

**Minutes of an extraordinary meeting of Drayton Parslow Parish Council held at Greenacre Hall  
(Carrington Room) on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017 at 7:30 p.m.**

**Present:** Cllr. D. Perry (Chairman)

Cllr. M. Thum (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr. H. Harvey

Cllr. S. Colborne-Baber

Cllr. A. Batley

**Also present:** Deborah O'Brien, Parish Clerk; 16 residents

Cllr Perry made the following statement:

*"Thank you to everyone for attending the meeting this evening. Before we start I would like to make some opening remarks.*

*Tonight we are holding an extraordinary meeting at my request.*

*The reason for this is that the matter of the gating of the field at the Mursley end of the village was discussed at our last Parish Council meeting, however I was not aware at the time of the meeting that it would be possible for the Parish Council to apply for a Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) which would designate the access to and paths within the field as a public right of way.*

*It is my view and one shared by others on the Parish Council that this should be discussed by the Parish council and voted on accordingly. I also feel that given the strength of feeling arising on the matter, the potential for escalating and intemperate language via electronic communication and second and third hand discussion of the facts, that any delay to our next scheduled meeting would be unwise.*

*I would like to remind everyone present that the Parish Council are volunteers and that we discuss village matters and make majority decisions based on our view of the best interests of the village. I would like to think that we create a forum for the frank exchange of views, sometimes strongly held, but we do this in a spirit of respect for each other, and the sure knowledge that we live in a small village and after this meeting and any subsequent decisions made that we will need to continue to live together as a community with our varying work and social priorities.*

*The meeting will be minuted and these will form the public record. I would urge that anyone not able to attend read the minutes.*

*The format of this meeting will be as usual that there will be time allotted for those present to make representations, that will help the Parish Council in its discussions, and we will be happy to provide information on the various responsibilities of Bucks CC, Highways, the Parish Council and the DMMO process as required to help this part of the meeting. After this, the Parish Council will debate and make decisions. The meeting portion of the evening is of course open to the public, but I need to be clear that it is not a public debate. If necessary I will suspend the meeting should the need arise to address issues from the floor."*

Cllr Perry also advised those in attendance that the content of e-mails received by the Parish Council relating to this matter had been shared with the tenants with all personal information removed so that the tenants were aware of opinions received. He then invited comments from the floor.

A resident stated that her primary concern was that of safety. Historically the field has been used for access to the bridleway and a footpath (DPA/11/2) and the closure creates a safety issue. The access from Main Road directly on to the Bridleway (DPA2/2) is unsafe due to the extreme narrowness of the road on a blind bend with steep banks, no verge or emergency exit. She feels that there is a duty of care and a moral responsibility to ensure safety and requested that the Parish Council arranges to make it safer. Ideally the hazard (horses, pedestrians) should be removed from the road – so access via the field is required. There is a risk to pedestrians, vehicles, horses and riders – a major safety issue.

The Clerk explained that she had contacted Transport for Bucks (TfB) which, as the statutory authority for Highways has a duty to provide safe passage along the highway for all users – motorists, users of public transport, cyclists, equestrians or pedestrians. This is detailed in their T10 Network Safety Principles which can be viewed at <https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/transport-and-roads/policies/service-delivery-statement/> She has requested that warning signs are installed indicating equestrians and TfB has requested a map of locations of stables & liverys within the village in relation to the bridle path so that they can assess the risk. Time is of the essence in achieving this. An answer to the request is awaited from TfB and residents will be advised accordingly.

Cllr Perry gave a brief description of a Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO). Basically the Definitive Map is the legal record of all Public Rights of Way within the County. If it is felt that a RoW has been erroneously missed from the map or if it is felt that a RoW should be declared to add a RoW due to prescriptive (over 20 years) usage then a modification order can be applied for by anyone. Bucks CC currently has a 5 year backlog of applications so it is not a speedy process. The evidence required must illustrate use by multiple equestrians or walkers depending on whether applying for a bridle way or footpath. Installing a notice giving permission but declaring it is not a right of way or closing the field one day a year is the traditional means to prevent the path becoming a presumed Right of Way.

Other residents were also concerned about the safety risks and requested that the gateway is re-opened. A resident added that residents need to adhere to the Countryside Code and respect the rights of farmers and others.

The tenants of the land advised that the closure is due to persistent abuse of their land. Dog walkers let their dogs run loose, mess without clearing up and there have been instances of sheep being attacked. They are running a family business, which is their livelihood and have to protect the land and their livestock. The land is used for grazing, arable crops and hay.

The tenant did concede that it may not be necessary to padlock the gate all year round if there is no grazing of livestock. Some suggestions were made as to how this could be effectively achieved. One suggestion was to enable access to the bridle way DPA/2/2 but not to footpath DPA/11/2. Reporting of irresponsible dog walkers and those with criminal intent is also an option but difficult to police. The tenant also suggested that riding permits are available through Kingsland Farm giving alternative access to the bridle way.

The Churchwarden has made separate arrangements for access to the field for parking during weddings, funerals and the village fete.

Cllr Perry thanked everyone for their comments and the formal meeting commenced at 8:30 p.m.

**59.0 Apologies:** Members accepted apologies from Cllr Spavins

**60.0 Declarations of Interest:** There were none

**61.0 Presumed Right of Way – field adjacent to the Church:** Cllr Perry proposed (Cllr Harvey seconded) and it was **RESOLVED that** Cllr Batley should meet with the tenants of the field to negotiate a compromise for access and that the Parish Council is minded to support signage within the field and other necessary measures to achieve this. Cllr Batley to make a formal presentation to the Parish Council for final approval and agreement. It was **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Clerk should write to all who had submitted e-mails advising that the Parish Council does not feel it is constructive to pursue a DMMO at this time as Cllr Batley has agreed to undertake mediation.

The Clerk will continue to pursue safety signage with TfB as a priority and the Parish Council as a whole is endeavouring to arrange additional traffic calming measures throughout the village. These are based on recommendations made by TfB during a feasibility study commissioned by the Parish Council and subject to achieving funding.

**62.0 Date of next meetings –** Drayton Parslow Parish Council **RESOLVED to** note (7:30 pm start):

- Monday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2017
- No meeting in December
- Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2018
- Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2018

Cllr Perry thanked all for attending and the meeting closed at 9:00 p.m.