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# LEVINGTON AND STRATTON HALL PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 5<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2017 at 7:15pm

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**Present:** Councillors: David Long (Chairman)('DL'); David Pryke (Vice-Chairman) ('DP'); Pat Pryke ('PP'); John Bailey ('JB') Ian Angus ('IA'), Andrew Abram ('AA') – Parish Clerk: Jane O'Hear (JO) Outgoing Parish Clerk Lucy Buckle ('LB') – until 8.30. SCC Councillor 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*.

- **COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

At Full Council on 20<sup>th</sup> July SCC adopted its new Strategic Priorities document. This outlines SCCs priorities for the next four years building on the Conservative manifesto from the recent CC elections in May. At its core are three principles – inclusive growth, health care and wellbeing, efficient and effective public services.

Every four years any council is required to appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel to look at and report on the Allowance Scheme for Councillors. SCC voted to accept the proposals made by the Independent Remunerations Panel, to increase allowances for the Cabinet, Deputy Leader and Leader. The Panel recommended no change to the level of basic allowance for county councillors. The increase for Leader, Deputy and Cabinet has been met by savings and will have no overall effect upon the budget.

I was re-elected as Chairman of the Police and Crime Panel at its meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> July. The meeting focused on: road safety, update on Local Policing Review and speed watch schemes. Road safety is a major issue and areas discussed included: enforcement of speeding fines, drug related driving; 20mph speed enforcement; urban community speed-watch schemes. Questions regarding the Local Policing Review centred on: police recruitment, delivery of the Police & Crime Plan objectives, communication, a most vital area; response to 999/101 calls.

There has been improvement in both GCSE O and A level results.

Suffolk CC Highways have been re-structured and as of 4<sup>th</sup> Sept. a new system has been put in place. To report defects <https://highwaysreporting.suffolk.gov.uk> or phone 0345 606 6171.

Free school travel has been adjusted and only those attending the nearest school will be able to benefit. Those attending a school that is not the nearest will no longer benefit from free travel. Free travel will remain available for those with individual needs and from low income families.

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- **DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

I hope you have had a good summer.

The most important item is the 10 week consultation on the Issues and Options for the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Review. All comments need to be in by 30th October. Now is the time to have your say on the future of your area. For once there is some joined up thinking as Suffolk Coastal, Ipswich, Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils are all at a similar stage and are working together.

East Suffolk Tourism Strategy generates £0.5 billion of economic value and accounts for 13% of the total employment in the 2 Districts.

The Tour of Britain will be coming through Kesgrave, Woodbridge, Melton, Wickham Market before finishing in Aldeburgh on 8th September.

The Beach Hut Review has taken place and this time there have been discussions with the Hut Owners Association. There are 916 existing beach huts in Felixstowe and Sizewell and they are all on a licence system. This is due to be discussed at Cabinet early in September. I have had an input and I am hoping that what is decided will be a much better solution than that offered previously. The consultation has been listened to.

Disabled Facilities Grants. There are to be amendments to the policy which will help these applications to be dealt with more speedily. This will benefit those who really need them.

The Deben Leisure centre has now closed for refurbishment which will take 10 months. There will be a new spacious Gym and a health suite which will feature a steam room, sauna and ice room. During the refurbishments, there will be a slight loss of car parking.

Have your say on Dog Controls. Public are being urged to have their say on proposed changes to dog controls and introduce Public Space Orders. To take part in this consultation visit

[www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/environment/environmental-protection/animals/dog-control/public-space-protection-orders](http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/environment/environmental-protection/animals/dog-control/public-space-protection-orders)

Comments should be in by Friday 22 September 2017.

## **MAIN MEETING:**

**The Parish Council ('the PC') meeting was declared open at 7.25pm.**

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

James Ramsay ('JR')  
SCDC Cllr. Harvey,  
DL welcomed AA to his first full PC meeting.

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

*Declarations of interest were:*

DL – Planning Application: Driftway (Item 7); PP – Community Speedwatch (Item 10); IA – Non Pecuniary interest in View over Church Field (Item 12)

### **3. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 5th July 2017 AND THE MEETING OF 25<sup>th</sup> JULY 2017**

The draft minutes for both meetings 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**

The Chairman thanked outgoing Clerk LB for her excellent contribution to Levington and Stratton PC and welcomed new Clerk and RFO JO.

LB thanked the parish councillors for their support during her tenure and then left the meeting at

## **6. FINANCE**

- External Audit – The Clerk reported that the Conclusion of Audit certificate has not yet been received
- Insurance – The Clerk had circulated the renewal notification plus 3 quotes for cover from October 1<sup>st</sup> to all councillors for review ahead of the meeting. Subject to the proposed amount meeting the insurance category in the 2017-18 budget, it was agreed by all that the Clerk should formally accept the quote from Ecclesiastical offering 3 years cover at a fixed annual rate of £300.37 including insurance premium tax.
- DL updated the meeting on his progress with Barclays regarding the change of Clerk/RFO details in order to facilitate JO's access to the parish council bank account statements. To date he is waiting for a response to his letter of request.

(a) Review of finances for the month end July 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) Bank balances at 31 July 2017 (reconciled to bank statements to 31 July 17);

- Current account: £5,026.08
- Deposit account: £6,568.67

(c) Income since meeting of 5<sup>th</sup> July 17 - Zero

Payments made since meeting of 5<sup>th</sup> July 17:

- Clerk's Salary to 30/06/17 (net of tax) £399.69
- HMRC £245.20
- Clerks expenses £6.75
- July Newsletter & stamps £94.50
- Datacom £35.00
- Parish Noticeboards £535.00

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

- (LB) Clerk telephone calls and paper expenses £6.75
- (LB) Clerk's salary & homeworker allowance £233.55
- (JO) Clerk's salary & home worker allowance £339.00
- (HB Crisp) Clerk's Copy paper & notepad £7.99 (VAT £1.33)
- (HMRC) Income Tax Quarter Ending 05/10/17 £469.40

## **7. PLANNING**

- The Planning Committee had met and approved proposed alterations at Heath Cottages IP10 OLS including 2 storey side and rear extension.
- Notification of approved application for removal of row of sycamore trees between The Driftway and Barrack Row, Rackhams Farm, Church Lane, Levington
- IA advised that the application regarding 4 New Cottages had been withdrawn prior to resubmission.

## **8. CONSULTATION ON REVISED LOCAL PLAN**

DL submitted an introductory report on the SCDC consultation documents. It was agreed to hold a formal Parish Council meeting in October and DP advised he would follow up on obtaining hard copies of the full plan and a large area map. He asked the Clerk to make a written request for these - plus to check Village Hall availability in October. DP and JB would attend inter-parish meetings, and report back, especially in relation to Innocence Farm, for which SCDC will be crucial

The large extent of proposed land for development was noted. JB thought local residential development would be preferable and pointed out that the proposed plan area is as big as Tilbury which means additional railways and other infrastructure will also be required. Consideration was given to Jack Kade's (Kirton PC) suggestion that all local PC's comment on the impact of air quality at Innocence Farm if the proposed plan goes ahead, and it was agreed not to do this at this time.

## 9. SOLAR FARM AT WALK FARM

Following JR's report on his approaches to local solicitors for legal support, it was agreed that he should progress contact with Birketts. In response to JB's enquiry, LB confirmed that the PC was still eligible for financial support. DP agreed to look into how successfully other PCs have achieved similar support from local law firms. Agreed JR should press on with Birketts regarding options and estimates and to see if the firm would work pro bono. Progress will then be reviewed at the November meeting.

## 10. PROJECTS

- **Drainage system on Bridge Road**

Matt Williams from Suffolk Highways is now actively following up on improving the drainage around Bridge Road by installing an appropriate additional pipe. Following his request, DL has forwarded relevant contact details for local landowners.

- **Village Pedestrian Gate**

So that he can improve the levels of the gate and bench in relation to the path, IA has been offered a donation of topsoil from McNichols and it was agreed he should accept it. The topsoil will be delivered to the site and IA will carry out the necessary work – he is hopeful that one delivery load will be sufficient. Once the levels are correct, the positioning can be adjusted as required.

- **Website**

IA has had an offer from a local resident to upgrade the PC website *probono*. DP expressed concern about leaving SALC-approved onesuffolk. It was agreed that IA will arrange a review meeting with the resident and Parish Council in October to explore his suggestion more fully. The Parish Clerk has experience of moving a PC website to an alternative provider and she will also attend.

- **Broadband**

In view of the considerable and ongoing variation in the quality of broadband supply within Levington and Stratton Hall, the Clerk contacted Better Broadband to request direct contact details for a relevant technically competent member of staff. Unfortunately, BB will only provide a general email address for any enquiries, which is clearly unsatisfactory. The matter was raised with local MP Therese Coffey during her recent short visit to Levington and she promised to look into the issue and report back. It was agreed to wait for her response before looking for any other way to follow up

- **Community Speedwatch**

A report was received on CSW.

PP emphasised that CSW is firstly an educational system. However, despite the police being keen, she would not support its implementation in Redhouse Walk. She believes Bridge Rd and Church Lane would be better locations.

It was noted that speeding traffic does however go past Redhouse Walk from the other direction and that it is important to define whether CS is punitive or educational – (noting that educational approaches work) and to be clear about what information is collected, who holds it and for what purpose.

IA said he believes CSW is monitored by the police and that it is effective traffic control. Also, he supports “smiley faces” outside the Alms Houses.

Following on from this, support was given to SID type signage for raising speed hazard awareness and catching repeat offenders. As these are potentially expensive, the Clerk will report back on the likely cost and agenda for further discussion at the next meeting.

## 11. BOARDWALK MANAGEMENT

IA reported that it is increasingly overgrown/impassable and this is exacerbated because SCC has outsourced its management to Norse which only cut twice per year. SCC, having been notified of the problem, has agreed to remedy the situation with its contractors.

## **12. VIEWS OVER CHURCH FIELD**

The topic of reduced views from Church Field towards the River Orwell was raised. This situation is due to oak trees maturing in a neighbouring property and it was accepted that the landowner is acting perfectly within his or her rights. Accordingly, there is nothing that the Parish Council can formally do in respect of complaints.

## **13. THERESE COFFEY VISIT TO LEVINGTON**

DL circulated a short report of the MP's visit. It was noted that she was particularly concerned about the "infilling" between Ipswich and Felixstowe. In response to a query regarding Gypsie and Traveller sites, she thought any reference to these would be in the Local Plans, currently out for consultation.

## **14. CORRESPONDENCE**

The following items were referenced and circulated as required:

- Request from Clerk to the Trustees of the alms houses regarding ongoing hazardous rates of increased and speeding traffic. This will be included under the Community Speedwatch item at the November PC meeting.
- Invitation from ES Partnership to Unlocking Potential of Growth Locally at Trinity Park Conference Centre 10/11/2017.
- Notification of Felixstowe Community Transport AGM 11/09/2017.
- Notification received of Scotts Miracle-Gro sale of European and Australian businesses to Exponent Private Equity.
- Response from Highways regarding recently reported potholes opposite Heath Cottages along Felixstowe Rd. These were inspected but action not deemed necessary at this point but would be monitored going forward.

## **15. REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS**

IA circulated the minutes of the Felixstowe & District Tasking Meeting.

DL updated Barn Owl boxes progress - which are now being used by stock doves,

DP reported the cancellation of the Village Hall Meeting

IA confirmed there would be a meeting with residents of the alms houses later in September.

PP shared the Public Transport report and said that Norse was described as very good.

IA reminded the meeting of the forthcoming Coasts and Heaths clear-up on September 15<sup>th</sup>.

IA confirmed that Mrs Ryan has been appointed as the new headteacher at Nacton School.

IA will try and attend the SALC area meeting on 18/09/17.

PP and DP will attend the Port Liaison Group on 5/10/17

The meeting concluded at 9.25pm and members of the public were invited to speak.

- A local resident raised the issue of the continuing inconsistent broadband supply in Levington and stressed the importance of continuing to challenge BT. Another member of the public added that residents should also complain to their individual broadband supplier as she had experienced more progress in improving her broadband speed this way. DP stressed it is also important to keep challenging BT especially in relation to misleading TV advertisements.
- A local resident said that while Speedwatch is good, SID is best. She also observed that despite the consequent loss of views, there may be some local support for the advancing tree growth in Church Field trees as they promote local wildlife habitats.

