

2. PUBLIC TOILETS FEN ROAD, METHERINGHAM

1. HISTORY

The Public Toilets were built in c1980 by North Kesteven District Council by extending and remodelling an existing lean-to Village Hall toilet with an adjoining single storey barn. The rectangular coursed stone barn with red brick plinth and natural clay pantile gable roof was a typical vernacular building found throughout the village. Although outside, the building abuts Metheringham Conservation Area and is immediately opposite the former Wesleyan Methodist Chapel and School Hall, a Grade II Listed Building. Considered a sensitive building within the street scene the front facade of the stone barn was retained and sympathetically extended with minimum door and window openings. The new section of roof was constructed to match the barn and covered with Lincolnshire clay pantiles.

In c2000 the District Council closed a number of public toilets in their District including Metheringham and offered them to the respective local town and parish councils. Responsibility for Metheringham Public Toilets was passed over to Metheringham Parish Council and a cleaner subsequently employed. Later, and in compliance with the Disabled Discrimination Act, a unisex toilet was incorporated at the Parish Council's own expense.

2. BUILDING WORKS TO PUBLIC TOILETS

Pre-Contract

- i.* From the Minutes of the Extra Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 19 April 2023 it was resolved to allocate £198,000 towards 11 projects including *Public Toilet Refurbishment*.
- ii.* In April 2023 the Clerk (KST) contacted Messrs Smith Construction Ltd of Sleaford regarding the roofing works, but although they did not carry out this type of project they recommended a roofing contractor who did.
- iii.* From the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 28 June 2023 it was recorded under Item 13.c. *Toilet refurbishment item deferred awaiting quotes Proposed Cllr Toynton Seconded Cllr Worthington and approved unanimously*. According to an email to the Environment Committee, a meeting was held with Newman Moore on 6th June 2023.
- iv.* Following a meeting with Councillor Worthington and the Clerk (KS) with building contractors Messrs Newman Moore Ltd of Sleaford a detailed quotation dated 11 July 2023 was received from them to carry out the work for the sum of £24,000. No further action taken.
- v.* From the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 26 July 2023 it was recorded under Item.14.b. *Refurbishment of public toilet. Despite numerous attempts by the clerk to secure a quote for the repairs, not one company as yet has submitted a quote. Councillor Worthington proposed to offer some builders names, in a hope of finally acquiring a quote for the work to be conducted. Deferred until the next meeting. Proposed by Councillor Westerman and Seconded by Councillor Parker.*

All in favour. Despite being deferred, Councillor Worthington nevertheless obtained a quotation some two weeks later. Contrary to the adopted Standing Orders and Financial Regulations no other quotations are recorded to have been invited.

- vi. From the recommendation of Councillor Worthington a quotation via email was received on 14 August 2023 from Gary Jones Building Services for carrying out the work for the total sum of £11,890. A detailed costings breakdown was not provided. The quotation was also without a business address and the only contact details being an email address and mobile telephone number.
- vii. From the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 30 August 2023 it was recorded under Item 12. *Quotes: To consider quotes received, if available a. Refurbishment of public toilets. The Chair presented a quote for the refurbishment of the toilets as a whole. This was much lower than the original quote. There then followed a discussion on the viability of the toilets and whether MPC should maintain their presence. It was also brought out that back in 2005 there had been similar discussions and it was raised then that the bus stop is designated as a terminus and a toilet needs to be made available. Councillor Nelson proposed to accept the quote, seconded by Councillor Peek. Chair required vote; For accepting vote - Councillors Peek, Westerman, Worthington, Nelson, Parker. Against accepting vote - Councillor Parry. Carried - to accept the quote.*
- viii. On 03 November 2023 the Clerk (AD) sent an email to Mr G Jones confirming he had been awarded the contract to refurbish the Public Toilets.

3. BUILDING WORKS TO PUBLIC TOILETS

Post-Contract

- i. The project may have required Building Regulations approval. However for certain types of building work, people working under a relevant approved competent person scheme set up under Regulation 20 and listed in Schedule 3 of the Building Regulations can self-certify that their work complies with the Building Regulations.
- ii. Work started on site, but no records of commencement date, site meetings, site instructions, variations, snagging lists, etc.
- iii. An email dated 19 November 2023 from Gary Jones Building Services was received by the Clerk (AD) advising that the rear roof of the toilets was in a poor state of repair and as requested, submitted a quotation as follows;

- 1. *Re-felt, new battens, eaves tray and using old tiles (we would have to replace about 25% of old. Materials and labour £3360*
- 2. *Re-felt, new battens, eaves tray and new tiles (to match squash club or a modern day pantile design. Materials and labour £4200*

iv. From the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting on Wednesday 29 November

2023 it was recorded under Item 00012;

To consider and resolve to accept the quotation received for additional works identified for a replacement roof to the Public Toilets following the discovery of battens, felt and roof tiles in a poor state of repair.

OPTION 1: Re-felt, new battens. Eaves tray and new tiles Cost £4,200.

OPTION 2: Re-felt, new battens, eaves tray and use old tiles where possible (minimum of 25% of old tiles would need to be replaced) Cost £3,360.

Quotes received include materials and labour.

Proposed Cllr M Westerman, Seconded Cllr F Pembery and Resolved: Council Members approved option one, new roof at a cost of £4,200.

v. The project was completed circa April 2024 and Gary Jones Building Services

submitted a final account with a reduction of £326 for magnetic locks that were

not supplied or fitted.

vi. No records traced of a site inspection or site handover which should have been

carried out before the final account was paid.

vii. Subsequent site inspections identified the following;

- a. The original quotation from Gary Jones Building Services dated 14 August 2023 included *Replacement of broken and slipped roof tiles*.
- b. The original natural clay pantiles have been changed to inappropriate concrete interlocking roof tiles with dry verges destroying the integrity of the building. No variation order, written instructions or verbal agreements have been traced or identified agreeing to such change.
- c. Although the quotation dated 19 November 2023 submitted by Gary Jones Building Services is somewhat ambiguous in relation to OPTION 1 and OPTION 2, it is reasonable to conclude that the 'new tiles' would be clay pantiles and not concrete interlocking roof tiles.
- d. Since concrete interlocking roof tiles are heavier than natural clay pantiles a structural engineer's input may have been required to establish whether the existing roof timbers were appropriate to support the additional loadings.
- e. Since the concrete interlocking roof tiles used on the project are cheaper to provide and lay instead of natural clay pantiles, no price adjustment was made to the final account.
- f. The original quotation was for stainless steel WC suites, urinal and wash hand basins. However, the basins installed were white vitreous clay, a cheaper alternative with no price adjustment to the final account. On further inspection this has now been rectified, but I am informed without communication with MPC. It would appear the contractor had not been requested to complete the work. On further

inspection in the Ladies Toilet (12.02.2025) I noted a stainless steel splashback had been fitted and further decoration work carried out around the basin.

- g. It is understood that a relevant NICEIC electrical safety certificate has not been issued. At a MPC Meeting Councillor Worthington confirmed that he would issue such a certificate.
- h. Confirmation required that the Unisex Disabled Toilet was decorated. Other issues including holes around wash hand basins, sealants, wipeable surfaces including exposed stone walls and floors. It would appear the contractor had not been requested to complete the work.

4. CONCLUSION

- i. From available Parish Council records and contrary to the adopted Standing Orders and Financial Regulations only one quotation was received and accepted for the project.
- ii. The approved quotation submitted by Gary Jones Building Services only gave a total figure without a detailed breakdown of costs for each element of the proposed works.
- iii. Without written evidence it would appear that variations had been made without consultation or approval, particularly in relation to the roof covering.
- iv. No written records of site meetings or site instructions have been traced.
- v. Clarification required whether the project was subject to the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM15) and whether the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) should have been notified.
- vi. Clarification as to whether Building Regulation approval was required, particularly under the following Approved Documents;
 - a. Approved Document A - Structure
 - b. Approved Document G- Sanitation, hot water safety and water efficiency
 - c. Approved Document H- Drainage and Waste Disposal
 - d. Approved Document P - Electrical Safety

Michael Credland BEM
14 February 2025

