

# LEVINGTON AND STRATTON HALL PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDS 7 SEPTEMBER 2016 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');  
Parish Clerk: Marian Rose ('MR');  
County Councillor Patricia O'Brien ('PO');  
District Councillor Susan Harvey ('SH');  
No members of the public.

The Chairman opened the meeting by publicly acknowledging the efforts of the Clerk following the demise of her PC lap top computer. He also thanked her husband for his help with setting up the PC's other computer for her use. His sentiments were echoed by the other councillors.

- **VILLAGE FORUM**

There were no comments.

- **SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

PO attended & presented the attached report.

She added that the devolution appeared to be going ahead with Norfolk & Suffolk in favour though Cambridgeshire were still not supporting the proposal.

IA commented on the policing issues mentioned in her report, saying that he felt the Police & Crime Commissioner had done as much as he could.

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

SH attended & presented the attached report.

DL thanked her for her support for the Community Enabling Grant claimed for treatment of the Village Hall floor, which had been confirmed earlier in the day.

She agreed to ascertain if any storage cabinets might become available from the DC's imminent move to new premises.

At this point DL opened a planning meeting to consider application number DC16/3283 re storage land on the Old Felixstowe Road. This meeting was minuted separately.

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

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr James Ramsay owing to a close family bereavement.

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

PP & IA declared non-financial interests re item 8b as a member of both the Church congregation & the Friends of St Peters.

3. **TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF  
28 JUNE 2016**

The draft minutes presented, with two minor amendments, were approved & signed as a correct record.

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

- Item 9: It was noted that, at Levington Flower show, DL had presented the gifts to 3 members of the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday commemoration team ('HMQ90') who were present, expressing thanks on behalf the villagers & the PC. This had been well received by the recipients & the audience. He had since delivered the gifts to the remaining members of the team.

**5. TO CONSIDER THE APPOINTMENT OF A NEW PARISH CLERK & RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER**

Two villagers had originally applied for this post although one had since withdrawn her application. The current Clerk & many Councillors had met the remaining applicant, Lucy Buckle, to explain the role. Councillors felt she appeared to be a very capable & personable young woman who could fulfil the role & it was agreed that she be asked to accept the appointment with effect from 1 October 2016.

The salary level was agreed at the rate suggested by SALC who had been given a copy of the job description – SCP20 scale rate of ££9.99 per hour. It was also agreed that the salary rate for the current Clerk should be increased to this level with effect from 20 July 2016, the date of SALC's advisement, as set out in a paper produced by DL & provided to all Councillors.

DL would write to Lucy accordingly. He was thanked for his considerable efforts to research & draft the necessary employment documents. It was noted that the new contract would need to be issued by the end of November 2016.

It was agreed that Lucy & Marian would work in tandem for a short time until Lucy had undertaken her training & was more familiar with the work. Marian was happy to remain in touch to help for as long as necessary to ensure a smooth transition.

It was also agreed that a third party payroll service such as SALC should be used & the logistics of this would be investigated to ensure this could be operated effectively before confirming their appointment.

**6. PLANNING**

The following was noted:

- DC16/2207/AGO – *Walk Farm Buildings - Switch Room:*  
SCDC had confirmed that planning permission was not required for this application;
- DC16/2314/FUL – *17 Red House Walk, Levington - carport*  
SCDC had refused planning permission on 17 August for same reasons given for the first application;
- DC16/2384 – *Wyncroft, Bridge Road – front extension:*  
SCDC had approved this 2 August;
- DC16/1189 – *land on old A45 – erection of storage building/workshop:*  
This application had apparently been withdrawn in favour of DC 16/3283 – see separate item on agenda above.

- *DC15/4107 - Solar Farm at Walk Farm, Stratton Hall - time extension*  
Nothing more had been heard from SALC regarding the community benefit payment & it was agreed that they should be asked for an update.
- *World of Planning event 14 July 2016:*  
DL & IA had attended this & a report had been provided to Councillors. This was noted & it was agreed that they would carefully review the Local Plan coming out of strategic review in Spring 2017.
- *Non heritage assets:*  
Reference to this had been included on DL's report above. It was also noted that the PC had suggested that Red House Walk & the Canon be included in a list of non-heritage assets. However it was now evident that SCDC had not gone ahead with the plan. It was agreed this matter be left in abeyance.
- *SCDC scheme of delegation*  
There was still no news on the review of the procedure.

## 7. FINANCE REPORT

The following were noted:

- (a) the External audit had been completed & the relevant section of the Annual Return signed. Councillors accepted their audit certificate.  
As required, the formal Notice of the Conclusion of Audit had been published on the website & on the notice board.
- (b) Bank balances as at 31 August 2016 (reconciled to bank statements);
  - Current account: £4,017;
  - Deposit account: £6,292;
- (c) the following income, received since the meeting of 28 June 2016, was noted:
  - £200 from Adnams for flower seeds;
  - £28 from 3 villagers who purchased HMQ90 mugs;
  - £20 from Norse in appreciation for litter picking;
- (d) the following income, anticipated before the next meeting, was noted:
  - £3,050 - precept 2<sup>nd</sup> instalment;
  - c£12 - Newsletter subscriptions;
  - £660 – Community Enabling Grant for Village Hall floor treatment;
  - £500 - Locality Budget 2016/17, if claimed (see item 8 re projects);
  - £15,000 - Community Benefit Payment from Lightsource, if claimed (see agenda item 5 above);
- (e) the following payments, made since meeting of 28 June & approved at that mtg and/or budgetted, were noted:
  - Clerk's Salary & Expenses from 1 May – 26 June £531.43 (net of tax) including expenses;
  - HMRC re PAYE £123.78;
  - Pat Pryke £105.35 re July newsletters;
  - SALC: training for Clerk 18/4 £30;
  - Chown China £47.93 for 6 HMQ90 mugs for gifts to HMQ90 team;

- James Golding (The Ship) £44.94 for 6 bottles prosecco for gifts to HMQ90 team;
  - Brightwell, Foxhall & Purdis PC £20 for DL & IA to attend Public Nuisance course;
  - Norfolk Assn Local Councils £50 Employment seminar (DL attended);
  - Information Commissioner £35 for data protection renewal;
  - Ian Angus £35.88 for dog bin bags.
- (f) the following payments due to be made before next meeting were approved:
- Clerk's Salary & Expenses from 27 June – 31 Aug £296.69 (net of tax) inc exps
  - HMRC re PAYE £72.36;
  - BDO £120 for External audit;
  - Pat Pryke c.£105 re Sep newsletter;
  - DC Construction Ltd £792 for Hall floor treatment (inc VAT) (net cost covered by Community Enabling Grant);
  - SALC: training for new Clerk £120.00;
  - Came & Co re insurance £305.33 renewal due 1 Oct 16;
  - D Long re poppy wreath c£15;
  - New lap top for Clerk & associated software c £700;
  - PC Doctor £40 for work done following Clerk's laptop failure.

It was noted that there may be further items for payment under agenda item 8 ( projects);

(g) Councillors reviewed the attached finance schedule showing the year to date results against budget. This appeared satisfactory.

## 8. PROJECTS

### a. *Gate to Church Field:*

DL summarised the position to date, as previously notified to Councillors, explaining that, following the site visit, he had obtained an estimate from the PC's usual contractor for £400 but he suggested that the budget for this should be £500 to include a margin for the necessary associated groundworks.

It was then necessary to consider how this project could be funded. JB reported that the HMQ90 team had made a surplus of £600 from the street party & would make this available for this project. As full funding was therefore assured, it was therefore agreed that DL would contact the contractor immediately for the work to commence as soon as he was able to do so.

### b. *Churchwarden's request to site the Church notice-board at Trickers Wood:*

IA outlined the Churchwardens' reasons for wanting to move their notice board to outside the Churchyard:

- to make it open for non Church-goers to read notices;
- to make it easier & safer to stand & read (they felt the current site could be slippery & that crossing the road at that point could be hazardous).

He added that they would almost certainly move the notice board to an alternative site even if they were refused permission to place it against Trickers Wood.

In discussion, Councillors comments included:

- some felt the road was not so dangerous as to be difficult to cross at that point, while others noted that traffic had increased in numbers & in speed;
- the notice board is the responsibility of the Church & should remain on Church land as there was sufficient room for it within the Churchyard;

- reservation that in the long term there could be a dispute over which organisation was responsible for the upkeep of the notice board with a wish to ensure that future Councillors would not be asked to maintain it;
  - desire to keep Trickers Wood ‘natural looking’.
- There was a suggestion that the matter be put to villagers but this was rejected as the PC was responsible for Trickers Wood.
- A vote was held with a close majority in favour of refusing the Churchwarden’s request. The Clerk was asked to write to them accordingly.

*c. Refurbishment of parish notice-boards:*

A quotation of £535 had been obtained from a reliable locally known contractor to undertake the work. After a brief discussion it was agreed that the quotation be accepted. It was also agreed that a claim be submitted to SCC for this sum to be provided through PO’s Locality Budget (‘the LB’). The go ahead for the work would not be given until it was confirmed that the LB would cover this cost. The Clerk was authorised to submit the grant claim.

*d. New laptop computer for Clerk*

As mentioned above, the computer used by the current Clerk had recently suffered an irrecoverable failure. She was temporarily using the spare lap top held for general use.

A new laptop with appropriate software was required imminently & it was agreed that this be purchased as soon as possible. The likely cost of £700 would be funded from reserves. DP was authorised to research & order suitable equipment. He would ask the new Clerk for her preferences for size of screen etc before making the purchase.

**9. BROADBAND UPDATE**

An update from Suffolk Better Broadband (‘SBB’) had been received & revealed the post codes to be covered by the new cabinet at the Village hall, by March 2017. It was noted that not all postcodes in the two parishes were included. SBB had reported that a reliable view of the coverage & timescales for our parishes was still not available & had invited the PC to contact them in two months’ time for a further update.

**10. LOCAL HIGHWAYS ISSUES UPDATE**

An update on outstanding issues had been received from Malcolm King at SCC. He had reported that funding was an issue for them with non urgent matters taking longer than expected to be dealt with. He promised to update the PC further when any progress had been made.

**11. UK POWER NETWORK UPDATE**

*(a) New telephone number:*

It was noted that, on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2016, a new national phone number “105” was to be launched by electricity network operators for customers to call should they need to report or get information about a power cut in their area. It was agreed that the key points be cascade to villagers via the newsletter.

*(b) Critical Friends Panel*

MR had acted as the liaison with UK Power Networks since the St Jude Storm & was a member of their *Critical Friends Panel*. This was not a role the Clerk would normally be expected to do & IA agreed to take over this role & would attend their meetings on behalf of the PC.

**12. SCDC ENABLING COMMUNITIES EVENT**

IA attended this event on 19 July & Councillors formally received his report.

**13. IPSWICH TIDAL BARRIER VISIT**

It was noted that 4 Councillors & the Clerk had accepted the Environment Agency's invitation to visit the Ipswich tidal barrier on 11<sup>th</sup> August 2016. It had proved to be an extremely interesting visit. It was again confirmed that this extra flood defence would have no impact on Levington or Stratton Hall.

**14. SCDC DEVOLUTION**

IA had attended an event on behalf of the PC on 21 July 2016. His report was formally received.

**15. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMUNITY ACTION SUFFOLK**

The PC had been invited to accept free membership of this organisation. JR has kindly said he would be willing to act as the lead Councillor on this, should it be required. It was agreed that the invitation to join be accepted.

**16. 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 particularly noted in particular:

- litter in Old Felixstowe Road layby: IA had reported the issue to Norse & had updated the complainant accordingly. He had also copied in Nacton PC & the Orwell Park Estate for their information'
- there had been no report of any residents meeting Thérèse Coffey MP at her recent flying visit;
- just prior to the meeting, a thank you card had been received from Caroline Young – member of the HMQ90 team – in response the gift each had received from the PC;
- a letter of congratulations had been sent to Scotts in recognition of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Levington compost brand;
- concern expressed by a resident about a cold caller: she had been advised to notify the police of her concerns.

**17. REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS**

**a. Trees and Church Field warden:**

- IA reported that he would ask a resident for assistance with clearing the bramble patch in Pilots Way;
- DL confirmed that it was planned that the work identified as necessary during in an inspection earlier in the year would be undertaken in the Autumn.

**b. Village Hall:**

DP reported:

- the corner of the path leading up to the Hall was to be modified;
- the Hall floor had been re-treated (& was to be paid for by the PC with the CE grant).

IA suggested the litter bins could be stored away from the front of the Hall as they detracted from the pleasing frontal view of the Hall.

**c. Sir Robert Hitcham's Almshouses:**

- The Trustees' financial summary for the year to 30 April 2016 was noted.

**d. Local Public Transport:**

- PP had nothing to report as the local service continued to work well.

**e. Coasts, Heaths & Footpaths**

i. *Stour and Orwell Forum*

DL & IA had attended. Their report was noted.

ii. *Stour & Orwell Estuaries Management Strategy*

It was noted that the relevant documents were now available on the Stour & Orwell page of the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB website:

iii. *Footpath signposts:*

The Clerk had reported a missing signpost at the bottom of Bunnifers Hill on Nacton Road to SCC Rights of Way team in March 2016 butn iyt had not yet been re-stated;

The sign at the river path had also been reported;

iv. *Wasps nest in the hedge tunnel off Tankards Meadow:*

IA confirmed he had had this dealt with.

v. *Water/orchid meadow path:*

Clerk has had a complaint from a Trimley resident asking if the PC could do anything to get this cut as it was apparently impassable. DP had previously reported this to SCC thus no further action was deemed necessary.

**f. Nacton Primary School:**

- Nothing to report (school holiday until 5 September).

**g. SALC**

- The next area meeting was to take place on 19 September 2106, which IA would attend. The main speaker was to be the SCDC planning manager, Philip Ridley. SALC had requested that questions for him be submitted in advance. Councillors chose not to submit any questions.

**h. Port Liaison Group**

- The next meeting was planned for 6 October. DP & PP would attend.

**i. Police SNT**

- Newsletters were now accessed via the website & had been circulated to Councillors, when available but were still slow in being made available;
- Councillors were aware of a resident's complaint that it had taken several minutes for a 999 call to be answered. IA reported that the police were trying to get a form of triage system in place to help prioritise calls as only 1/3 of calls were for the police.

**The formal business of the meeting was declared closed at 10:25pm.**

**Approved by:**

**Date**

**POINTS FROM POST-MEETING VILLAGE FORUM:**

- None