

# LEVINGTON AND STRATTON HALL PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON

WEDNESDAY 16<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2019 IN THE VILLAGE HALL AT 7.15 PM

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**Present:** Councillors: David Long, Chairman ('DL'); David Pryke, Vice-Chairman ('DP'); Ian Angus ('IA'); John Bailey ('JB'); Pat Pryke ('PP'); James Ramsay ('JR'); Andrew Abram ('AA')  
 Parish Clerk: Lucy Buckle ('LB');  
 District Councillor Susan Harvey (SH); County Councillor Patricia O'Brien ('PO')  
 Four members of the public attended.

### COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT –

Patricia O'Brien informed the meeting that a report published on 18th December 2018 has revealed the importance of the Sport and Physical Activity sector to the Suffolk economy.

A specialist economic development and regeneration consultancy Hatch Regeneris, published a report showing that the sector contributes £270m a year to the Suffolk economy. This accounts for over 10,000 jobs or 3% of all employment in Suffolk and is almost double the proportion seen at national levels.

It appears that employment in the sector has grown at a faster rate than all other sectors in Suffolk - up 60% in the last 5 years. By contrast, employment in financial and professional services has grown by 10% over the same period.

The report highlights the importance of continuing the drive towards increasing participation in sport and physical activity as a way of both improving productivity and reducing the spend on health and social care. It estimates that a reduction of just 10% in Suffolk employee sickness rates would give the Suffolk economy a boost of £42m annually.

Much emphasis is placed upon the need for organisations to work together to respond to the future skills needs of a growing sector.

She went on to mention that, as previously reported, SCC faces significant financial challenges in delivering frontline services and will need to make savings. One of the areas is that of Citizens Advice Bureau. At present SCC provides grant funding to CAB and it is proposed to remove this funding. However, it is recommended that the reduction be phased, that it will be reduced by half to £184,000 in 2019/20 before ending in 2020/21. A consultation is at present taking place until 23<sup>rd</sup> January. This will give residents an opportunity to say how they use the service.

The government has given police commissioners the power to increase the policing element of the council tax by £2( I think 2% p.a.) a month from April; it will mean an extra 29 police officers.

She understands the Commissioner has selected a replacement for the Chief Constable. He will come before the Police & Crime Panel on 25<sup>th</sup> January for their scrutiny and approval.

An Inter-governmental study is being carried out re. wind speed on the Orwell Bridge. The objective is to determine what can be done to manage traffic, particularly lorries, when wind speeds are high.

## DISTRICT COUNCILOR'S REPORT

Susan Harvey started by wishing everyone a Happy Healthy New Year. She gave an update on the Local Plan and that on Thursday 3rd January the New Local Plan came before the Full Council at an extraordinary meeting. Although she had been on the working group of this plan since its inception, she had voted against it. This was because of the impact the proposed Innocence Farm development would have on the villages in her Kirton Ward. The next stage will be a further consultation on soundness starting on 14th January for 6 weeks. The plan is expected to go before the Inspectors later this year. She also made the point that she does not agree that all the houses are needed; in her own opinion, the developers will stop building when houses stop selling.

Sizewell C has now moved on to the next stage of consultation, which is from 4th January to 1st February. There is an exhibition at Woodbridge Community Centre (behind Deben Leisure) on Tuesday 15th January from 10.00am to 4.00pm where questions can be asked and information given. She informed that Scottish Power have decided they want to put a massive building in Freston having totally ignored responses from the Councils and MPs. She had attended the launch of the AONB management Plan in December and the impact on the AONB will be enormous. When she had suggested that there is a need for employment in Lowestoft, which is not in the AONB, and these buildings should be built there she was told that there is no connection to the National Grid there. The small area of Suffolk coast around Sizewell will be involved in the supply of over 35% of our country's electricity over the next 10-15 years.

As mentioned by PO, she also confirmed that County Council funding to Citizens Advice was to be cut completely, but representations were made by the Citizens Advice branches and it has now been decided that the funding will be cut by half this year and be totally withdrawn in 2020. This is a case where the County is having to reduce its expenditure but, in this case, it affects the people who need it most. Citizens Advice runs on donations and volunteers apart from a paid Manager.

## VILLAGE FORUM

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 comments made.

The formal business of the meeting commenced at 7.43pm

### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received

### 2. CODE OF CONDUCT & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Refer to Suffolk Code of Conduct from time to time and update Register of Interests as required. State any Declarations of Interest in this Agenda. None were declared at the meeting.

### 3. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT, RECORD THE MINUTES OF MEETING OF 7th Nov 2018

The minutes were duly approved as a correct record and signed.

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

Nothing brought up.

### 5. HIGHWAYS – A14 closure and impact on the Parish

The Clerk sent a letter to Highways that outlined the impact of the overturned lorry on the Parish that happened on the 5<sup>th</sup> December, at time of writing no update has been received.

“The unfortunate road traffic crash which occurred around 12.30pm on Wednesday 5 December had far reaching repercussions.

First and foremost, the consequences were greatest for those directly involved in the road crash, and the emergency services that responded so fast and efficiently.

It is what then resulted from this road crash which is of much concern to this Parish Council.

Although there are diversionary routes, we all know from past experience that these are totally inadequate as Ipswich Town soon becomes gridlocked and rural roads are completely unsuited to the volume and type of vehicles which use the A roads.

We appreciate that many were affected by this crash but we want to focus on what happened to the parishes of Levington and Stratton Hall.

Our understanding is that the one main rural diversionary route was via Nacton to the A1156. However, as this route soon became choked and vehicles, especially HGVs, sought a different route in a quest to reach the Port of Felixstowe.

This resulted in many of the vehicles reaching Levington and using Bridge Road which is the only route through the village. More importantly, some diverted from this route and forced a way through Church Lane and leading onto Stratton Hall Drift.

These two thoroughfares are very narrow single-track lanes and totally unsuitable for HGVs. At one time a convoy of 7 HGVs forced their way through here with resultant damage to verges and safety barriers along the stretch of road, especially on the hill just beyond The Ship Inn and by the entrance to Levington Hall as shown in the attached photographs.

There was a real and present danger to vehicles travelling in the opposite direction along this single-track lane, or of it becoming totally blocked by HGVs. If the weather had been colder with accompanying ice, the outcome would have been even worse. There is a case of an OOCL HGV being stuck on The Ship Inn hill when attempting to find a way around Operation Stack [we do have photographic evidence if you require it].

In an attempt to minimise the impact on this single-track lane, some Councillors attempted to divert vehicles from this lane at the village hall junction with Bridge Road. To avoid more HGVs attempting this unsuitable route a temporary narrowing of the start to Church Lane was made by using old brown waste bins. Maybe this wasn't within the Parish Council's power, but needs must.

The Parish Council would like you to consider the following:

1. A visit by SCC Highways Officers to travel Bridge Road, Church Lane, and Stratton Hall Drift to inspect the damaged verges and safety rails, and to then make repairs.
2. To consider ways of stopping HGVs using Church Lane and Stratton Hall Drift.
3. To consider whether temporary road signs should be left in the parish to use if road diversion are again in place.
4. Whether major roads can be cleared quicker after a RTC as the A14/12 was closed for nearly 12 hours.
5. To take into account the damage caused on this occasion by heavy vehicles when using Church Lane and Stratton Hall Drift when Network Rail shut the Stratton Hall level crossing for a long period

in May 2019 and this may be the only access to the extremely busy Levington Marina for extended periods.

6. Although Highways England claim to have diversionary routes when the A14 is closed, and although they look good on a map, we all know that in practice they are inadequate. Experience has shown that town centres such as Ipswich, Bury St Edmonds and Newmarket all soon become gridlocked. We also know that rural roads are totally inadequate to deal with diverted traffic from the main road network.

Two parish Councillors recall a meeting of SCC Highways Officers, Highways England Officers and Parish Councillors at SCC Offices to discuss diversion routes. One suggestion was that sections of the A14 had removable barriers. In the event of a road blockage these could be removed and a temporary contra flow implemented. This seemed to work well in some European countries. Could this alternative to diversion routes please be considered again?

We look forward to hearing from you.”

PO asked the Clerk to send her the letter and she would look to raise internally for an update at the Council.

## **6. PLANNING MATTERS – including review of Local Plan**

The Final Draft Local Plan was approved for publication by Full Council at their meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> January. The Plan will be published for 6 weeks from Monday 14<sup>th</sup> January until Monday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2019, during which time Parish Council representations will be invited in relation to legal and procedural requirements and the soundness of the Plan.

DP and JB attended a briefing session run by SCDC on the 11<sup>th</sup> January 2019. DP updated the Council that the presentation at this session was by officers though two councillors, Cllrs Dunnnett and Fryatt, were present.. There was also a presentation from Mark Edgerley and a colleague: this will also be e-mailed to Parish Clerks in due course.

- The Plan runs to 2036.
- The total number of new dwellings has been increased to 10,476 (582/year)
- Employment land identified for 6500 jobs.
- There are some significant changes in this latest (final) version from the previous one including some new sites in the frame and, for some villages, a change in their status in the Settlement Hierarchy – there was some protest at changes appearing at this late stage when the emphasis is now on soundness. But if we have comments, make them on the basis that the changes haven't been made 'soundly'
- The new 'consultation is on 'Soundness':
  - Is the plan "legally compliant"
  - Is the plan "sound" - a definition of the criteria for 'soundness' is set out in the National Planning Framework (NPPF)
- SCDC prefer comments/representations to be submitted via their on-line system, (relevant web page on the poster, which we will get with the documentation) but are happy to accept other methods.
- The required format of responses is very complicated – each separate comment needs to be on a separate form. There is a guidance document being issued.
- The timetable is:
  - Deadline for responses to SCDC 5pm 25<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2019
  - Submission to Inspector March 2019
  - Hearing (anticipated) Summer 2019

- Adoption (anticipated)      End of 2019

The Parish Council all agreed that the Local Plan is crucially important to everyone living in the Suffolk Coastal area, and there are concerns about the detrimental impact on the wildlife especially as the Parish is classed as AONB, plus road infrastructure issues. It was also noted that the process of preparing the plan is necessarily slow and in the interests of transparency, is accompanied by a significant amount of detailed information.

There was no mention in the Local Plan of trying to keep Felixstowe and Ipswich separate.

The Parish Council recognise a responsibility to our residents to keep them informed and make this process accessible to them. A village meeting on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019 has been arranged which will be, additionally, include the Sizewell 'C' consultation. For that meeting, it was agreed that it would not be possible to cover the whole district-wide plan, so the meeting would focus on items that have a direct impact on the Parish:

- Policy SCLP12.57 Land at Bridge Road, Levington 0.75ha of land adjacent Levington Park, Bridge Road has been identified for the development of 20 dwellings.
- Policy SCLP12.35 Land at Innocence Farm, a large-scale employment allocation of approximately 67ha has been identified on the western part of the site for port related business and operations to support the continued viability of the port.
- Policy SCLP12.38 Levington Park, has been identified as an existing low-key employment site some 3.29ha in size.
- Policy SCLP 12.20 Land at Felixstowe Road, for a high-quality business park to provide entertainment spaces targeted at business and professional service sectors. Start-up units and grow on space will be supported as part of the overall mix of units on the site.

After the village meeting the Clerk will organise an additional Parish Council planning meeting to view the Parishioner's feedback and ratify the response to be made to SCDC on the plan.

A cross parish meeting is being organised for the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2019 which DP and JB will be representing the Parish Council.

DL and DP discussed the settlement of hierarchy and the Parish with its limited resources had in the past been deemed not suitable for development, yet this was not mentioned via the Local Plan documentation.

DP raised that in the Local Plan there is reference to traveller sites and a 2017 report had been done which stated SCDC needed to find fifteen permanent pitches but no locations suggested within the plan. Concerns were raised if a transit lorry park may, eventually become a potential traveller site?

#### **OTHER LOCAL PLANNING MATTERS**

- DC18/3197/FUL – Walk Farm change of use – Stratton Hall Farms: PIng mtg held 22 Aug. Almost unanimous decision to oppose. SCDC decision awaited.

- DC/18/4459/FUL - **Replacement kitchen extraction system and associated screening works - Ship Inn Church Lane Levington IP10 0LQ** – no PC objections, SCDC decision awaited.
- DC/18/4998/CON - **Marine Licence Consultation - Application for a marine licence: Levington Saltmarsh restoration and beneficial use of dredging project 2018 - Suffolk Yacht Harbour Access To Levington Marina Stratton Hall Suffolk IP10 0LN** – No planning meeting held as no documentation was received to the Clerk. SCDC have now updated that they have no objections. (Clerk has notified SCDC of lack of plans made available)

## 7. SIZEWELL 'C' CONSULTATION UPDATE

The Clerk had received a 'Public Consultation Begins' leaflet on the proposed Sizewell 'C' nuclear power station development. This leaflet has also been sent out to local residents. The Council discussed that Page 7 refers to two options for freight management facilities, and both are near to the Parish.

**Option 1** refers to land near to the 7 Hills Road junction and between the Old Felixstowe Road and the A14. It conveniently avoids the adjacent piece of land identified by SCDC in the Draft Local Plan for the provision of a business park. Something similar to this was included in an earlier Sizewell 'C' consultation document, but identified the freight management facilities site as being the site now grabbed by SCDC for the business park. Previously, the Parish Council objected to the use of this site thinking a more appropriate site being nearer to the Sizewell development site and near to the proposed 'park and ride' site near to Wickham Market.

**Option 2** refers to using part of Innocence Farm land:

On page 4 there is a local map of the wider area and a key indicating potential sites and usage. Most are marked as temporary except the two freight management facilities options.

There are a series of public exhibitions and the nearest one to us is at the Trimley Sports and Social Club in Trimley St Martin on Tuesday 22 January between the times of 11 - 5pm which DP and DL will be attending to represent the Parish Council.

## 8. REVIEW STANDING ORDERS

Since the recently circulated 2018 model standing orders, NALC have issued an amended version to address anomalies in three areas – one results from the last-minute change to Data Protection legislation meaning councils are not now required to appoint a Data Protection Officer, the other two relate to technicalities around Procurement and the Annual Return.

The Parish Council formally adopted these changes.

## 9. FINANCE

- a) Bank balances at 31 Dec 2018 (reconciled to bank statements) where signed off:
  - Current account: £20,487.16;
  - Deposit account: £7,008.48.
- b) Income since last meeting:

- Nil
- c) Income anticipated before next meeting:
- £250 from SH enabling grant – Clerk has made an application (DETAILS) which has been successful, the final forms have been submitted.
- d) Payments made since meeting & approved at that meeting and/or budgetted:
- Salary for Marian Rose (previous Clerk) for Sep £385.83 & Oct £83.29;
  - Salary for LB for Sep & Oct £289.08;
  - HMRC £186.80;
  - Gate expenses £227.42;
  - Tree GP £216;
  - Nov newsletter and stamps £104.93;
  - Coffee Morning gate refund £75;
  - Flower Show gate refund £75
- e) Payments due to be made where approved:
- Lucy Buckle's Nov and Dec Clerk's salary £608; 8 weeks homeworkers allowance £64 and stamp expenses £4.02
- f) Budget

The final 19/20 budget was agreed and that the 2019/2020 precept would be £8,759: The budget represents a 15% increase from last year's precept – driven mainly by a mix of Clerk salary increase, training allowance for any new Cllrs and expenses and any potential election cost.

It was discussed if the situation arose where the need for additional clerking hours were required, due to an unplanned event, then this would be managed from reserves. The Clerk's hours were assumed to remain constant at 8 hours on average per week and at a rate £11.22 SCP 22 in 2019/20.

## **10. LOCALTY BUDGET AND SOLAR FARM FUND – POTENTIAL PROJECTS**

PO had mentioned that she had £450 to award the Parish Council from her Locality budget, the council discussed that £120 of this budget should be for wild flower seed to be planted by the wall opposite the Church. With the remainder of the funds the Clerk would write to the Village Hall Trustees to see if they would like to utilise the remainder on a pull-down baby changing unit for the hall.

The solar farm funds of £15,000 is currently in the PC current account, and the Council asked the Clerk to open a new account for these funds to be transferred in until a suitable project/s was decided upon.

The Parish Council has also been awarded £250 from SH enabling budget this money was agreed that it should be spend on a new microwave for the village hall.

## **11. DATA PROTECTION POLICY**

SALC have confirmed that local councils do not need a data protection officer. The PC has taken out a Data Protection Officer agreement with Local Council Public Advisory Services. The Standard Service Agreement has omitted the month, day, year in which this service starts plus period covered, or defines specifically what service the PC will receive. The Clerk has written to Jayne Cole CEO of the Local Council Public Advisory Services and she has confirmed the contract will run till the end of this Financial Year and

that the service on offer allows the PC to raise any Data Protection queries we may have and/or offer support on Data Protection issues.

## 12. FUTURE OF THE VILLAGE NEWSLETTER

After sixteen successful years of providing the Parishioners with an informative newsletter, PP will no longer be writing the newsletter as she is not standing for election at the end of this Council term. January and March's subscriptions will not be taken.

Pat will advertise in the January newsletter the opportunity for either someone on the Parish Council or a Parishioner to take on the newsletter.

## 13. BROADBAND UPDATE

BT have now confirmed that for many residences that their service was upgraded on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2018 and that there is also the option to obtain packages with other service providers. Speeds of excess of 70Mb/s have been reported! This service is now available to all residents that are connected and within close enough proximity to cabinet No3 (by the village hall). It was noted that not all Parishioners were receiving the same speeds and that the Council would look to work with the Suffolk Better Broadband group with the aim of getting similar speeds across the village.

## 14. PROJECTS

*Notice board at Red House Farm* - This board had been removed temporarily while building work has been carried out. The Clerk will write to the landowner to arrange when the board can be put back up. A builder's quote is being sort for the erection of the board.

## CORRESPONDENCE

To note that Cllrs are sent all communications received by the Clerk, unless clearly not relevant eg adverts for street furniture.

## 15. REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS AREA OF REPOSNSIBILITY

- a. **Tree and Church field warden**  
Tree GP have completed the work at Pilots Way.
- b. **Village Hall**  
Was noted that the Bridge Club have moved their meetings to another location.
- c. **Sir Robert Hitcham's Almshouses**  
Quinquennial report is due soon.
- d. **Public Transport**  
Nothing to report as yet
- e. **Coast & Heaths & footpaths**  
A meeting has been arranged with England Coast Path Group for the 6<sup>th</sup> December at Felixstowe Town Hall to discuss the work they are doing and future plans – unfortunately no one was available to attend. The balustrading at the steps had broken, but this had been reported to the Council.
- f. **Nacton School**  
Regular newsletters continued to be received during term time.

- g. **SALC**  
Nothing to report.
- h. **Port Liaison Group**  
Nothing to report and the next meeting is on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2019.
- i. **Police/SNT:**  
IA meet with the Police and Crime Commissioner and endorsed the 2% tax increase for policing.

The meeting was declared closed at 9.24pm

#### **VILLAGE FORUM**

Thanks, and applause was given to PP for her dedication for all the years she had written the village newsletter, which has been gratefully received by the villagers.

The Parish Council mentioned to the public that due to budget constraints that donations to village organisations has now ceased.