
LEVINGTON AND STRATTON HALL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WED 5th July 2017 at 7:15pm

Present: Councillors: David Long (Chairman)('DL'); David Pryke (Vice-Chairman) ('DP'); Pat Pryke ('PP'); James Ramsay ('JR'); John Bailey ('JB') Ian Angus ('IA'). Andrew Abram ('AA') – arrived after formal meeting had closed.
Parish Clerk: Lucy Buckle ('LB'),

District Councillor Susan Harvey ('SH'); Patricia O'Brian ('PO')

Four members of the public.

- **VILLAGE FORUM (Agenda Items Only)**

An opportunity for residents to give comments on any issues *on the agenda*.

(Per standing orders: Max 15 minutes unless otherwise directed by the Chairman; a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes).

No points were raised.

- **COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

PB ran through her report updating on the result of the County elections, which gave the Conservatives a considerable majority: PB remains on the Police and Crime Panel. A new Highways Senior Leadership team has been established from March with appointments made to all Head of Service roles under the New Highways Transformation Programme.

Suffolk Better Broadband Programme continues across the County.

Deborah Cadman SCC's Chief Executive is to take up a new role as Chief Executive for West Midlands Combined Authority.

- **DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

SH commented that through careful and effective budget management the Council delivered savings and achieved additional income, which helped to meet spending pressures and reduction in Government Grant.

Operation Camouflage is being run again this year. This is a joint venture with the council and the Rock Barracks. This is a week of entertainment, learning, exercise and fun based at the Rock Barracks, Felixstowe, for children from 8 to 16 years old.

East Suffolk House was officially opened by the Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk, Clare Euston on 15th June.

SCDC is looking to commission a local artist to create a new and exciting piece of public art and in return gain some recognition for their work. Details are on the Council web site.

There are new facilities for recycling small electrical appliances behind the Deben Pool and in Saxmundham. Since these facilities have been available 1500 small electrical appliances representing 2 tones have been recycled instead of going to waste. These sites are in addition to those at Felixstowe, Leiston and Foxhall.

Return of Women on Wheels. There are 2 rides taking place at Rock Barracks on Sunday 1st October. These are open to women and girls of all ages. Details on the SCDC web site.

The Coastal Conference is taking place at Trinity Park on Friday 6th October. Places are available. (www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/suffolk-coast-and-estuaries-community-conference-2017-tickets-26964786402) This year it focuses on Valuing our Coast. There will be speakers and workshops.

Review of the Core Strategy Document. This consultation will be coming out to everyone in August. This is PC's opportunity to have your say about the future of our villages until 2035.

Merging of Waveney and Suffolk Coastal District Councils is moving forward. The number of Councilor's considered necessary to manage a council will be determined by the boundary commission when they start their process later this year. It will probably end up between 50 and 60 instead of the 90 who serve the area at present. There will probably be 2 or 3 planning committees for practical reasons including the benefit of local knowledge and local decision makers and the need to travel to Waveney sometimes.

SH has been made interim Vice Chairman of the Planning Committee as present Vice is not too well. This involves her in several more meetings.

MAIN MEETING:

The Parish Council ('the PC') meeting was declared open at 7.41pm.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

None.

2. CODE OF CONDUCT & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

As well as the usual opportunity to state any declarations of interest (all Cllrs need to remind themselves from time to time of the Suffolk Code of Conduct & check that their register of interests on the Suffolk Coastal website is up to date).

3. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 16th MAY 2017

The draft minutes were approved & signed as a correct record

4. MATTERS FOR REPORT FROM THE LAST MINUTES (not covered elsewhere on the agenda)

None.

5. NEW CLERK

On the 15th June, JB, DL, DP, IA and the Clerk interviewed Jane O'Hear who is the Knodishall Parish Clerk for our vacancy. Jane lives a 35-minute drive from our village so it was discussed how this could be best managed if she was offered the position.

Another candidate has applied who is based in Ipswich and is already Clerk for two other Parishes. An interview date has been provisionally made for the 10th July. A special Parish Council meeting will be arranged to make the appointment.

6. PLANNING

- *DC15/4107 - Solar Farm at Walk Farm, Stratton Hall - time extension*

Cllrs will recall that Light source (now Quintas Energy from 1 November 2016) offered £15,000 as a Community Benefit Payment regardless of whether the planning application for a time extension was supported.

The Clerk has written to Qunitas Energy Legal to confirm if the community benefits funds are still available (Luis de Santiago) and the reply has been that funding is only payable on the conditions meet in the deed - clause 2.3 which establishes that the contribution shall be payable within 2 months from the concurrence of either:

- an extension to the planning permission term of 5 years (25 to 30 years); or

- An agreement between the operator and the landowner to extend the lease for an equivalent term

The PC voted if the funds should be accepted and all but IA, who abstained, agreed that the fund should be accepted and a solicitor should be employed to ensure that the Parish Council would not be open to current or future action. JR would obtain a quotation from Birketts.

7. FINANCE REPORT

(a) Review of finances for the month end May 17:

The schedule of income & expenditure for the month was noted together with the explanatory comments. The amount held in reserves was also noted.

(b) Internal Audit has now been completed and no material beaches found. There were some recommendations on best practice which the Parish Council noted and would action:

Recommendation: To put all LGAs137 payments in the appropriate column in the cash book and list as such in the Income & Expenditure summary - The Parish Council noted that no LGA137 payments had been made in 2016/2017 but, if they were in future, this recommendation would be implemented.

Recommendation: To ensure that a review of the risk assessment and internal controls takes place within the year of audit – Noted to be completed in March's 2018 meeting.

Recommendation: The risk assessment could be improved by expanding the area of risks covered to include risks associated with assets. – The Finance Advisor Group would meet to see how the risk assessment could include the PC's assets.

Recommendation: To ensure loose-leaf minute pages are consecutively numbered throughout the year – Clerk noted.

(c) External Audit – The Clerk has now sent all the documentation and intermediate review survey requests to BDO.

BDO have requested for a wage reconciliation and for a copy of the meeting minutes that state that the previous year's internal audit was noted and reviewed. The Clerk would provide all the necessary documentation as requested.

(d) Bank balances at 31 May 2017 (reconciled to bank statements to 31 May 2017);

- Current account: £6,518.67;
- Deposit account: £6,854.29.

(e) Income since meeting of 16th May 2017

£26 newsletter sub

(f) Income received:

£597.96 VAT refund following submission of annual 2016/17 VAT return

£200 Adnams donation;

(g) Payments made since meeting of 16th May 2017:

- Clerk's Salary 22nd Feb – 29th April £424.75 (net of tax)
- HMRC re April PAYE £261.60
- SALC Subs £131.67
- S.Rackham expenses – barrier tape for beacon event £13.45
- Davis Long £97.65 re May newsletter;
- Pat Pryke stamps £8.25
- Heelis & Lodge Internal Audit £66.00

- Tree GP £288
- Lucy Buckle stamp expenses £5.90

(f) Payments due to be made before next mtg:

- Clerk's salary & home worker allowance from 1st May – 30th June £644.89
- Clerk telephone calls and paper expenses £6.75
- Noticeboard repairs £ 475.00
- IA for PC seed and field equipment £55.48

8. FLOODING ON BRIDGE ROAD

Flooding continues to be an issue at a property on Bridge Road. The property owner has written to SCC (cc. County Councillor and Theresa Coffey)

David Chenery, the Assistant East Area Highway Manager, has responded: "I've copied in John Rozier, who heads up our HQ drainage team, to check where we have got to and advise you further".

The Clerk has not seen any follow up on this matter at time of writing. The PC supports the resident in trying to get this issue to resolution.

9. PROJECTS

(a) Pedestrian Gate

	GROSS	500.00
	Less VAT	55.00
	Net COST	<u>445.00</u>
GRANT		500.00
	PROFIT	<u>55.00</u>
	TOTAL PROFIT	<u>41.5</u>

The Clerk has asked Countryside Gates to do the re-fit work which she is trying to arrange for mid-July.

The PC had another site visit on the 30th June to review the layout behind the gate to avoid a steep drop, which may be problematic especially for wheelchair users: no conclusion was made.

DP put to the PC the option of leveling the field and JB suggested moving the bench nearer the gate. IA said he would mark out an alternative place for the gate and the bench and share the information with the PC.

(b) *Bridge Road Verge*

IA had a conversation with a local resident, who asked whether we could persuade UKPN to clear the verge between her field and Bridge Road and make a path for pedestrians. IA tried a couple of years back, but it was too big a job and did not meet with support from all residents.

The PC had been asked by parishioners to cut back the growth to make it easier to walk off the road to avoid passing vehicles.

IA commented that it may be possible to create an off-road pedestrian way and that we might be able to come to an agreement with UKPN, particularly

after they severed the telephone cable! OOCL would also be willing to provide maintenance of the path.

Malcom King from Highways mentioned that he saw no objection to the path when he did a site visit on the 9th Jan 17; there was one soakaway, which wouldn't cause an issue and earth could be put over, and he advised not to scalp it, but to make the path a grass one.

The PC discussed what the next steps would be to agree in principle that the path should go ahead. IA would liaise with OOCL and UKPN to get agreement that they would be on board to support the project and that there would be no cost to the Parish Council for the works done.

IA updated the P.C: he had discussed with UKPN Project Manager and they would be looking to support the project and would be happy to meet in September to discuss it further.

10. QUIETER LANES

JR informally contacted Neil Winship some time ago to tell of our possible interest in making part of Church Lane and Stratton Hall Drift (part from top of Gun Hill to entrance to Suffolk Yacht Harbour) a Quiet Lane. He did not indicate that the PC would proceed, only that interest has been observed. There is a cost of signage etc. which will be high and that this, together with other factors, have been considered by Cllrs and that there was no overwhelming support for a Quiet Lane.

The Clerk had contacted Suffolk County Council (SCC) to gauge their views, and David Chenery, the Assistant East Area Highway Manager, advised that there had been a Quieter Lane Status trial and there wasn't a marked difference in usage by cyclists and walkers but more of a comfort that something had been done. He quoted that there may be better solutions to deal with the PC's issues.

The Clerk has written back to David Chenery to see if he had any possible specific solutions/suggestions which could be implemented. No update at time of the meeting.

The PC have now decided not to proceed with Quieter Lane status.

11. MEETING DATES 2018

These are the provisional dates the Clerk has booked with the Village Hall. These of course can be changed if necessary – the new Clerk may have holidays booked for example.

- Wed 17 January 2018;
- Wed 7 March;
- Wed 16 May (Annual Parish Council Meeting) – set a bit later than usual to allow more time to get the Annual Return done;
- Thu 24 May (Annual parish meeting);
- Wed 4 July;
- Wed 5 Sept;
- Wed 7 Nov.

12. SOCIAL MEDIA

The PC doesn't use limited forms of social media for communication to the Parishioners and wider communities. Social Media could be an effective way of communicating on top of our existing mediums e.g. email and the website.

The PC questioned if they should be using a social media platform and who would be responsible if we did? IA noted that SALC would have a presentation at the AGM and that it would be ideal that any training and best practice should come from SALC, so that Parish Councils could be consistent in their approaches and learn from best practice.

13. CORRESPONDENCE

All correspondence (unless of a very routine nature) had been circulated to Councillors at the time of receipt/issue. The list attached was reviewed & noted.

14. REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS

- **Tree and Church field warden**

Tree work at Trickers Wood has now been completed by Tree GP.

Barn owls are to be seen most evenings hunting over Church Field and Rackham's Farm land. At least one barn owl is seen regularly roosting in the Turkey Oak tree and very close to the Barn Owl nesting box. Earlier in the year the nesting box was used for breeding by Jackdaws, but the young have now fledged. On inspection, the nesting box is now vacated and there is sufficient lining for use by a Barn Owl.

In the vicinity of this nesting box it is pleasing to see that Stag Beetles are again active, probably helped by us retaining rotten timber and vegetation in Trickers Wood.

Also, hedgehogs and a badger have been seen in this area which is a pleasing reward for encouraging wildlife in this natural environment.

The long grasses are soon to be cut.

- **Village Hall**

- **Sir Robert Hitcham's Almshouses** - AGM to be held in July. Rev Ian Wilson will be a trustee and maybe become the Chairman.
- **Public Transport –Nothing to report**
- **Coast & Heaths & Footpaths** - Broken Bridleway sign still not repaired, Clerk has raised with Right of Way team at SCDC.
- **Nacton School** - Joanna Kidby is leaving as Head at the end of the summer term.
- **SALC**
 - IA attended last SALC meeting & provided a report on the 20th June 17.
- **Port Liaison Group**
 - Next meeting 5th Oct 17.
- **SNT:** IA provided the latest report on 26th June, there was no issues impacting the PC.

Community Speed Watch was raised by JB, and what premise did these Groups have as they were noted to be doing their speed watch on private land at Red House Walk, and there is not a long clear straight road in the village. IA said that he would ask the Police whether they gather average speeds and whether the location of the teams is publicised.

The formal business of the meeting was declared closed at 9.16 pm.

Approved by:

Date

VILLAGE FORUM

An opportunity for residents to raise any issues (whether or not on the agenda).

(Per standing orders: Max 15 minutes unless otherwise directed by the Chairman; a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes).

- A Parishioner raised the path project and asked what was being suggested and IA mentioned the discussions he had with UKPN was a 3ft grass verge.
- Broadband work was raised and the Clerk mentioned that the Project Manager from the Suffolk Broadband team had left so this may be a contributing factor as to why the Parish Council had not yet received any updates on the work to be completed.
- There was an upcoming road closure noted on Bridge Rd.
- A Parishioner mentioned that he had read that the port may be losing two shipping lines due to congestion but this was yet to be confirmed.
- It was brought up that Scotts was being sold and the Parish Council had not yet been informed who the new buyer was.
- A leaflet on the history of the village would be sent out with the next Newsletter.
- An updated welcome pack was shared.
- Posters would be put up on the field gate opposite the Ship asking for donations to the East Anglian Children's Hospice.

Nacton School Head – a current reception teacher was taking up the post o