

Offton and Willisham Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held remotely, via Zoom, on Monday 5th October 2020
7pm.

Present:	Cllr S Warnes (Chair)	Cllr D Cattermole (Vice Chair)
	Cllr A Rumsey	Cllr A Chaplin
	Cllr A Bye	Cllr C Pinson-Roxburgh
	Cnty Cllr K Oakes	Dst Cllr D Pratt
	1 member 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; Formal apologies were sent by Cllr A Cox and Cllr I Gilson both of which were accepted.</p> <p>c) Declarations of Interest; None</p>	
2	<p>To Approve the draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 21st July 2020, planning committee meetings of 6th and 24th August, and for the Chairman to sign as a true record</p> <p>The Chair asked if there were any matters arising from each of the minutes in turn.</p> <p>a) It was confirmed that apologies were formally sent by Cllr A Chaplin for the 6th August meeting, and this would be corrected.</p> <p>b) None</p> <p>c) None</p> <p><i>It was unanimously agreed for the Chair to sign all minutes as a true record once the correction was made.</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 if the resident wanted to speak at this point or to wait for item 9. The resident was happy to wait.</p> <p>The Chair then invited County Cllr K Oakes to speak. The County Cllr's report can be found in the addendum. It was also confirmed that the Clerk had also forwarded the Quiet Lanes information sent by Cnty Cllr Oakes for item 10.</p> <p>The Chair then asked if District Cllr D Pratt would like to speak. Cllr D Pratt confirmed that he will forward a formal report shortly but mostly wanted to bring to the parish council's attention the Planning White Paper. A short discussion took place highlighting the implications of not currently having a Neighbourhood Plan (NP), influence of the Local Plan (LP) of the District Council and the concerns of being correctly 'banded' following the changes set out in the White Paper. Cllr C Pinson-Roxburgh advised that he had contacted MP D Poulter, who had said that the White Paper would be protecting villages such as Offton and Willisham. Cllr D Pratt offered to look into things further. It was then established by the Chair that a further discussion on the matter may be needed and</p>	

	<p>that the Clerk would email all Councillors to establish if a planning committee meeting was to take place at a later date.</p> <p>It was at this point that Cllr D Pratt asked for feedback on the District Council's intention to increase the biodiversity of the Offton Village Green in St Mary's Close. Currently the green is mown. A short discussion took place in regard to having wild meadow around trees and in the centre. Cllr D Pratt was happy to take this input back to District Council.</p>	
4	<p>Chair Report</p> <p>The Chair took this opportunity to thank those residents and Councillors who took part in the Litter Pick in both Offton & Willisham. Cllr Pinson-Roxburgh advised that there was a tyre and a car wheel that he was having difficulty in getting to be collected. The Chair offered to contact the relevant dept in District to sort this out. Cllr Pinson-Roxburgh also took this opportunity to report that he now had an increase in regular litter pickers for Offton throughout the year and asked if it was possible to obtain hoops for refuse bags to make it easier in poor weather conditions when picking. Cnty Cllr Oakes advised that this was not possible, but offered to forward details to the Clerk on where to purchase the hoops, which the Cnty Cllr then offered to reimburse. All Cllrs were very happy with this.</p> <p>The Chair then went on to report attendance to the SALC area forum where the election for vice chair and chair had taken place. The main topic of discussion at the forum was the encouragement of diversity.</p>	
5	<p>Clerk Report</p> <p>Since the last meeting I have moved home, therefore I have notified relevant bodies of a change of address and have a redirection of mail in place for the next 10mths. A letter has been written to the bank (attaching the correct form) to ask for a change of address to be made to each account, along with a request for information on setting up a standing order and mentioning that we have had no formal reply regarding our complaint, I have placed it as item 18 for you to discuss. The standing order request is to save time and costs incurred for our signatuees signing cheques and posting them each month during the current covid-19 situation.</p> <p>Following a request from one of the Cllrs, I have gained insight from SALC on agendas and correspondence. An email detailing this was sent to all Cllrs and I would like to request updated guidance on what emails to send out to Cllrs, this is item 6.</p> <p>I have placed items carried over from the last meeting on the agenda, should any Cllr not be ready to present their findings, please advise the Chair who might feel it best to move the item to the next meeting.</p> <p>Antisocial behaviour was reported by a number of residents by telephone and email, and they have been referred to our District Councillor, Dr D Pratt, the reporting webpage for BMSDC, as well as our local police.</p> <p>The Public's right to view the accounts and audit findings were published on 13th August on each noticeboard. Unfortunately the website was down at this time, due to a potential security risk that was identified by our website providers. This has now been rectified. A new lock also had to be sourced for</p>	

	<p>the Offton Noticeboard by St Mary's close that day. Thankfully, Cllr D Cattermole kindly replaced the lock and all documents were put up in a time.</p> <p>Two planning committee meetings have been held, the minutes are due for approval this evening.</p> <p>The Litter Pick had both Willisham and Offton volunteers and I would like to offer thanks to both Cllr Warnes and Cllr Pinson-Roxburgh for organising a covid-19 safe environment and being so flexible to help throughout the litter pick week.</p> <p>Pay increases for existing pay scales for 2020 have now been agreed by NALC. As it is coming up to my 2nd yr and I will hopefully starting the Cilca in October, I have placed this as part of a larger discussion as item 11.</p> <p>I have had an email from a resident requesting information on if the senior citizens Christmas lunch will take place. I have placed this as item 12 in the agenda.</p> <p>A resident telephoned to report that the Willisham noticeboard was damaged in the high winds. The doors were collected by Cllr Warnes for safe keeping. Having found no local companies, I have emailed links to Councillors on obtaining a new noticeboard from three different companies (without purchasing new posts), and have also obtained a claim form from the insurance company should the Cllrs see fit to place a claim. Cllr Cox has also offered to contact a local joiner to see if just the doors can be replaced. I have placed this as item 13</p> <p>A resident emailed to advise about a property in Willisham, this has been referred to BMSDC.</p> <p>I have forwarded an email from BMSDC regarding trees and hedgerows, this has been requested to be placed on the agenda as item 14.</p> <p>The remainder of the Precept has been paid, this will show on the 2nd quarter account review and placed on the next agenda in December. Due to the date of this meeting, and having not yet received the bank statement for September, the 2nd quarter accounts will also be on the next agenda.</p> <p>I have carried out an asset check for this year, the results of this were forwarded to all Cllrs and has been placed as item 15.</p> <p>I have drafted a 3yr budget for completion as set out in the business plan and have emailed to all councillors for you to discuss at item 19</p> <p>The Website Accessibility Statement has been drafted and emailed to all Cllrs, it is based on the government guidance found at gov.uk and this is item 20. I have been unable to attend the SALC Website Accessibility live webinar, but a recorded one will be available soon.</p> <p>As part of our ongoing commitment to meet new Data Protection Regulations, I have drafted a Data Retention Policy for you to discuss at item 21.</p> <p>Finally, in light of the cumulative impact of covid-19 since March on the normal running of the Parish Council, I would like to ask that the existing policies we have for review on the business plan are moved to an annual review at the next</p>	
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	annual meeting to ensure we are up-to-date each year. IF this is ok, I will amend the business plan to reflect this. I have placed this as item 22.	
6	<p>To discuss current policy of Emailing all Emails to Cllrs A discussion took place in respect of suggestions put forward by the Clerk of what needed to be emailed, how and why, along with confirmation of what would now be listed on the agenda. It was confirmed that Cllrs were happy for the Clerk to use discretion and that when emailing, a ‘traffic light’ approach would be welcomed.</p> <p>In addition, no list’s of correspondence received were to be placed on the agenda, unless pertaining to an item on the agenda, where it would be listed for data protection, or mentioned in the Clerk report. A Publication Policy will be drafted so that the public know how they can gain access to any public documentation the Parish Council hold.</p> <p>It was Proposed by Cllr S Warnes, Seconded by Cllr D Cattermole and unanimously agreed to adopt this new procedure.</p>	Clerk
7	<p>To discuss supporting The Local Electricity Bill Cllr A Chaplin asked if this item could be deferred to the next meeting. The Chair agreed to do this.</p>	Cllr A Chaplin
8	<p>To discuss Mobile phone signal strength update Unfortunately Cllr N Bunton, dealing with this item, was not in attendance. The Chair moved this item to the next meeting. Cllr Pinson-Roxburgh wanted to confirm that other residents were waiting for updates on this and wanted to confirm their support.</p>	Cllr N Bunton
9	<p>To discuss Offton Telephone Library Re-Opening The Chair encouraged the resident to take part in this discussion. The discussion looked at the need, how it was to be used and took into account the continuing uncertainty and new increases in the virus currently going on. It was agreed by all to keep the Telephone Box closed until the spring. A revisit to the item would be made in March 2021.</p>	Clerk
10	<p>To discuss ‘Quiet Lanes’ The Chair advised that Ringshall PC was looking into the potential of making Offton Road / Holly Lane into a ‘quiet lane’. A discussion took place between Councillors and Cnty Cllr Oakes, it was established that ‘Quiet lanes’ was an initiative to encourage other modes of transportation to be used down these lanes. eg: Cycling and people walking. It was not statutory, no speed limits would be changed, it had to be on a road with less than 1,000 vehicles a day, it was just to bring awareness to drivers of cars and lorries, that other users were on this road. This encouragement would be mostly by signage and publicity. To gain funding for a nominated road you would need a champion, and you needed to register by 30th November. The Chair was happy to liaise with Ringshall PC and advise that Offton & Willisham had no objection to their plans, should they decide to go ahead.</p>	Chair

<p>11</p>	<p>To discuss current pay scale and hours of the Parish Clerk A discussion took place about the current hours, the new NALC pay scales and the current experience of the Clerk. It was also established that the Clerk was to undertake the Cilca in the next few months, and that it was recommended by SALC that some of the hours of study be paid for. The Chair advised that the minimum pay scale normally offered to a new Clerk ranged from SCP 7 to SCP 9. The Clerk was asked what hours would be needed for normal work and study. The Clerk advised that an average of 8hrs a week should be sufficient. The Clerk also advised that as this was only a small parish, a token gesture to cover study hours would only be necessary, if only to confirm the PC wanted the clerk to gain the qualification.</p> <p>It was Proposed by Cllr D Cattermole, Seconded by Cllr C Pinson-Roxburgh and unanimously agreed to increase hrs to 9 until February 2021, by which time the Cilca would have ended, the hours would then be revisited.</p> <p>It was Proposed by Cllr D Cattermole, Seconded by Cllr A Rumsey and unanimously agreed to increase the pay scale to SCP 9.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>												
<p>12</p>	<p>To discuss the annual Senior Citizens Christmas Lunch In light of the covid-19 outbreak now beginning to increase again, it was deemed prudent to postpone the Christmas Lunch. It was also highlighted that no new people were coming forward to help this year, as the organiser is now standing down after many years of service. The Chair suggested that this be an item on the agenda in March, so that possible alternatives of the event can be discussed.</p> <p>It was also concluded that a formal letter of thanks was sent to the organiser for all their efforts over the years.</p>	<p>Clerk Clerk</p>												
<p>13</p>	<p>To discuss the Willisham Noticeboard The Clerk had provided quotes for a replacement Noticeboard, and Cllr A Cox had provided quotes for the repair and replacement of doors. Cllr A Cox had also offered to fit the doors and replace the backing.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="336 1384 1284 2063"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="336 1384 651 1447">Company</th> <th data-bbox="651 1384 970 1447">Price Quoted</th> <th data-bbox="970 1384 1284 1447">Notes</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="336 1447 651 1675">Greenbarnes</td> <td data-bbox="651 1447 970 1675">£2,159.24 & £1,857.36</td> <td data-bbox="970 1447 1284 1675">As New, would need to be fitted, one from recycled material (£2159.24). Has two doors, is a different size to original.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="336 1675 651 1877">Noticeboard Co. (online)</td> <td data-bbox="651 1675 970 1877">From £545 excl VAT</td> <td data-bbox="970 1675 1284 1877">Not bespoke, not guaranteed to fit on existing posts, no doors (all window opens).</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="336 1877 651 2063">Wonderwall (online)</td> <td data-bbox="651 1877 970 2063">From £416.40 Incl VAT</td> <td data-bbox="970 1877 1284 2063">Not bespoke, not guaranteed to fit on existing posts, no doors (all window opens).</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Company	Price Quoted	Notes	Greenbarnes	£2,159.24 & £1,857.36	As New, would need to be fitted, one from recycled material (£2159.24). Has two doors, is a different size to original.	Noticeboard Co. (online)	From £545 excl VAT	Not bespoke, not guaranteed to fit on existing posts, no doors (all window opens).	Wonderwall (online)	From £416.40 Incl VAT	Not bespoke, not guaranteed to fit on existing posts, no doors (all window opens).	
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14	<p>To discuss Land for Trees and Hedgerows</p> <p>A discussion took place on this item twofold. Firstly, the Footpath warden and Cllr Pinson-Roxburgh were detailing ongoing problems with footpaths. It was concluded that the Clerk would contact the Area Rights of Way Officer and arrange a meeting between the two Cllrs and the Officer to report back to the PC.</p> <p>Secondly, BMSDC had contacted the PC to ask if there was interest in using land within the Offton and Willisham Parish to encourage a wildlife sanctuary by planting trees and hedgerows. Cllr A Bye suggested some land, which used to be a wood and would love to see it a wood once again. Discussion surrounded the current incentives around from the Tree Council and the Wildlife Trust, nothing of which could be done without the landowner. It was agreed that Cllr A Bye would contact the landowner to see what their thoughts were on the matter, and to report back to the PC.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the Clerk would advise BMSDC that the PC would be positive towards the idea.</p>	Cllr A Bye Clerk									
15	<p>To discuss the annual asset check</p> <p>The Clerk had carried out an asset check and provided a summary of the current state and condition of each asset. The Chair advised that this would be useful for when deciding the budget in December.</p>										
16	Planning - None										
17	<p>Finance</p> <p>a) Current Bank Balances as at 28th August 2020:- Community Account = £2,287.86 Premium Account = £0.34 Premium Savings Account = £9002.14</p> <p>b) Income – None</p> <p>c) To confirm payments made to:- Clerk Wages Paid end of August - £280.54 Clerk Wages Paid end of September - £280.54</p> <p>d) To approve payments and authorise cheques for signature</p>										

	It was Proposed by Cllr D Cattermole, Seconded by Cllr A Rumsey and unanimously agreed for the Clerk to update the Business Plan.	Clerk
23	Next meeting monday 7th December 2020 7pm	
	Items for the next agenda Local Electricity Bill Mobile Phone Signal Strength 2nd Quarter Financial Review 2021/22 Budget & Precept Annual Staff Review	
	Meeting Closed at 8:50pm	

Addendum

1.County Councillor K Oakes Report for September

Visit suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus for health advice, service changes, business support and schools' guidance.

Keep up to date on the latest guidance on Covid-19 from central government here: www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Preparations are finalised for SCC funded school travel for the new school term

Suffolk County Council (SCC) have made preparations to ensure all pupils who are eligible for SCC funded school travel are transported to school safely for the start of term. SCC transports approximately 12,000 pupils, which is around 12% of the school population.

On 11 August 2020, the Department for Education published official guidance on the measures that need to be in place to ensure that school transport is COVID-19 safe. SCC have been working closely with bus operators and schools to put these into place.

There are three types of school transport that children travel on - either a dedicated closed contract, shared route, or public transport route. The guidelines for these routes are slightly different.

The majority of eligible pupils travel to school on dedicated, closed routes. This means that the vehicle only carries school children. On these routes, social distancing will not apply. There will be other measures in place to ensure pupils' safety. For example, children need to make sure they wash their hands before and after travelling, and no eating and drinking will be allowed on these vehicles. Face coverings are also recommended for children aged 11 and over.

Some children travel to school on shared routes. This is where most passengers are pupils going to school or college, but there are also a few members of the public travelling on the vehicle. SCC have worked closely with operators to ensure that there is enough space on these shared transport routes. Pupils should observe social distancing guidelines with members of the public and sit in the seats marked; they can sit next to members of their family or fellow pupils. On these routes, face coverings will be mandatory unless a child is exempt from wearing one, in line with guidance.

For pupils who travel to school by public transport, where routes are used mainly by the general public, social distancing will apply and face coverings will be mandatory unless the child is exempt from wearing one.

For pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) most of their routes are dedicated, so this means there is little change to their transport. Where changes are being made, we are getting in touch with the families to explain the arrangements for the new term.

A child **must not** travel on any of these routes if anyone in their household has symptoms of COVID-19, which are a new persistent cough, high temperature and/or a change in their sense of taste or smell. If the child or anyone in the household has these symptoms, then public health advice should be followed as usual.

Spare seats

Planning school transport has been complex, as SCC has to plan transport across the three types of school travel routes. This involves, trying to predict how many fare-paying passengers there will be on shared and public routes. This has an impact on dedicated routes and how many spare seats will be available. We may need to use some of the spare seats for entitled pupils, but this will not be known straightaway. Therefore, spare seats will still be unavailable, to enable SCC to monitor capacity. Parents will be able to apply for spare seats from October half-term, subject to availability.

New project website for Suffolk County Council's A140 improvement scheme

Suffolk County Council has partnered with Interserve Construction to deliver a vital upgrade to the A140 road near Eye, Suffolk.

This stretch of road has seen a number of issues over the last five years. The scheme will improve journey time reliability and road safety in the area, and advance access to the Eye Airfield Development Area.

The improvements include:

- Two new roundabout junctions on the A140 Castleton Way and south of Rectory Road.
- A link road through to B1077 from the Northern roundabout.
- Restricted movements at the A140/B1077 junction: prohibit right turns in and out, improving journey times and safety.
- Closure of the A140/Rectory Road junction.
- Landscaping and new pathways for walkers and cyclists.

Keeping the local community and key stakeholders updated and informed is a vital part of the project. Therefore, the project team is happy to announce that a dedicated website has been developed.

<https://eyea140scheme.co.uk/> aims to update all interested stakeholders regularly about the project's recent activities and any traffic management measures which may be in place to help support the work. A phone number is also available (07917 598 686) to directly contact the project's representatives.

Remembering VJ Day, 75 years on

Saturday 15 August was the 75th anniversary of VJ Day in the UK, marking Victory in Japan at the end of the Second World War.

With celebrations often centred around VE Day earlier in the year, this period of the Second World War is sometimes overlooked, but it is important to remember that the war between the Allied Forces and Japan continued until August. In fact, on VE Day in 1945, Churchill reminded the British public that the country should "not forget for a moment the toil and efforts that lie ahead" and for many people this certainly proved to be true.

Troops from the Suffolk Regiment served across the Far East including in the Razmak District of Pakistan, Burma, and Singapore, as well as in Europe and Africa. It was following the loss of Singapore in February 1942 that the 4th and 5th Battalions spent three and half years as Prisoners-of-War, initially in the infamous Changi Jail, then constructing the Burma to Thailand Railway.

The team at Suffolk Archives have put together a [special online exhibition marking VJ Day](#), exploring the stories of two Suffolk men who were taken prisoner in the Far East, Able Seaman Harold Lock and Private Raymond Suttle, from the 4th Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment, as well as looking at the way our county marked the end of the Second World War.

The Suffolk Archives display also features a digitised version of a 1944 War Office handbook explaining the challenges of contacting and supporting POWs in the Far East, and a series of extracts showing how VJ Day activities across Suffolk were reported in local newspapers.

The development of online displays such as this has been made possible thanks to funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, aimed at increasing use and understanding of the archives through a series of countywide initiatives.

Councillor Paul West, Suffolk County Council Portfolio Holder for Heritage, said; "We hope that this new display will help people to remember and recognise those Allied Forces who served in the Far East, in particular those who were imprisoned or who lost their lives. Not only did the Allied Forces have to contend with the War itself but also faced the menace of deadly and unfamiliar tropical diseases as well high temperatures, high humidity and

monsoons. Seventy-five years on it is important to look back and realise how many people made the ultimate sacrifice.”

Suffolk celebrates 1,000 miles of newly surfaced roads

Suffolk Highways has completed its 1,000th resurfaced mile, following the Council's commitment to relay new road surfaces on a quarter of Suffolk's road network.

In 2017, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet committed to resurfacing 1,000 miles of road across Suffolk over a four-year period; in a bid to improve the quality of roads, reduce the number of potholes and to help stop potholes from forming in the first place.

The commitment also makes sound financial sense, as preventing the deterioration of road surfaces by machine surfacing or surface dressing helps reduce the need to spend more money on reactive maintenance repairing potholes now, and in future years.

The 1,000th mile was laid at Horham Road in Eye on Tuesday 4 August 2020.

Free cycling sessions for the people of Suffolk

The County Council's Bikeability team is now offering FREE cycling sessions to provide practical skills on how to cycle on today's roads. Everyone is welcome to take part - adults, families, and children. The sessions are aimed at those who want to cycle more regularly, whether to keep fit, to commute to work or school, or to visit friends.

A session lasts between 2 and 2.5 hours and is delivered by a fully qualified Bikeability Cyclist Trainer. The trainer chats to you first about what you are trying to achieve and tailors the session to your specific needs.

Travel behaviour has transformed during lockdown, both nationally and in Suffolk, as more people turn to cycling for essential journeys and exercise. It has been a cycling revolution!

- Journeys made by bike rose by 120% during the pandemic, while bus, rail, ferry, plane and car journeys fell by as much as 95%.
- Latest research also suggests that as much as 16% of the population in England (8.9 million people) have been cycling per week during the pandemic.

Suffolk County Council wants to encourage more people to get out and about by cycling and walking for their short journeys. The aim is to embed active travel as part of a long-term habit and reap the associated health, air quality and congestion benefits.

Suffolk has already implemented several cycling schemes in Ipswich as a result of funding received from the Department for Transport and further schemes are now being considered in Bury St Edmunds, Newmarket, Beccles, Felixstowe, Stowmarket and Sudbury.

It is also promoting the Government's Fix Your Bike £50 voucher scheme, and has provided funding to Greater Anglia to install more cycle racks at their train stations across Suffolk to help more people make cycling part of their commute or daily routine.

Suffolk and Norfolk businesses set for extra boost for apprentices

Apprenticeships Suffolk and Apprenticeships Norfolk are launching a reward package, **Recruit Retain Reward**, providing £1,000 grants for businesses taking on new and/or redundant young apprentices, aged 16-24.

In a bid to give small and medium-sized Suffolk and Norfolk businesses as much support as possible, the project aims to offer a flexible 'Apprenticeship Incentive Fund' of £1000, giving businesses a boost to recruit their workforce for the future.

Employers who take on apprentices can experience a wide range of benefits. Developing apprentices' skills to be relevant to the organisation, along with improved productivity, better quality of product or service, and higher staff morale are benefits highlighted by around three-quarters of employers. More than 8 out of 10 employers recommend an apprenticeship to others *

The new incentive scheme across Suffolk and Norfolk, will complement and enhance the new Government apprenticeship incentives announced recently by the chancellor Rishi Sunak (£2,000 for 16-24, £1,500 for 25+), and also the existing age incentives of £1,000 for 16-18s (19-24 with an Education Health Care plan).

In addition to the one-off financial payment, there will also be continued support for organisations who are new to apprenticeships. A collection of online resources is being created to support businesses employing an apprentice for the first time. This includes practical guidance and useful information from existing, local apprenticeship ambassadors to help add real value to the business.

It is hoped that the project, which is sponsored by the East of England Employer Ambassador Apprenticeship Network, will encourage apprenticeship starts across Suffolk and Norfolk, post COVID-19.

Suffolk County Councillor Mary Evans Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills said: "I am delighted to see the launch of this reward package for businesses in Suffolk. The project provides an excellent package of support for our local employers who are keen to find and develop emerging talent and invest in the future growth of their organisation."

Apprenticeships Suffolk and Apprenticeships Norfolk provide an impartial service to all employers, providers, apprentices and stakeholders. Further details of the project can be found here: apprenticeshipssuffolk.org and apprenticeshipsnorfolk.org

* Data source: [GOV.UK publications](https://www.gov.uk/publications)

2. District Councillor Report for October (added following the meeting)

Annual Council meeting

The annual meeting was held virtually on 24th September. Barry Humpheys was elected as Chairman and Paul Ekpenyong as Vice Chair. The Committees and Chairs were all agreed, with the Chairman using his casting vote to elect all the chairs and vice chairs from the Conservative and Independent Group.

Government consultations on planning

Changes to the current planning system is about changes to planning policy and regulation including how the housing numbers for each local government area are calculated (which would be upwards for Mid Suffolk). It also recommends changing the threshold of homes built (from 10 to 40) on a development before which affordable homes must be built. The Council's response to this consultation was discussed at the September Council meeting, following which the response has been amended by the Corporate Director in consultation with the portfolio holder for planning and the opposition spokesperson for planning, and has now been submitted.

Planning for the future is a White Paper that proposes major reforms to the planning system. These include reducing the timeframe in which a Local Plans must be created to a maximum of 30 months; and dividing land into zones for development, renewal (brownfield) and protect (green belt, national parks etc) then automatically granting outline planning permissions within the development and renewal zones. Planning Committees at a district council would therefore only consider design and not the principle of development. The White Paper also considers greater digitalisation, a different system for developer levies and a fast-track system for "beautiful buildings". The consultation closes on 29th October and the Mid Suffolk response to this will be discussed by a cross-party working group of members before being submitted.

Homelessness

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils have been awarded a grant of £100,000 to help cover the cost of temporary accommodation for homeless people over the winter. In Mid Suffolk there are few (possibly only 2) people sleeping rough but pre-Covid many others had been sofa-surfing or staying with elderly relatives. In order to protect vulnerable people, some of these people became homeless and have been accommodated in hotels. This will need to continue for some months at least.

Gateway 14

A new timetable was agreed detailing the next steps for the Joint Local Plan. It is now likely to be published in the autumn, followed by a six-week consultation period. The plan is not likely to be adopted before late 2021 or early 2022 leaving the Councils vulnerable to speculative development in the meantime.

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