

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Civic Affairs Committee held on
Thursday, 25 March 2021 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Dr. Douglas de Lacey – Chair
Councillor Dr. Claire Daunton – Vice-Chair

Councillors: Henry Batchelor
Nigel Cathcart
Bridget Smith
Heather Williams

Dr. Martin Cahn
Mark Howell
Dr. Aidan Van de Weyer

Officers: Patrick Adams
Andrew Francis
Ellen Bridges
Louise Lord
Rory McKenna

Senior Democratic Services Officer
Electoral Services Manager
Development Officer
Development Officer
Monitoring Officer

Councillor Brian Milnes was in attendance, by invitation.

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no Apologies for Absence.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Mark Howell declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 5 on the agenda, Sawston and Babraham Parish Boundary: Community Governance Review, as his son had a business in Dale Business Park.

Councillor Nigel Cathcart declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 6 on the agenda, Update on Code of Conduct Complaints, as he knew the people affected in relation to complaints made involving Bassingbourn Parish Council. Councillor Heather Williams also declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item, as she also knew some of the persons affected by a recent complaint.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2020, as a correct record.

4. Community Governance Review - Foxton Parish Council

The Development Officer introduced this report, which invited the Committee to consider a request from Foxton Parish Council to increase its membership from 9 members to 10.

Foxton Parish Councillor, Caroline Ilott explained that Foxton Parish Council

needed to increase its size due to:

- An increase in the workload of the Parish Council.
- An increase in the population of the parish.
- An increase in planning matters, including a call for sites.
- To allow a more even division of the workload.
- To encourage a more equal representation, both in terms of age and geographical location.
- To provide a better service to parishioners.

In response to questioning, Parish Councillor Ilott explained that due to a recent resignation, the parish council currently had 8 members. She was confident that the parish would be able to recruit ten parish councillors to its parish council.

It was noted that the local member, Councillor Deborah Roberts had supported the proposed increase.

Members of the Committee made the following points:

- A compelling case had been given for the increase.
- The quality of parish councillors was more important than quantity.
- Whilst there was local support for the increase, the number of responses received was low.

The Chair proposed and Councillor Mark Howell seconded that the number of parish councillors on Foxton Parish Council be increased from 9 to 10.

A vote was taken and by affirmation the Committee

Agreed to the request from Foxton Parish Council to increase the number of parish councillors from 9 to 10.

5. Sawston and Babraham Parish Boundary: Community Governance Review

The Development Officer presented this report, which invited the Committee to consider which submissions the Council should consulting on for Stage Two of the Sawston and Babraham Parish Boundary Community Governance Review.

Councillor Brian Milnes, local member for Sawston, reported that both he and the local member for Babraham, Councillor Peter McDonald, supported the change of the boundary proposed by Sawston Parish Council. It was noted that Babraham Parish Council also supported this proposed change.

It was noted that an alternative proposal for a boundary along the Babraham/Sawston Road would result in neighbouring properties in separate parishes, which was contrary to Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) guidance. The other alternative proposal was that the proposed route of Cambridge South East Transport Project (CSET2) be used, but the Committee rejected this as the route had not yet been confirmed, as according to the LGBCE guidance recommended that boundaries be easily identifiable and were likely to remain so. It was noted that the proposed route for CSET2 was also

very similar to the boundary proposed by Sawston Parish Council.

Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer recommended that the Council only consult on the boundary proposed by Sawston Parish Council. Councillor Martin Cahn seconded this proposal.

By affirmation, the Committee

Agreed to invite submissions for Stage Two according to the timeline set out in the Terms of Reference, on the boundary proposed by Sawston Parish Council presented at Stage One.

6. **Update on Code of Conduct Complaints**

The Monitoring Officer updated the Committee on the latest Code of Conduct complaints received by the Council.

The complaint regarding members of Heydon Parish Council was not being progressed, as the complaint mostly related to matters that occurred when the councillors were not acting in their official capacity as a councillor. The investigation regarding a District Councillor had found that there had been no breach of the Code. The consideration of three complaints regarding members of Bassingbourn Parish Council was ongoing.

The Committee **Noted** the report.

7. **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 10 June at 10am.

Members of the Committee thanked the Chair for his sterling work on behalf of the Committee and wished him well in retirement.

The Meeting ended at 10.45 a.m.
