

LEVINGTON AND STRATTON HALL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 4 MAY 2016 IN THE VILLAGE HALL AT 7:15 PM

Present: Councillors: David Long (Chairman)('DL'); David Pryke (Vice-Chairman) ('DP'); Ian Angus ('IA'); Nick Hopkins; Pat Pryke ('PP'); James Ramsay ('JR');
Parish Clerk: Marian Rose ('MR');
Three members of the public.

- **VILLAGE FORUM**

There were no comments.

- **SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

Patricia O'Brien ('PO') had sent her apologies for being unable to attend as she had another meeting to attend. There was no report for this period as there had been no noteworthy news.

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

Susan Harvey ('SH') had sent her apologies for being unable to attend as she had another meeting to attend. She had supplied the attached annual report.

- **POLICE REPORT**

Crime reports for February, March & April 2016 & their annual report had been provided.

See also item 20 below.

The Parish Council ('the PC') meeting was declared open at 7:20pm.

The Chairman began by thanking the Clerk for the extensive aide-memoire she had supplied to Councillors to help their preparation for the meeting.

- 1. TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN AND RECEIVE HIS/HER DECLARATION OF OFFICE**

David Long was nominated by IA & seconded by JR. He was then re-elected unanimously. DL was thanked for his contribution to the Council & excellent work for the parishes. He signed the Declaration of Office & this was witnessed by the Clerk.

- 2. TO ELECT A VICE-CHAIRMAN**

David Pryke was proposed by IA; seconded by JB. DP was re-elected unanimously.

- 3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

- 4. CODE OF CONDUCT & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

IA, PP, & JB declared non-financial interests re item 15 as members of the congregation & Friends of St Peters.

- 5. TO ELECT COMMITTEES, OFFICERS AND LEAD COUNCILLORS**

By agreement officers were elected as shown on the attached list.

6. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 8 MARCH 2016 & 11 APRIL 2016

The minutes were approved & signed as a correct record.

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

No comments.

8. TO CONSIDER A CO-OPTION TO FILL THE PARISH COUNCILLOR VACANCY

DL reported that he had spoken to a potential candidate but who had felt unable to consider the appointment until the Autumn.

It was agreed that an article be placed in the parish newsletter seeking volunteers to fill the vacancy.

9. TO CONSIDER THE VACANCY FOR PARISH CLERK & RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER

MR had submitted her resignation with effect from 31 March 2017 which Councillors accepted with reluctance. She hoped the timing would allow adequate time for Councillors to find a replacement & to allow some tandem working if necessary.

It was agreed that the Finance Group would meet to agree a draft job description & to consider how best to proceed.

10. FINANCE REPORT

The following were noted:

(a) A summary of the finances for the year to 31 Mar 16 was reviewed.

(b) Annual Return for y/e 31 March 2016

- the Annual Governance Statement (section 1) was reviewed & confirmed;
- the Accounting Statement in section 2 was also approved;
- The Annual Return was then signed by the RFO & Chairman;
- Clerk would now submit the PC records for 'internal' audit with Heelis & Lodge.

(c) Bank balances at 30 April 2016 (reconciled to bank statements to 31 March 16);

- Current account: £5,352;
- Deposit account: £6,191.

(d) Income received since the meeting of 8 March:

- £150 from Lunch Club towards the beacon;
- £6 newsletter subscription;
- £330 from Village Hall for the extra tables they ordered;
- £3050 precept first instalment;
- £0.76p interest for Q/E 31 March 16.

(e) Income anticipated before the next meeting:

- £577 VAT refund following submission of annual VAT return
- £500 from UK Power Network for the PC's help with their pilot scheme;

- (f) Payments made since the meeting of 8 March & approved at that meeting:
- Clerk's Salary & Expenses from 1 Jan 16 - 29 Feb 16 £680.19 (net of tax) including expenses;
 - HMRC re PAYE £141.60;
 - Hall hire for the year to 31 March 2016 - £380 (£440 budgeted);
 - Ian Angus £66.32 batteries, dog litter bags, vacuum packs, welcome pack bags;
 - Ian Angus £97.65 re March newsletter;
 - Gopak £1037.30 for 10 small tables for V Hall;
 - Chown China £238.31 for 36 HMQ90 mugs;
 - Bullfinch £358.80 for the gas-fired beacon.
- (g) Payments due to be made before next meeting:
- Clerk's Salary & Expenses from 1 Mar 16 – 30 April: £827.11
 - HMRC re PAYE £190;
 - SALC: training for Clerk 23/3 £18.00 & 18/4 £30; + £11.70 for Good Cllr Guides;
 - Pat Pryke re May newsletter c£105 + £7.56 stamps for March newsltr;
 - PC Doctor £30 – Clerk's laptop health-check;
 - SG Cubitt £150.00 – fence repair at top of Church Field.

11. PROJECTS

(a) Village Green retaining wall:

The problem of the low wall & the edge of the Green being damaged by vehicles was discussed & DL's attached report considered. It was agreed to wait for the building work at Pollys Cottage to be completed before doing any material work to the Green, meanwhile a temporary solution was suggested such as placing white stakes to emphasise the edge of the Green. The cost was estimated to be £70. The owners of The Drift would be asked if they had any objections to this temporary measure to protect the Green.

(b) Refurbishment of notice boards:

It was noted that both notice boards were in need of attention as they were difficult to open & close & potentially hazardous. Tom Rose was thanked for replacing the brass door knobs on the Village Hall board. It was agreed that IA would contact a reliable local carpenter for his opinion on what needs to be done to the notice boards including making that by Red House Farm water-proof.

(c) Pedestrian gate for Church Field:

It had been previously agreed that a gate be put in to allow pedestrian access to Church Field. DL reported that SCC did not have a suitable gate available. He would therefore make further enquiries with other suppliers for a new gate but it was agreed that, first, the Councillors should conduct a site visit to decide where the gate should be placed & determine the required size.

12. PLANNING

The following was noted:

- *DC16/0857 – Pollys Cottage alterations, ground & attic floor extension*
This was a reduced application from the earlier one. At the PC planning meeting on 18 March Councillors had agreed to recommend that SCDC refuse the application. It had since been referred under the scheme of delegation rules. The PC had asked for the application to be considered by the full committee as it had

in the earlier case. SCDC had also made an enquiry about which plans the PC had been supplied for the first application. There had been no further response from SCDC to date.

- *DC16/1189 – land on old A45 – erection of storage bdg/workshop:*
The PC had approved the application at their meeting on 11 April but had made some recommendations. Councillors were aware of responses from Network Rail & SCC Highways. There had been no decision from SCDC as yet.
- *DC16/1219 – Scotts Research Station - portacabin:*
The PC had supported this application; SCDC had approved it on 12 April 2016.
- *DC15/4107 - Solar Farm at Walk Farm, Stratton Hall - time extension*
DP provided an update on the status of the Community Benefit Payment. He had asked SALC to apply to NALC for their comments. He felt SALC's initial summary was not quite correct. It was agreed he should ask her to delay submission to NALC until it was corrected.
It was suggested that the PC should negotiate with Lightsource for an increased offer. It was agreed that an application should be made to them seeking an increased offer.
If the payment was obtained then it should be accepted 'without prejudice' & be accounted for separately in the PC's balances.
- *SCDC Site Allocations & Area Specific Policies & Action Plan:*
The consultation documents had been circulated & also made available online to Councillors. DL had produced a very full summary which he had previously circulated to Councillors. He was thanked for his efforts. It was agreed there was no cause to make any further comments in response to the consultation.
- *SCDC Proposed changes to scheme of delegation*
SH had alerted the PC to the fact that SCDC were reviewing the operation of the Scheme of Delegation. The Clerk had notified Tony Fryatt the cabinet member of the problems experienced. He had agreed to include these in a review of the scheme.
- *Gypsy & Traveller short stay site & Old A45*
There had been no response to the PC's request to SCC for an update of their proposals. However, it was noted that field next to the lay-by on the Old Felixstowe Road (the old A45) was now being used by an independent person (see above).
- *SALC planning course*
IA had attended this course on 12 April. He was disappointed to report he had learnt nothing new.

13. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Councillors had been notified that Framlingham Town Council was seeking a governance review to change the number of seats on their Council. Changes in procedures have made this more difficult to do & had asked for support in seeking changes to the procedure. Councillors felt that no action need be taken at present.

14. ADMISSIONS TO NACTON CEVC PRIMARY SCHOOL

The PC had been contacted by a parishioner whose eldest child was due to start primary school in the Autumn. However they had been notified that she was unable to attend Nacton CEVC Primary School despite attending pre-school there.

PO had asked the SCC cabinet member to become involved & to contact the parents. IA explained that the school had followed the relevant rules. There were 14 places available at the school. These were being filled by 11 siblings of current pupils & 3 other children who lived closer to the school. He added that the school could exceed these numbers in the first (reception) year but not in the following year. He would liaise with the parents & also with the chairman of the PTA to see if anything further could be done to ensure children from our parishes could attend the school.

15. TO CONSIDER A REQUEST TO RELOCATE THE CHURCH NOTICE BOARD

This had been briefly discussed before the request was withdrawn, at the last meeting. The Churchwardens had written formally to ask again. IA explained that the Churchwardens wished to relocate the notice board to outside the Churchyard to allow non Churchgoers to read Church notices & also to enhance the view of the Church. It was noted that Church notices already appear on the parish notice board so were thus already visible to non Church-goers. It was also felt that Trickers Wood would not be improved by a notice board being sited there. After some discussion it was agreed to visit the site & defer a decision until the next meeting.

It was noted that the Churchwardens' letter also asked if they would be able to submit a report at the Annual Parishes Meeting. The Clerk confirmed that the senior Churchwarden had always been sent an invitation to submit a report for the PCC but had not responded in recent years. IA would confirm this to the PCC.

16. HM QUEEN'S 90th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

(a) Beacon Event & Street Party

All agreed that the beacon evening in celebration of the Queen's birthday had been a great success & expressed their gratitude to the organisers & also to Adnams & The Ship;

(b) Street Party:

SCC had confirmed that the application to close Church Lane for the party on 12 June had been approved.

The organising group had advised that tickets had gone on sale on 1st May.

JB provided a brief overview of the events & games planned as well as the timetable for the day. The organising group would welcome a Councillor attending their next meeting & were agreeable to building in the points the PC had suggested regarding the risk assessment. It was important that this was properly considered & drawn up to ensure that the PC insurance cover was valid for the use of Church Field. It was agreed that all Councillors would review the current draft risk assessment & pass any comments to DP who would then liaise with the organising group to finalise this before the event;

(c) Mugs for the children of the parishes:

The 36 mugs purchased to give out to children who had not yet left school would be distributed with the newsletter being printed following this meeting.

An article would be placed in the newsletter saying that villagers could order a commemorative mug for £7 each. This would include postage & packing.

17. STANDING ORDERS - AGENDA ITEMS

JB raised the query to ask if section 9 of the Standing Orders overrode section 6, questioning if an agenda item requested by two Councillors could always be sustained. It

was felt the answer was not obvious & it was agreed that the Finance Group would meet to consider the matter in the first instance & report back to Councillors.

18. IPSWICH TIDAL BARRIER

In response to a query from a parishioner, the Environment agency had confirmed that the operation of the tidal barrier will have no effect on water levels at Levington and Stratton Hall.

They had also issued an invitation to the PC to visit the site & it was agreed this be accepted on a mutually convenient date.

19. POLLUTION WATCH

It was noted that the PC had registered with Anglian water to be involved with this project. The decision had been driven by the fact that there was a sewerage works at the Creek. It was not yet known what form the PC involvement would take.

20. CHANGES TO LOCAL POLICING

IA gave a resumé of the meeting he had attended on 31 March & explained the proposed changes to local policing & the Safer Neighbourhood Team. The team would still be led by Sgt Peter Street but with a much reduced workforce. But Suffolk now has more police staff although not all are visible to the public as they may be dealing with issues such as the ever-increasing cyber crime.

IA commented that the Police & Crime Commissioner Tim Passmore hoped to be re-elected in the election on 5 May as he understood the role so much more now & felt he could contribute much more to the role than when he was first elected.

21. BROADBAND UPDATE

In response to an article in the local press, the SCC Programme Manager had confirmed that everything was going to plan, and they expected to publish the rollout plan in the summer 2016, which would include the previously-discussed plans for Levington.

22. 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.

23. REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS

a. Trees and Church Field warden:

- DI advised Councillors that the repairs to the fence had been completed & removeable panels were included at the locations discussed at a site visit;
- An offer from Elite Tree Services to carry out a free survey was noted. SCDC had confirmed this was a reliable firm. This was noted in case of future need.

b. Village Hall:

- DP reported that the new small tables had been well received;
- Village organisations were being asked what storage they needed in the Hall. The Trustees would then consider how best this could be achieved.

c. Sir Robert Hitcham's Almshouses:

- IA had reported that some exterior painting had been done & the property was looking nicely presented.

d. Local Public Transport:

- PP presented the attached report.

e. Coasts & Heaths:

- Nothing to report

f. Footpaths:

- Nothing to report

g. Nacton Primary School:

- See also item 14 above;
- Nothing further to report.

h. SALC

- IA had attended last Suffolk Coastal area meeting & had provided a report;
- The next meeting would be on 20 June when it was expected Philip Ridley from SCDC planning department would attend.

i. Port Liaison Group

DP gave a brief summary of the meeting held on 28 April 2016. The most significant issues were:

- domestic housing & warehousing development was planned on the Felixstowe peninsular;
- the Port had decided to halt all new quay extensions;
- storms in January & February had had an adverse effect on the Port's business with some ships having to be relocated to the new London Gateway terminal;
- The railway passing loop proposed near the parishes had been reduced in size & would now stretch from Trimley to Grimston Lane. It would be 1.9k in length & would provide for 45 freight trains per day (approx 30 at present). It was thought this would be operational by 2019;
- Bidwells (the land agents) were continuing to manage the number of deer which were damaging crops;
- The minutes would be circulated as soon as they were available.

j. SNT

- See item 20 above. Nothing further to report.

The formal business of the meeting was declared closed at 10:30pm.

Approved by:

Date

POINTS FROM POST-MEETING VILLAGE FORUM:

- It was reported that Scotts Research Station were experiencing problems with deer which were an increasing problem for local businesses & householders; IA would talk to the manger of Home Farm Nacton to discuss how further culling could help control numbers whilst still retaining a sufficiently large gene pool;
- Nelson Potter of Bentley could supply a gate suitable for Church Field;
- DL thanked Bob Hardwick for agreeing to continue as Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator & for seeding the border opposite the Church, with IA.