowledgement that the "cycle route" was not intended to be properly surfaced: I pointed out this would make it almost useless for commuting, and it wasn't exactly the route one would choose for a pleasant leisurely spin. I think this was taken on board.

One of the nicer aspects of being a Councillor is that one gets invited to interesting functions. The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment is running a series of events for Councillors in the Eastern Region, conveniently hosted by various Cambridge Colleges. We have appraised Accordia on Brooklands Avenue, and redesigned the Histon Road/Huntingdon Road junction. These raised a huge range of the issues and conflicts of interest we shall be facing when we come to judge the planning applications for NW Cambridge, NIAB and Northstowe.

On 23 Oct my least favourite Committee: Corporate Governance. We went through our external auditors' annual report, noting some very large discrepancies. An hour and a half discussion established that these were not over-worrisome, but need attention; and we agreed that the auditors' report was an extraordinarily helpful document as we try to Do Better.

Histon Early Learning Centre is already doing great work in Girton, but being aware that it has little penetration into the Wellbrook Estate it ran a morning's outreach on 24 October, and I joined them briefly to discover a great deal of excited activity taking place in an inflatable tent.

The Joint Development Control Committee met on 3 November for a briefing on future developments. NIAB 1 (the area within the City) should come to the next meeting early in December. NW Cambridge is still under intense discussion (and I am pleased how involved I am being in these discussions) but the University hopes to freeze the planning early in the new year, present it to the Regent House for approval and then draw up an application. I have already had an opportunity, in the annual Discussion of the Board of Scrutiny's Report to the University, to make a plea that this development above all should be a paradigm of zero-carbon, cutting-edge planning. We shall see how much of that is taken on board.

Douglas de Lacey

## **GIRTON FEAST PAPER FOR PARISH COUNCIL**

Reports on the Feast, including a financial report, have previously been provided for Council consideration. This further paper sets out possible options for future Feasts for the Council's consideration. There appear to be three general options:-

### Option 1

A feast along the same lines as 2009 with a similar budget. It is important to remember that in addition to Parish Council funding, we received £500 from Girton Town Charity and £500 from the Girton Parish News (plus some smaller donations). As previously reported an event can take place based on the same level of funding but, as for 2009, it would rely on the cheapest available marquee, borrowing equipment, free appearances wherever possible etc. Approx cost for 2010: £2,200 (allowing for inflation)

### Option 2

To elaborate on the arrangements made for the 2009 Feast. For example, in keeping with feedback received this year, a future Feast might include:-

hiring a larger marquee with flooring, better lighting, etc (possible £1500 extra);

PA system to include outside speakers;

More toilet facilities (approx an additional £250);

Buying-in attractions particularly some aimed at younger villagers eg Bouncy castle, mini-cars etc and also involving organisations such as the Raptor Centre which charge an appearance fee;

Increased publicity material eg professionally produced banners (approx £100);

Possibly offering some support for events taking place over the Feast week or generating interest in the Feast with competitions eg a children's competition to produce Feast posters with an appropriate prize.

Although some approximate costings are provided it is difficult to be precise on most costings at this stage but, clearly the arrangements for a future Feast would be tailored in accordance with the funding which is available. It might also be possible to obtain a degree of sponsorship from local business, Council grants; something which was not widely pursued for the 2009 Feast.

### Option 3

No future Feast planned. However based on the positive reception to the 2009 Feast this is not felt to be an appropriate option but is included for completeness.

Other considerations for Council consideration include the frequency of the Feast and, in particular, whether the next Feast should be in 2010 or 2011. Advantages to 2010 include maintaining the momentum of this year's Feast. However, in addition to the prime issue of availability of funding, there is also the question of the 2010 World Cup Finals which are understood to climax on 11 July which would be likely to coincide with the Feast, particularly taking into account the matches which will be taking place during Feast week and might impact of the turnout for Feast week events. It might, therefore, be a sensible course of action to consider planning a Feast for 2011 which would enable funding to be identified over a two year period. By default, therefore, it would be held alternate years and is less likely to coincide with some major sporting events (eg Olympic Games 2012). It would remain possible to hold other fund-raising events in the interim. Alternatively if the Council wished to proceed with a Feast in 2010 then organisation will need to commence in the near future and I confirm my willingness to be involved.

**Council is, therefore, asked to consider :-**

- (i) whether it is possible to plan a future Feast based on either Option 1 or Option 2 above?**
- (ii) if Option 2, to identify the level of additional funding available;**
- (iii) whether the next Feast should be in 2010 or 2011?**

Chris Starling, November 2009

**Appendix D**

## **Girton Parish Council**

Complaints Policy relating to the administration or policy of the Council

This policy was approved by Girton Parish Council for residents of Girton on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

### **Introduction**

Girton Parish Council provides a wide range of services. They include sporting facilities, outdoor pursuits, provision of safe play and meeting places for everyone from the very young to the retired and more senior members of our community and they are responsible for such things as bus shelters, various hedges, fences and ditches, seats, footpaths, trees, playing fields and much more.

During the course of their duties the Clerk, Councillors and other officers of the Parish Council have daily contact with users of these facilities, with contractors who maintain them and other bodies who have an interest in them. Inevitably grievances may come to the fore and they could find themselves subjected to complaints made against them personally, about equipment, village maintenance, Council policy or about other outside issues.

Equally enquiries from villagers and other members of the public seeking information, making bookings, expressing frustration or annoyance with issues that they wish resolved as soon as possible are received daily at the Parish Office. These issues may be the responsibility of the Parish Council, of other outside bodies or Councils and could also be the cause of grievance or complaint.

In all cases complainants should receive a clear and helpful response with every effort made to resolve any grievance quickly and to the satisfaction of the person making the complaint

### **Complaints covered by this guidance**

Complaints may take many forms. Whilst the Clerk and Council will consider each case carefully this complaints policy is primarily focused on responding to complaints about poor administration or policy.

Complaints against employees are dealt with in accordance with employment law by Girton Parish Council under an internal and confidential disciplinary procedure.

Councillors are bound by a separate code of practice and poor conduct by them is dealt with by South Cambridgeshire District Council.

### Referrals to External Bodies

The Local Government Ombudsman has no jurisdiction over parish councils under the terms of the Local Government Act 1974. However, some complaints can be referred to external bodies for investigation.

The list below, provided for the information of complainants, shall not be regarded as comprehensive but may provide useful sources of advice and assistance.

<b>Complaint against Girton Parish Council</b>	<b>Refer complainant to:</b>
Concern about the legality of a decision of the Parish Council	The Courts for a judicial review of the Council's decision
Poor behaviour by a Parish Councillor(s) e.g. breaching the Code of Conduct <sup>1</sup> .	Standards Committee of South Cambridgeshire District Council <sup>2</sup>
Financial irregularity	The Council's external auditor or the Audit Commission
Suspected criminal activity	Police
Not releasing information under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.	The Information Commissioner.
Where the Council is carrying out functions on behalf of another local authority, and does so in such a way to cause complaint.	In this instance the issue shall be referred to the principal authority, and if not resolved may be referred to the Local Government Ombudsman.

### Informal complaints to Girton Parish Council

The initial point of contact will normally be via the Parish Clerk and most enquiries of Girton Parish Council will be dealt with quickly and to the satisfaction of the enquirer. In instances where the matter cannot be resolved to that person's satisfaction a complaint may result.

These complaints will usually be dealt with informally at the time of or shortly after they arise by the Parish Clerk who will record the incident in a complaints register or in correspondence to be placed before the full council. In all cases the clerk must inform the Chairman of the Parish Council or if appropriate his deputy of any actions he has taken.

The Clerk may, if appropriate, discuss the issues with his/her Parish Chairman, his/her deputy, or relevant Committee Chairman who may themselves deal with, or advise the Clerk on the Council's response to the complaint. The Clerk or other members of the Parish Council may also discuss the issues with other advisors.

In most instances issues will be resolved at this stage.

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<sup>1</sup> Copy available from Girton Parish Office

<sup>2</sup> Contact Holly Adams, Democratic Services Officer, South Cambridgeshire District Council T: 01954 713030

In all cases the complainant should be informed of the result and acknowledge in writing that he/she is satisfied with the result and that he/she requires no further action.

Where complaints are not satisfactorily resolved informally the complainant may wish to make a formal written complaint.

### **Girton Parish Council's Formal Complaints Procedure**

- 1 **Formal** complaints shall be submitted in writing to the Clerk, (or the Chairman of the Council if the complaint concerns the Clerk), shall be signed and dated, and include: full details of the complaint, and why it is being made at that time; the subject of the complaint (e.g. Council, Councillor(s), Clerk); the desired outcome; and name and address of the person making the complaint.
- 2 The Clerk shall acknowledge receipt, provide advice on the complaints process, and copy the complaint to the Chairman (or the Vice-Chairmen if the complaint is against the Chairman).
3. The Chairman (or Vice Chairmen) in consultation with the Clerk, shall contact the complainant(s) in writing within 7 working days of receipt to respond to the complaint, or seek further clarification.
4. A copy of the written complaint and response shall be circulated by the Clerk to all members of the Council, including the Councillor or Officer who is the subject of the complaint. Where this is inappropriate due to the nature of the complaint The Clerk, Chairman or his deputy must record the reasons for not informing the full council and/or the subject of the complaint. At the conclusion of any enquiry the full council should then be informed of these reasons.
5. Where it is appropriate and if it becomes clear that a solution cannot be reached or that the complainant still feels a sense of grievance the issue(s) shall be discussed at the next meeting of the full Council with the aim of resolving the matter as far as is possible, and agreed actions (*if any*) recorded in the minutes of the meeting. In the case where serious complaint is made it may be appropriate to cancel all Parish Meetings until the matter is resolved.
- 6 If the complaint remains unresolved and it is appropriate to do so then all the parties to the complaint shall be invited to attend an 'Extraordinary meeting' of the Council by the Chairman (or Vice Chairman if appropriate). Seven clear working days shall be provided prior to the meeting to allow the complainant time to prepare, and arrange advisors or representatives to attend. He/she may also submit additional documentation at this stage subject to it reaching the Parish Office marked "Confidential – Formal Complaint" at least 2 working days before the meeting.
7. The following procedure shall apply at the meeting, and be recorded in the minutes of the meeting:
  - (i) the Chairman shall introduce everyone, explain the procedure, and invite the complainant(s) to state in full the details of the complaint.

- (ii) The subject(s) of the complaint shall be invited to question the complainant.
  - (iii) Any Members of the Council shall be allowed to question the complainant.
  - (iv) The subject of the complaint shall be invited to answer the complaint.
  - (v) The complainant shall be invited to question the subject.
  - (vi) The complainant may make a closing statement.
  - (vii) The subject of the complaint may make a closing statement.
  - (viii) The complainant and the subject shall then temporarily withdraw.
  - (ix) The Council shall consider the evidence and may come to a decision in respect of the complaint.
  - (x) Where the complaint is upheld in full or in part the Council may agree a remedy.
  - (xi) The complainant and the subject of the complaint shall be invited back into the meeting and advised of the decision.
  - (xii) This shall be confirmed in writing within the next 7 working days together with details of any action that has been taken.
8. Any appeal against the decision of the Council shall be considered by the Council in closed session at its next meeting.

## **Appendix E**

### **Chairman's Report**

I have put into Correspondence letters I have received as Chairman on the Gypsy and Traveller consultations (Sir Geoffrey Cass) and the cycle lanes on Huntingdon Road (Revd David Kettle). I have also forwarded the latter to John Reynolds with a request to be updated on the consultation on this scheme, and raised the issue with Girton College. The College has a new Mistress and I am in correspondence with her about possible issues of mutual interest.

I have written to Bidwells, the agent for NIAB, about the possibility of getting a permissive Right of Way from Wellbrook Way to Thornton Close. Bidwells feel it is unlikely that this can be progressed before the formulation and approval of the NIAB 2 Planning Application, but are enquiring.

I have had further discussions with the University over NW Cambridge. The University is putting on an exhibition on 19 November 0900 - 1700 and then a public workshop 1730 - 2030 both at Fitzwilliam College, and I would encourage Councillors to attend. As a member of the Joint Development Control Committee which will judge the eventual Planning Application I need to be very careful how I tread: I do not want to be told that any of my activities mean that I have created for myself a prejudicial interest in the application!

At the A14 Exhibition in mid-October, in discussion with the Atkins noise expert, I issued a challenge which to my surprise was accepted: to disprove our concerns about noise from the Bar Hill section of the A14. So we shall be setting up metering at some stage which should either reassure us that it's not as bad as it seems, or provide useful data for the Inspector's enquiry.

Douglas de Lacey

Appendix F

Girton Parish Council Payments from 21<sup>st</sup> October to 17<sup>th</sup> November 2009

Payments	19-Nov-09	Combined PC/Rec payments				
Cq no.	Paid To	Description	Gross	VAT	net	
2412	Linda Miller	Bookings Administrator Wages - m7	560.70		560.7	PAID
2413	Natalie Stone	Principal  Finance Officer Wages - m7	209.36		209.36	PAID
2414	Norman F Lewell	Security/Maintenance Officer Fee	229.64		229.64	PAID
2415	Robert A Stone	Parish Clerk Wages - m7	912.84		912.84	PAID
2416	Inland Revenue	Tax & NI	511.87		511.87	PAID
2417	Screwfix Direct	Maintenance Supplies	58.17	7.58	50.59	
2418	J Wells	Work on benches and Rocking Horse	412.00		412.00	
2419	J & P Plant Ltd	Grass verge cutting	230.00	30.00	200.00	
2420	Wicksteed Leisure	Replacement straps for baby swing	73.60	9.60	64.00	
2421	SSP PECIALISED Sports Products Ltd	Repair of Play Equipment Surface	1,211.72	158.05	1,053.67	
2422	N.J Twitchett	Architects Fees	2,850.62	371.82	2,478.80	
2423	Peter T Round	Grounds Maintenance & Open Space - Oct	749.74	97.79	651.95	
2424	Girton Village Plan	Section 137 Grant	500.00		500.00	
2425	M & M Heating (Cambs) Ltd	Supply and installation new water heater	241.50	31.50	210.00	
2426	Peter Graves	Replanting tubs	310.00	40.44	269.56	
2427	Steelway Fensecure Ltd	New fencing - childrens play area	5,000.65	652.26	4,348.39	
2428	British Telecommunications plc	Telephone bill 3 Aug-1 Nov 09	264.27	34.47	229.80	
2429	Robert A Stone	Expenses - paint, printer cartridge	64.79		64.79	
2430	Linda Miller	Expenses -postage, milk	17.11		17.11	
2431	CMR Wilson	Work at Recreation Ground, petrol & supplies	486.24		486.24	
2432	Tamla Sparkes	Litter picking	60.00		60.00	
			<b>14,954.82</b>	<b>1,433.51</b>	<b>13,521.31</b>	14,954.82

To be paid 30th November 09

2433	Linda Miller	Bookings Administrator Wages - m8	560.70	560.70
2434	Natalie Stone	Principal Finance Officer Wages - m8	209.56	209.56
2435	Norman F Lewell	Security/ Maintenance Officer Fee	229.64	229.64
2436	Robert A Stone	Parish Clerk Wages - m8	913.04	913.04
2437	Inland Revenue	Tax and NI - month 8	511.47	511.47