

Offton and Willisham Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council EGM held remotely, via Zoom, on Monday 29th March 2021
7pm.

Present: Cllr S Warnes (Chair) Cllr D Cattermole
Cllr A Bye Cllr A Cox
Cllr C Pinson-Roxburgh

Cty Cllr K Oakes
2 members of the public Clerk - T Davis

ACTION

1	<p><u>Meeting Administration</u></p> <p>a) Welcome by Chair and opening of the meeting; The Chair opened the meeting and thanked everyone for coming.</p> <p>b) Apologies for absence; No apologies were sent</p> <p>c) Declarations of Interest; Cllr A Bye & Cllr C Pinson-Roxburgh declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 9a</p>	
2	<p>To Approve the draft minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 1st February 2021 and the EMG held on 9th February 2021 and for the Chairman to sign as a true record</p> <p>a & b) The Chair asked if there were any matters arising from the minutes. No matters arose. <i>It was proposed, seconded, and unanimously agreed for the Chair to sign the minutes as a true record for both meetings.</i></p>	
3	<p>Public Participation Questions and Information</p> <p><i>To hear reports from the County Councillor, District Councillor, and comments from the Public.</i></p> <p>The Chair asked Cty Cllr K Oakes if there was anything to report. Cllr Oakes advised that community testing is to change due to lack of use and that Needham testing centre will close on 16th April. It was speculated that people are preferring home testing. Cllr Oakes also confirmed that 100,000 trees have so far been planted by SCC, and that they were half way off their target in only 5 months. A full report from Cllr Oakes can be found in the addendum.</p> <p>The Chair then asked if the residents would like to speak. One resident asked for an update on if the notice board's were going to be up and running again. It was established that both Willisham notice boards have now been refurbished, both original locks still working. The Chair confirmed that the Offton noticeboard on St Marys Close was in the process of having the lock repaired now that restrictions have been lifted and a volunteer resident had kindly offered to fix it. All notice boards should be up and running by May, however it was noted that this issue would be placed on the agenda for May. It was at this point that the Chair</p>	<u>Clerk</u>

	<p>confirmed that the resident was welcome to be involved in the discussion for item 6.</p> <p>One resident was attending for item 8 and wanted to relay their support for the Quiet Lanes Initiative and to thank Cty Cllr K Oakes for maintaining the momentum on behalf of all parishes when the Parish Council had faced problems. The Council thanked the resident. Cllr Oakes confirmed at this point that Great Bricett were very much onboard with the quiet lane proposals.</p>	
4	<p>Chair Report</p> <p>The Chair confirmed that other than the update on the Quiet Lanes for item 8 no new information had been received.</p>	
5	<p>Clerk report, with mention of emails & correspondence received</p> <p>Since the meeting in February I can confirm that increased feedback has been received from residents regarding the reopening of the telephone box and the bench at Tye Lane and a resident asking about the state of the path in Tye Lane, these are on the agenda.</p> <p>A replacement bench for Tye Lane has been purchased, and the invoice is listed under item 10 for this meeting, we expect delivery to take place in May. We also received a contribution from BMSDC of £650 for this bench in February, following the application to District Cllr D Pratt. The owners of the land have been in contact to advise that the original consent conditions set out 12yrs ago expired in 2019 and this will need to be reviewed. I have invited the landowners to the next parish council meeting of 4th May.</p> <p>I have received news from the SLCC that I have passed my Cilca and will be receiving my formal certificate in approximately two months time. Budgeted payments have been made over February as listed in item 10. I have contacted the landowner regarding the hazardous hole and it has transpired that the hole is caused by a broken drain. This has been reported back to Highways as the drain is theirs for the road. Suffolk Highways Customer Service have confirmed it has been placed in a report and I am currently waiting for an update from Highways. Meanwhile the landowner is keeping the hole open with the temporary cover for access to the drain.</p> <p>I have yet to gain quotes for the new bin for St Marys close, this is next on my list.</p> <p>Following the EGM of 9th February, Two laptops have been purchased by Claydon High School for those pupils in Offton and Willisham Parish Council. The invoice is listed in item 10 and will be paid from the covid-19 emergency grant. The school were incredibly happy to be able to provide these to the students, a thank you letter was sent to councillors.</p> <p>I have had one volunteer so far for the Spring/Summer Tea event.</p> <p>I have received two grant applications for 2021/22 ready for the annual meeting in May.</p> <p>We have not yet had a reimbursement from Suffolk County Council of £68.05 for the litter pick bin bag hoops.</p> <p>Finally, our donated Zoom subscription will come to an end on 10th April 2021. Thank you Cllr D Cattermole for making this possible. For the Zoom</p>	

	<p>meeting of May, I have, with the agreement of the Chair and Vice-Chair (in line with the financial protocol) arranged for a further monthly payment of £11.99 to be made (this might be subject to a small tax as it is outside of the UK) item 10.</p> <p>As we do not have meetings every month, we thought this a more cost effective and seamless way of arranging zoom meetings in the future as the free package would only allow 40mins per meeting, which might be ok for Planning Committee meetings, and we can pay for a month as and when it is needed for full council meetings. The topic of using Zoom for the whole of next year, if at all, will need to be discussed by the Parish Council as a whole. Currently NALC (National Association of Local Councils) is waiting for the government to let us know if virtual meetings will still be legally allowed after 4th May 2021.</p>	
6	<p>To discuss reopening of the telephone box - book share in Offton</p> <p>Discussion took place between councillors and with the volunteer resident who looks after the book share. It was established that most were in favour of reopening at the same time as public libraries on the 12th April. After further discussion on health and safety, and confirmation that the volunteer had all the equipment needed,</p> <p><i>It was Proposed by Cllr C Pinson-Roxburgh, Seconded by Cllr A Bye and unanimously agreed to open when the volunteer considered it safe to do so after the 12th April and for the volunteer to email the clerk.</i></p>	Clerk
7	<p>Resident Request - Path on Tye Lane</p> <p>It was introduced by the Chair that the footpath between bungalows 2 & 3 has been very muddy and 10yrs ago had had road chippings dropped off, which volunteers took to cover the path. Is this something the Council might like to find out if it could be done again.</p> <p>The councillors discussed this matter, highlighting that most areas were experiencing an increase in mud due to the wet nature of the winter and the increase in use due to the pandemic, not just this area. Cllr K Oakes advised that Suffolk Highways were inundated with similar requests due to the wet winter and that this issue is not currently a priority for them and for people to consider things drying out first over the next months before anything is done. Cllr A Cox advised that he uses the footpath ensures that the path is clear of overgrown nettles and grass in his own personal capacity as a private resident. Overall the council felt that nothing should be done at the present time. The Chair advised that this would be relayed to the resident.</p>	Chair
8	<p>To discuss progress with the Quiet Lanes initiative</p> <p>The Chair summarised the current situation with Quiet Lanes, namely that since the application had been given in by Cllr K Oakes in October, the application had been delayed due to miscommunication within SCC however had since been located and processed with the proposed route being a suitable proposal for SCC. A spreadsheet had been sent which needed to be completed by 31st March 2021. The Chair sought confirmation that the Parish Council still wanted to go ahead with the proposed route and that should other councils wish to join the proposal</p>	

	<p>they could do so. It was suggested that Cllr K Oaks would take the lead on this project so that closer communication and collaboration could be organised if needed between parishes. Cllr Oakes was very happy to do this.</p> <p>It was identified that whilst SCC would be carrying the bulk of the cost, parishes would need to have a public consultation, such as a zoom meeting with the information given to Suffolk Highways. In addition to this, a traffic survey might be needed.</p> <p>It was Proposed by Cllr C Pinson-Roxburgh, Seconded by Cllr D Cattermole and unanimously agreed to forward a completed spreadsheet, and for Cllr K Oakes to be the 'lead'.</p>	Clerk
9	<p>Planning - BMSDC Planning Consultation Requested:-</p> <p>a) BMSDC DC/21/01363 Land off, Ipswich Road, Willisham <i>Cllr C Pinson-Roxburgh and Cllr A Bye withdrew from the discussion of this item, as per their declaration of interest.</i></p> <p>The remaining councillors discussed the application. It was confirmed that the last time the site had put forward an application the Parish Council had been in favour, and that the reason for decline by BMSDC had been based on the lack of appropriate access. Since then this application had improved it's access. Councillors felt that the small size of the application was in keeping with the village, would aid local business and enable tourists to explore the countryside.</p> <p>It was Proposed by Cllr S Warnes, Seconded by Cllr D Cattermole and unanimously agreed by the remaining councillors that they remained in favour but would not approve of a larger enterprise on the site.</p>	Clerk
10	<p>Finance <i>The Chair invited withdrawn councillors to come back to the meeting.</i></p> <p>a) Current Bank Balances as at 26th Feb 2021:- Community Account = £4,083.75 Premium Account = £0.34 Premium Savings Account = £9003.52</p> <p>b) Income – BMSDC £650 (for bench)</p> <p>c) To confirm payments made to:- Clerk Wages February - £423.54 SALC (Cllr Training) - £60.00</p> <p>d) To approve payments and authorise cheques for signature Clerk Expenses (stamps and 1mth Zoom) - £19.91 Clerk Office Allowance - £36.00 Clerk Wages March - £352.95 SALC (Payroll) - £54.00 Claydon High School (x2 Laptop donation) - £556.00 No Butts Bin Co Limited (Tye Lane Bench) - £510.00</p> <p>It was Proposed by Cllr A Cox, Seconded by Cllr D Cattermole and unanimously agreed to approve and make the above payments.</p>	Clerk
11	Date of next meeting, the Annual Parish Council meeting on 4th May 2021 at 7pm via Zoom	

Meeting end 7:51pm

Addendum

Cty Cllr K Oakes Report March 2021

Automatic Number Plate Recognition to help improve visits to Suffolk's recycling centres

On 29 January Suffolk County Council announced it will install Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras at its recycling centres.

Alongside the installation of an automatic entry system at its recycling centres, these measures are intended to improve customer experience and plan for future demand.

Suffolk has long held ambitions to Create the Greenest County and the Suffolk 2020 fund, which is a programme of work all about investing in community projects, aims to support the council's climate emergency declaration and improve Suffolk for all residents in years to come.

A booking system was introduced at Suffolk's recycling centres in May 2020 when sites reopened following closure at the start of the first Covid-19 lockdown and saw 14,000 visits per week during the summer. This can rise up to 27,000 per week in normal times, without current social distancing rules.

The project is part of the Suffolk 2020 programme and aims to improve the efficiency at the recycling centres by linking the online booking system with automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) technology and automated entry barriers.

Each of Suffolk County Council's 11 recycling centres had the ANPR technology installed as part of its contract with FCC, who manage and run the sites in Suffolk. The council is now looking to use the technology to further improve the current booking system for residents wishing to visit the centres and make the most of the technological opportunities.

The cameras give an accurate count of vehicle numbers and also record how much time each vehicle is on site. This will allow Suffolk County Council to maximise site availability and to develop new and existing sites to better meet the needs of the increasing population of Suffolk.

Data from the system could also assist in identifying rogue traders fraudulently using the free household waste service to dispose of trade waste. The system also has the facility to link to the DVLA database and identify the type of vehicle and registered keeper details if necessary.

The council will also be working on upgrades to the booking system software to improve the customer experience by making it quicker and easier to make and amend bookings.

Unique Suffolk project to save up to 600,000 tonnes of water each year

On February 2, a new project was announced that would see water normally pumped into Suffolk's River Deben, now being used in a new scheme near Felixstowe.

Each year, hundreds of thousands of tonnes of drainage water which fills land near the river's estuary is pumped away. This pumping process can also damage precious saltmarsh and mudflats, which are important habitats and part of the local ecosystem.

But now, the majority of this water is being carefully pumped inland thanks to an innovative project being led locally by Suffolk County Council, Felixstowe Hydrocycle Ltd, the Environment Agency and University of East Anglia.

The water is being reused by local farmers to irrigate food growing on their land and, in the future, can potentially be used in the public water supply.

In the East of England, new ways to source water are necessary because there is a growing demand for more and more water. This is due to future pressures from climate change, the need to supply demand from housing growth, industrial use and agriculture. But with this growing demand, our natural habitats must remain respected and protected.

Suffolk County Council increases budget to support most vulnerable residents and county's recovery from Covid-19

On February 11, Suffolk County Council agreed its budget for 2021/22.

Following approval of its annual budget, Suffolk County Council is increasing its planned spending once again in 2021/22 to £597.9million, some £41million (7.4%) more than 2020/21.

As part of this, the council will be spending £15.3million to address its ongoing Covid-19 costs, arising from the continuing local response to the pandemic. There are no proposed reductions in council services or personnel in 2021/22.

This year's budget is based on a 12-month financial settlement from government, rather than the 3 or 4 year agreement which is usually offered.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic over the last 11 months or so, the Government has continued to support local authorities as they adapt to serve communities, redeploy staff into alternative specialist roles and see income streams such as business rates and council tax reduce significantly. Suffolk County Council has received around £82.2 million in financial support during 2020 to meet Covid-19 related costs and whilst the challenges of continuing to respond, and in time recover, from Covid-19 remain, significant financial pressures will continue.

The council's income from council tax is going to be £7.9 million less than expected in 2021/22 and this shortfall will be met by using council reserves. Reserves can only be spent once and do not represent a viable long term financial solution. This effective use of reserves is made possible because Suffolk County Council has maintained a consistent approach to managing its finances effectively for a number of years, holding a proportionate level of reserves for this exact situation.

In 2021/22, general Council Tax will rise by 1.99 per cent, which represents an increase of £26.68 for a Band D property, from £1,224.70 in 2020, to £1,251.38. There is also a two per cent rise in the Social Care Precept for the forthcoming year as the council recognises the ongoing challenges with meeting the rising costs and rising demand for adult care services. This means a Band D property will see an overall rise of £53.55 this year for Suffolk County Council's element of their Council Tax bill, from £1,343.61 in 2020-21 to £1,397.16 in 2021-22. It is fair to say that the pandemic this year has also significantly impacted the expected progress of the council's recognised transformation programmes, as it has been absolutely necessary to focus on community resilience. This has included redeploying staff into bespoke roles such as procuring personal protective equipment (PPE) to support Suffolk's care sector and adapting working practices for frontline staff to maintain effective social distancing measures. As a result, the council is expecting a shortfall of around £7.8 million in projected savings for 2021. Whilst this means that further work is needed to identify potential future programmes of work, many of the new ways of working adopted by the council during 2020 because of the pandemic may actually offer potential alternative transformation savings as the organisation continues to adapt and tailor the way it works to deliver services for Suffolk's communities.

As part of the meeting, the council's Business Plan for 2021/22 was approved which draws attention to the ambitions for the authority over the next 12 months and its commitment to four key priorities:

Living with Covid-19 and Suffolk's recovery

Inclusive Growth

Health, Care and Wellbeing

Efficient and Effective Public Services

Throughout the business plan the Council presents its environmental thread demonstrating the range of projects and commitments in place as part of addressing the climate emergency that was declared in 2019. This includes details of the Council setting its Carbon Budget and the related work involved in achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

Highways doubles drainage budget following £27.2m announcement

On February 17 it was announced that Suffolk Highways allocated an extra £2m to support the fight against flooding. Drainage and flooding, Rights of Way bridges and resurfacing of roads in Suffolk have been allocated extra funds for the 2021/22 financial year following Department for Transport's funding announcement. Keen to progress more drainage schemes across Suffolk to support the fight against flooding, Suffolk Highways has allocated an extra £2m – double its current budget allocation – in order to help tackle the worsening flood problems being experienced across the county.

Suffolk Highways also looks set to bolster its resource to support in the repairing or replacement of seven Rights of Way bridges across the county with an additional £800k, whilst committing a further £3.4m to the county's surface dressing programme.

Although the budget is less than the 2020/21 allocation, Suffolk Highways prudently prepared for a decrease and allocated a tentative £21m for the 2021/22 financial year.

16 new COVID-19 rapid testing centres to open in Suffolk

On 19 January it was announced that a further 16 rapid testing centres for COVID-19 were to open in Suffolk, bringing the total number of centres to 28.

The sites are planned to open over the next two weeks in Beccles, Bungay, Halesworth, Southwold, Aldeburgh, Saxmundham, Debenham, Framlingham, Woodbridge, Eye, Holbrook, Needham Market, Elmswell, Hadleigh, Nayland and Brandon - serving more rural communities across the county.

The 28 centres use 'lateral flow' testing to identify people who may have coronavirus but who do not have symptoms. The tests are for people who do not have symptoms of coronavirus and cannot work from home. It's because one in three people with coronavirus do not have symptoms so regular testing is vital in breaking the chain of infection and keeping Suffolk safe.

Suffolk County Council's cabinet confirms its support for Freeport East

On February 23, the cabinet of the county council confirmed its support for the creation of a new Freeport (Freeport East). The Freeport would cover both the ports of Felixstowe and Harwich as part of the Government's aim to create a number of Freeports across the country to drive job creation, investment and international trade post Brexit.

A Freeport includes secure customs zones and tax sites where business can be carried out inside a country's land border, but where different tax and customs rules apply. These rules mean Freeports can potentially reduce administrative burdens and tariff controls, provide relief from duties, import taxes, and ease tax and planning regulations.

Freeport East has several unique aspects which make its bid for Freeport status particularly strong. This includes global and regional connectivity, with 36% of all the UK's container traffic passing through the Port of Felixstowe, unrivalled international connections, particularly with Asia, strong connectivity to the Midlands and the North, thereby supporting the government's "levelling up agenda" in these areas. The bid also stands out as supporting other national objectives such as the development of new technology and the push for clean energy. The Port of Felixstowe has recently won funding to trial a pilot 5G network and has strong research and development links with Cambridge and Essex Universities. There are also strong links with the energy sector and the emerging hydrogen economy.

The Government is due to make its final decision about Freeport status later this year after assessment of all bids received nationwide in March.