

LEVINGTON AND STRATTON HALL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 19 JANUARY 2016 IN THE VILLAGE HALL AT 7:15 PM

Present: Councillors: David Long (Chairman)('DL'); David Pryke (Vice-Chairman) ('DP'); Ian Angus ('IA'); John Bailey ('JB'); Nick Hopkins; Pat Pryke ('PP'); James Ramsay ('JR');
Parish Clerk: Marian Rose ('MR');
County Councillor Patricia O'Brien ('PO');
District Councillor Susan Harvey ('SH');
Two members of the public.

- **VILLAGE FORUM**

A villager raised concern about speeding vehicles particularly along Nacton Road & Church Lane. She was aware that some roads can be designated 'Quiet lanes' but also noted that the 20mph speed limit in Church Lane appeared to have little effect.

There were no other comments.

- **SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

Patricia O'Brien ('PO') attended & presented the attached report.

She awaited a reply from Dr Thérèse Coffey MP about the A14 congestion. Ben Gummer MP has expressed his support for her concerns about this road with the planned expansion of Felixstowe Docks. PP reported that several companies had applied for the contract to run the local bus service & a decision by Suffolk County Council ('SCC') was awaited. SH commented that the bus operator receives only 40% of the value of fares from those with bus passes.

In reply to a Councillor's question PO confirmed she did not know if SCC had a short list of sites under consideration for gypsy & traveller short-stay transit sites but she would try to ascertain this.

DP explained he had been trying to get answers from SCC & SCDC about issues arising from the recent planning application for an extension of time for the life of the solar park at Walk Farm. Many other counties offer guidance on the issue of benefit payments offered by the energy companies. PO & SH were unaware of any comments/policy on this matter. The comment was made that SCDC had let down its constituents as other Councils had been advising their local PC's on this issue for some time. SH agreed to make further enquiries at SCDC about this.

- **SUFFOLK COASTAL DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

Susan Harvey ('SH') attended & presented the attached report.

She re-iterated that speedcheck training was available & that she would support funding for this among the parishes in her ward.

Councillors thanked her for her support for our claim under the Community Enabling Grant for more tables & a chair trolley for the Village Hall.

- **POLICE REPORT**

No officers had been free to attend. IA commented that he was aware from his SNT committee that it was unlikely that officers would be able to attend PC meetings in future.

No crime reports had been received following a new crime investigation system being introduced.

The Parish Council ('the PC') meeting was then declared open.

The Chairman began by thanking the Clerk for her work during the recent spell of serious illness in her family. She appreciated this & in turn thanked Councillors for their support.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

2. CODE OF CONDUCT & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No comments.

3. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 4 NOVEMBER 2015

The minutes were approved & signed as a correct record.

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

None.

5. FINANCE REPORT

The following were noted:

(a) *Bank balances at 31 December 15 (reconciled to bank statements to 31 December 15);*

- Current account: £5,099;
- Deposit account: £6,091.

(b) *Review of budget v actual for the 9 months to 31 December 2015 & to set the budget & precept for 2016/17:*

The schedule of actual income & expenditure for the first nine months of the current year & the projected figures for the remaining quarter was reviewed. Councillors were pleased to note that the figures were in line with the budget for the year.

The attached draft budget for 2016/17 was also reviewed & agreed. This budget suggested no reason to increase the current year's Precept level of £6,100 & Councillors agreed to maintain it at this level for 2016/17. It was noted that the sum to be passed on by SCDC for householders receiving benefit was now known to be £1.09 only.

(c) *Income received since the last meeting was noted:*

- £5 – newspaper box key deposit.

(d) *Income anticipated before next meeting:*

- Community Enabling Grant for Village Hall 5 small tables & a chair trolley, if claim is successful - £534;
- Newsletter subscriptions x 6 = £36;
- Red House Walk Residents' Assn contribution to weedkiller costs - £15.

(e) *Payments made since last meeting & previously approved & budgeted:*

- Clerk's Salary & Expenses from 1 Sep – 31 Oct 15 £393.22 (net of tax);
- HMRC re PAYE £88.60;
- SALC training for Clerk £90;
- Heelis & Lodge re internal audit £66.00 for 2014/15;
- David Long re British Legion poppy wreath £15;
- David Long re Church Field chain & lock £27.04;
- Pat Pryke re newsletter £93.80.

(f) *Payments due to be made before the next meeting:*

- Clerk's Salary & Expenses from 1 Nov – 31 Dec 15 £445.97 (net of tax);
- HMRC re PAYE £92.20;
- Pat Pryke re newsletter c£105;
- SALC – new Councillor training for James Ramsay £120.00;
- Heelis & Lodge re internal audit £55.00 for 2013/14 (Councillors noted a bill for the 2014/15 audit had been received but not for the previous year despite the Clerk reminding them);
- Church flags: a replacement flag had been budgeted for in this financial year at £100. There was now a need to purchase a new flag & this had been sourced @ £39 only. It was agreed that two be purchased at this value so as to have one in store. Thus the budget for 2016/17 did not make any provision for a new flag in that year, although it was noted that flags do not last very long.
- IA has some modest expenses to claim for dog bin bags. He will notify the Clerk of the amount due;
- Pat Pryke re newsletter c.£100;
- 5 small tables & chair trolley for Village Hall with District Councillor Susan Harvey's community Enabling Fund if successful with the claim - £640.58 inc VAT;
- It was noted that there may be some expenditure incurred in updating the welcome packs distributed to new residents (see also item 12 below);

6. PLANNING

The following was noted:

- *DC15/4380 Pollys Cottage - alteration to extension*
The planning committee had considered this application before this main meeting. It had been agreed not to support the application for a number of reasons which would be submitted to Suffolk Coastal District Council.
IA & JR were thanked for their efforts in connection with this application.
- *DC15/4275/ADI - BDK advertising sign*
The PC planning committee had agreed not to support this planning application for an illuminated sign as it would increase light pollution in a dark rural area, and possibly create a precedent for other site users to follow, and create even more light pollution.
However, SCDC had granted permission on 6 January 2016.
- *DC15/4107 - Solar Farm at Walk Farm, Stratton Hall - time extension*
SCDC had granted permission on 1 December 2015. DP updated Councillors on his enquires about similar planning applications elsewhere in the country where monetary benefit was offered to Parish Councils. Suffolk Association of Local Councils were making enquiries with National Government to establish if guidance was available in a similar way to that issued for wind farm applications.
It was noted that Lightsource, the applicant, had initially mentioned a community benefit payment of £15,000 which was NOT dependent on the PC's support. At the meeting their representatives had attended with the PC they had suggested that more may be available. To date no payment had been received from Lightsource. It was agreed that no approach for payment should be made to Lightsource for the present.
SCDC would be asked if they had taken any action to ensure compliance with their condition, set when they approved the original planning application, that green screening be put in place around the site. It appeared that this had not been planted as early as it should have been &, as a result, had been slow to mature.

- *Levington Hall wall:*
There had been no update from SCDC since a holding reply of 17 September. The Clerk had sent a reminder on 3 November with no response to date. Councillors asked that this be pursued & suggested they make a site visit to monitor progress.
- *SCDC proposed changes to the Scheme of Delegation:*
Following a seminar the Chairman & Clerk had attended explaining the new procedures, the Clerk had asked for SCDC for confirmation that they would act on the requests made to send more than one email to notify PCs of a scheme of delegation matter & also to be told the reason why they were minded to go against the views of the PC. No reply had been received to date. It was agreed a reminder should be sent.
- *SCDC World of Planning event covering enforcement*
The Chairman & Clerk had attended this event on 12 November. The salient points, previously distributed to Councillors, were noted.
- *Tree Preservation Orders ('TPOs')*
It was noted that SCDC had provided a list of the TPOs in the parishes.
- *SCDC Preferred Options Consultation*
The PC's response to this consultation had been submitted on 27 November – as attached. There had been no formal response to date but a local newspaper had reported that Planning Officers were analysing the responses, and would then prepare a report on possible changes to the proposals, ready for a second round of consultation.
- *Gypsy & Traveller short stay site*
Councillors had heard unofficially that the preferred site was to be by the Orwell Truck Stop on the A14. The Clerk had, to date, received no reply to an enquiry to SCC on 17 January to ask what locations they had in mind in our locality. PO had said earlier that she would make enquires on behalf of the PC.
Both SCC & SCDC had confirmed that they had not purchased any land in the parishes. Councillors were aware that a large supply of pipes had been delivered to the field by the railway bridge on the old A45 but it was not known for what purpose or for whom.

7. LOCAL TRAFFIC ISSUES

(a) Operation Stack:

There have been several implementations of Stack recently but lack of prompt signage in the village has caused problems for villagers & businesses. DL has been in communication with Acting Police Inspector Julian Ditcham & was trying to arrange a meeting with him to go over the procedures.

Suggestions were made for how the 'road closed' signs could be put out more promptly but a decision was deferred until Councillors had met with Insp Ditcham.

Councillors also considered how to set up a way of alerting people when Stack is called. Chris Allen, who maintains our website domain, believes it will be possible to set up a distribution list via the website so that, when the police call Operation Stack, an email could be automatically forwarded to anyone on the list. This could include anyone at the local businesses as well as villagers. Again it was agreed to discuss this with Sgt Ditcham.

(b) Speed of traffic through the village:

A resident had raised concerns about the volume & speed of traffic coming through Levington – Nacton Road & Church Lane in particular. It was agreed that a meeting be arranged with SCC Highways to discuss the options available.

(c) *A14:*

PO had notified the PC that Kirton PC wished to write to Dr Thérèse Coffey MP & Highways Agency to urge action in response to increase concerns about problems on the A14 & the Orwell Bridge in particular. Kirton PC were due to discuss this at their next meeting after which they would draft a letter to which Councillors could consider adding their support. PO had written to local MPs but had not to date received a reply from Dr Coffey.

(d) *Deer warning signs:*

Clerk reported that she had chased SCC about this issue too. She had sent them a map on 3 Sep 2015, showing where the PC wanted the signs, but these had not been put up yet.

8. ROAD SURFACE DRAINAGE

Councillors were aware of problems in various locations in the parishes in Church Lane, Bridge Road, by OOCL & White House Farm & Stratton Hall Drift.

The Clerk had not yet been successful in obtaining an update SCC about this issue. This issue will be covered at the proposed meeting with SCC Highways (see item 7 above).

9. POLICE

(a) *SNT meeting:*

IA reported from the most recent meeting. He felt this area would be unchanged apart from the number of officers involved.

Crime reports may need to be accessed from the Police website.

(b) *Police reorganization:*

IA reported that the Chief Constable was confident about what can be achieved from the proposed re-organisation but it was felt that there must be some doubt that this can succeed as well as the Chief Constable predicts.

(c) *Motorbikes on foreshore path:*

Councillors noted this incident and that this demonstrated the excellent police response to a local 101 call.

10. FIRE SERVICE CONSULTATION

Councillors had received details of plans to reduce the number of fire engines in Ipswich. It was noted that this is a result of the reduced demand for the Fire Service as buildings are made progressively safer. It was not felt necessary to respond to this consultation.

11. EMERGENCY PLANNING

IA reported on the status of our plan which he has updated. He had identified that some items of equipment were needed & an article was to be placed in the newsletter seeking donations.

A meeting will be arranged to discuss how to proceed.

It was also noted that the Parish Council had obtained a contact telephone number for local councils to call in the event of a power cut which should avoid the problems of not being able to get through or get an up to date status report.

12. WELCOME PACKS FOR NEW RESIDENTS

IA is to take over the collation & delivery of the Welcome Packs for new residents. PP was thanked for the sterling work she had done on these in the past.

It was noted that some modest costs may be necessary for paper, printer ink etc.

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. The following items were noted in particular:

- Date of the villages' litter pick to be changed to March 5th to coincide with the Clean for the Queen campaign;
- There will be an article in the newsletter asking for opinions of residents re a commemoration of HM Queen's 90th birthday. Councillors had not yet had an opportunity to consider emails received just before the meeting concerning suggestions for the villages' celebrations.

14. 2016 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING DATES

The revised dates of the 2016 meetings were noted:

Tues 19 Jan 2016;

Weds 2 Mar;

Weds 4 May (PC Annual Meeting);

Weds 25 May (Annual Parishes Meeting) (CHANGE OF DATE);

Tues 28 Jun (CHANGE OF DATE);

Weds 7 Sep;

Tues 8 Nov.

15. REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS

a. Trees and Church Field warden:

- DP & DL would review if professional help was needed to assess the health of trees for which the PC is responsible.

b. Village Hall:

- DP reported that the AGM was held on 19 November 2015. The extension had cost £32,000 including extras such as improved lighting & heating. It was noteworthy that the cost had been met from resources amassed within the villages.

c. Sir Robert Hitcham's Almshouses:

- a new tenant had moved into no 4;
- work on the outside of all 4 properties was being undertaken.

d. Local Public Transport:

- PP reported that the contract for the local service was due to be renewed in March 2016. It was not yet known how this may affect our parishes. It was hoped that Norse, the current contractor, would be able to continue operating as they provide such a good service.

e. & f. Coasts & Heaths & footpaths:

- It was noted that many of the footpaths were understandably very muddy following the recent wet weather;
- SCC had improved the boardwalk path at the creek. NH would thank Martin Williams for his support for this project;
- It was hoped that improvements would be made to the Nacton meadow path. Historical information on the deterioration of this path over the years has been submitted to SCC to support a claim for work to be done;

g. Nacton Primary School:

- the usual weekly newsletters were now being received once again;
- the school was in the top 100 for improvement in key stage 1 & 2 results;

h. SALC

- There was nothing of interest to report from the Suffolk Coastal area AGM;
- IA had attended the Suffolk Coastal area meeting on 7 December 2015. There had been discussion about planning issues amongst Councillors attending & it had been agreed that Philip Ridley, head of planning at SCDC, would be invited to the next area meeting.

i. Port Liaison Group

- DP & PP had attended the official opening of the new berth on 5 November;
- The next meeting was due to be held in March 2016.

j. SNT

- This issue had been covered sufficiently by item 9 above.

The formal business of the meeting was declared closed at 9:55pm.

Approved by:

Date

POINTS FROM POST-MEETING VILLAGE FORUM:

- There had been damage to the green, where the canon stands, & the brick edging surrounding it, probably by vehicles. Councillors would meet to review the damage in daylight & consider how this could be remedied. It was possible the edging could be built up & reinforced to make it more visible to drivers.
- Re item 9 above, Bob Hardwick commented that he received weekly crime reports as Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator. He agreed to send the internet link to the Clerk.
- Councillors had not been able to discuss suggestions for the Queens' 90th birthday as this had not been on the published agenda. A tea party had been suggested for 12 June 2016. This would involve a closure of a short stretch of Church Lane by Church Field. An article about this will be in the parish newsletter.
- A resident had complained that deer were entering gardens & eating plants. He asked if a deer cull could be requested as the number of deer was increasing. Councillors would make enquiries about this.
- A resident had asked about the effect of a new flood gate in Ipswich & how this may affect Levington & Stratton Hall in the event of the River Orwell flooding. Enquiries would be made with the Environment Agency.