

**Minutes of the 822nd meeting of Toft Parish Council  
Held on Monday 3 February 2025 in The People's Hall, Toft at 7.00 pm**

Present: Councillors: M Yeadon (Chairman), B Harris, E Miles, S Tebbit and C Watson.

In attendance: 4 members of the public and Mrs A Griffiths (Minutes Secretary, LGS Services)

**Public participation on agenda items and matters of mutual interest (includes reports from County and District Councillors and representation by members of the public)**

A resident expressed concerns that pedestrians walking to various destinations in the High Street did not feel safe, due to the speed of traffic and the narrowness of the pavements. She voiced her support for the proposed 20 mph speed limit.

The resident also raised drainage problems causing large puddles, which resulted in pedestrians waiting at the bus stop in the High Street being soaked as cars went past. The drain outside Beldam's Close was blocked with debris and conifer needles, affecting the area near the children's playground and bus stop. The issues had been reported three times but the problem persisted.

Cllr Tebbit arrived at 7.08 pm.

The Chairman responded that the Council was very conscious of the problems, and outlined the Council's efforts to have a 20 mph limit throughout the village, and the process involved. He explained that the Council's application had been turned down by CCC but had been re-submitted; and the Council would continue to press for this. The drains had been reported regularly on the CCC website and to the District Councillor.

It was also reported that a conifer in the children's playground was swaying in high winds and asked that the trees be looked at. The Chairman explained that the playground was inspected annually.

Another resident asked why the 20 mph limit application had been turned down. Cllr Darbyshire had been speaking to the County Councillor to find out why the village had been such a low priority. The survey conducted had shown mixed views.

RESOLVED that the 20 mph limit application should be an agenda item for the March meeting.

A resident of the Birdlings raised the cycle path between Toft and Comberton. The Chairman explained that CCC had drawn up plans for widening the cycle path by removing vegetation, and reducing the speed limit from 50 mph to 40 mph. CCC were costing the project, which was yet to be approved.

**1. Apologies for absence and declaration of interests**

**1.1 To approve written apologies and reasons for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Darbyshire (out of parish).

**1.2 To receive declarations of interests from councillors on items on the agenda**

None.

**1.3 To receive written requests for dispensations and to grant any dispensations**

None.

**2. To approve the minutes of the last meeting on 6 January 2025**

RESOLVED that the minutes of 6 January 2025 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman. (Prop MY, 2nd ST, unanimous)

**3. To consider any matters arising from the last or a previous meeting including**

**3.0.1 (4.2) Toft People's Hall**

Cllr Tebbit reported that she was awaiting a response from a colleague and would report back when a reply was received.

**3.1 (3.1) Grass cutting contract – to consider tenders and additional information**

RESOLVED having considered the tenders received, as well as the additional clarification and references provided, to accept the quotation of £4,200.00 plus VAT

from MD Landscapes for the Grass Cutting and Village Maintenance contract for the three years from 2025- 2027 inclusive, subject to a review after 12 months, as being the cheapest tender received. (Prop MY, 2nd BH, unanimous)

RESOLVED that the Council would like the contractor to meet Cllr Harris before commencement of the contract, to discuss access arrangements and special events.

3.2 (3.4) QPJ area – update and report on meeting

The Chairman reported on his discussions with Tricia and Cynan Ellis-Evans. It had been felt advisable not to carry out the hedge and grass works at the same time.

RESOLVED to note that Mr and Mrs Ellis-Evans had purchased and planted the hedging plants and cleared the area with the assistance of volunteers.

RESOLVED to send a letter of thanks to Mr and Mrs Ellis Evans for all their efforts in planting the hedge around the Queen's Platinum Jubilee area.

RESOLVED to consider the grassing of the area later on in the season.

3.3 (3.5) East West Rail non-statutory consultation – to note response made

RESOLVED to note the response submitted by the Chairman.

3.4 (4.2) Net Zero Villages grant – update on discussion with People's Hall

Cllr Watson reported that the Toft People's Hall Management Committee had felt it was not feasible to proceed to install an EV charging point at this time, due to the uncertainty about the proposed alterations to the building.

3.5 (5.4) To appoint additional bank signatory/signatories

RESOLVED that Cllrs Tebbit and Harris be appointed as additional signatories on the Council's accounts, in addition to Cllrs Yeadon and Miles, and that Cllr Watson be removed as a signatory in accordance with her request at the last meeting. (Prop MY, 2nd EM, unanimous)

**4. To consider correspondence received since the last meeting requiring the Council's attention**

4.1 CCC proposal to widen and improve the cycle way between Toft and Comberton

RESOLVED, having considered the proposal from CCC to cut back and clear the hedge, install pipe work, widen the cycle track and reduce the speed limit from 50 mph to 40 mph, to respond that the Parish Council is in favour of the scheme.

4.2 Enquiry about allotment availability including clearance of plot

RESOLVED to offer the plot rent free for one year, in recognition that the plot will take time to clear. It was understood that the pump was working but needed to be primed by pumping it 4 or 5 times beforehand. The shed opposite is owned by another allotment holder but the new tenant could install their own on their plot.

RESOLVED, in recognition of the recent clearing of the footpath through the allotments, that the Parish Council should offer the tenant who did the work a rent-free year.

4.3 Finding Fitness Ltd – funding for play area improvements

RESOLVED that Cllr Watson should call the company to seek further details of the funding available for climbing walls, and report back to the next meeting.

**5. Finance, Procedure and risk assessment and use of delegated powers**

5.1 To consider the finance report and approve the payment of any bills

RESOLVED to receive the financial report and check the invoices and bank statements before the payments were approved, plus Tricia Ellis-Evans (Trees) £201.42, ICO (Membership) £40.00, James Tebbit (Bus shelter) £913.98, Drax (Electricity) £50.99, £61.18 and £41.53, Toft Calendar (Newsletter items) £224.35. (Prop MY, 2nd BH, unanimous)

Salaries		£186.53
M Sebborn	Website hosting	£139.06
Morelock Signs	Solar panels	£1035.60
Cam Valley Forum	Annual membership	£10.00
Toft People's Hall	Room hire Dec	£15.00
LGS Services	Admin support	£514.04

- 5.2 To receive play inspection reports and consider any work required  
 Cllr Watson reported that there were a number of overhanging trees and branches and the hedge was in need of a tidy up.  
 RESOLVED to obtain quotations for cutting the hedge before the bird nesting season and to delegate to the Clerk to accept a reasonable price.  
 RESOLVED also to seek quotations for cutting back the overhanging brambles behind the bus stop in the High Street. (Prop MY, 2nd EM, unanimous).
- 5.3 To consider any matter which is urgent because of risk or health and safety and relates to Council property  
 The Clerk has used delegated powers to accept a quote from Suffolk County Council for streetlight energy supply. They have quoted approximately £380 per year and are only able to start quarterly. The Council is expected to save approximately £400 during the 1/1/25 – 31/3/25 quarter over using the current supplier (Opus/Drax).
- 6. To consider any Planning or Tree works applications or related items received**
- 6.1 Planning applications received – to be considered
- 6.1.1 24/00087/S73 – Land adj to 6 Hardwick Road – S73 to vary condition 2 (Approved plans, 13 (External materials), 14 (Landscaping) and 16 (External lighting) of planning permission 20/03757/FUL (Erection of a detached dwelling house and associated works) alterations to the internal and external design of the proposed dwelling  
 Noted.
- 6.2 Planning applications for which a response has been made between meetings using delegated powers – to be noted  
 None.
- 6.3 SCDC planning decision notices and appeal notifications and applications for information only.
- 6.3.1 20/03757/CONDF – Land adj to 6 Hardwick Road – Submission of details required by conditions 3(c) (Remediation method) and 4 (Verification report) of planning permission 20/03757/FUL – Condition discharged in full
- 6.3.2 24/03941/PRIOR – CCC Social Services building, Comberton Road – Conversion of former Social Services offices into 2 no. 3 bed two storey dwellings, 1 no. 3 bed single storey dwelling and 1 no. 2 bed single storey dwelling – Prior approval given by SCDC
- 6.4 Tree works applications
- 6.4.1 24/0066/TTCA – 2 Comberton Road  
 Noted.
- 6.4.2 25/0098/TTCA – 61 High Street  
 Noted.
- 7. Members items and reports for information only unless otherwise stated**
- 7.1 Village Maintenance  
 Cllr Yeadon reported that he had installed the bench by the allotments at the end of Millers Road.  
 He had also received and planted the SCDC free tree in the Recreation Ground, and submitted a photograph.  
 The bus shelter repairs had been completed.
- 7.2 Highways  
 Nothing further to report.
- 7.3 Toft People's Hall  
 Cllr Watson reported that the People's Hall Management Committee did not wish to proceed with the EV charging points. They will convene a sub-committee to look at the proposed alterations. The finances were in good order and the Social Club was doing very well. The floor in the hall had been repaired. There was a potential leak under the floor and it was proposed to use a thermal camera to trace the source. A resident kindly offered the use of his thermal camera. The Chairman undertook to pass the resident's contact details to Martin Sebborn.

7.4 Footpaths

Cllr Miles reported that the fallen tree in Toft Wood, which had been reported to the Woodland Trust in January, was still down, and another tree in the wood was now overhanging the path. Cllr Miles had emailed them again and a reply was awaited.

7.5 Defibrillator report

Cllr Watson reported that the equipment was in working order and had not been used.

7.6 Birdlings liaison

The Chairman reported that the proposal for a community notice board at the Birdlings was due to be discussed at a forthcoming meeting of the management company. A resident of the Birdlings said they understood the management company was still in the hands of the developers.

7.7 Lot Meadow

Cllr Miles reported that a rustic wooden sign to Lot Meadow had been installed on the public footpath post in the High Street.

RESOLVED that Cllr Miles should contact the Men's Shed and express the Council's appreciation and thanks.

7.8 Nature in Toft

Cllr Miles reported on an article in the Calendar and a meeting with Shepreth Hedgehog Hospital, who had been given funding for tagging hedgehogs and releasing them in suitable places. There were a number of suitable areas in Toft for hedgehogs to be released. There will be a "hedgehog fun day" on 15 June to raise awareness.

7.9 VE day 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration

Cllr Yeadon proposed that the Parish Council organise a commemorative event on Thursday 8 May, including bell ringing, flag raising at 9 am, a proclamation and the lighting of the beacon at 9.30 pm.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council should organise the event and that a budget of £250.00 be approved to include the purchase of a commemorative flag at £64.00, a Peace Lamp at £55.00, and to cover other expenses such as lighting and possibly refreshments. (Prop MY, 2nd ST, unanimous)

7.10 Methodist Chapel update

The Chairman provided an update on the Methodist Chapel.

8. Closure of meeting

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 8.20 pm.

Signed .....Chairman .....date.