



EARL STONHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held online via Zoom on **Tuesday, 19th January 2021 at 7.30pm.**

Present:

Councillors: C Woods (Chair)
D Turner
H Stanford
S Budd
D Brenig-Jones
H Glasse
M Gillett
M Mann

In Attendance J Blackburn – Clerk

ES053/20/21 – PUBLIC FORUM

There were three members of the public present.

ES054/20/21 – TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Cllr Wilkinson.

ES055/20/21 – TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Gillett declared an interest in Item 12 on the Agenda, as a Member of the Village Hall Management Committee.

ES056/20/21 – TO RECEIVE APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION

None had been received.

ES057/20/21 – TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 2ND NOVEMBER 2020

A few typing errors were reported and amended.

It was AGREED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd November 2020 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

ES058/20/21 – TO RECEIVE THE POLICE REPORT

The Police were not present at the meeting and a report had not been received.

ES059/20/21 - TO RECEIVE THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – CLLR HICKS

Cllr Hicks' report was circulated prior to the meeting which stated the following:

- **Moving into a national lockdown. Testing capacity had increased in response to demand -** More than one third of Suffolk's total confirmed coronavirus cases were recorded in the last two weeks, government data had shown. A total of 15,643 people had tested positive for the virus in the county as of January 2 – with 5,321 people testing positive from December 20 to January 2, making up 34% of all cases recorded in Suffolk by that point. While the figures show cases were significantly on the rise, testing had vastly increased

in recent months when compared to the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic. Mobile testing had increased countywide, while a walk-in test centre had also opened at Portman Road, Ipswich, alongside the permanent test centre at Copdock. Suffolk was seeing a similar, sharp increase in positive cases in line with the regional picture, which was making more people ill and putting the hospitals under even more pressure. The new variant of the virus spread more easily.

- **Support payments available for those told to self-isolate on low incomes** - As of the 24th December, more residents on low incomes or benefits could now get financial help if they were told to self-isolate due to COVID-19. Previously Test and Trace Support payments could only be given to people meeting certain criteria, including on benefits. Now Councils across Suffolk had extended this, using their discretion, to help those on low incomes but not on benefits. Councils across Suffolk were helping administer the Government grant scheme to help people remain at home and do their bit to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Details about the Test and Trace Support Payments could be found on District and Borough Council websites and how to apply for it. It was part of a range of measures that councils across Suffolk had introduced to support communities and businesses during the coronavirus pandemic.

Additional help, including financial aid, was also available from Suffolk Support and Advice Service. The additional help was available for those facing financial difficulty or needing support – especially for those who had never asked for help before. On 1 October 2020, the Suffolk Support and Advice Service phone line was launched to help people across the county access information or support relating to debt, benefits, housing or employment.

- **Suffolk 2020 fund projects to deliver over £2.5 million in new community-focused initiatives** - On the 18th December, seven new projects were announced as part of the Suffolk 2020 fund to support residents and improve the county for years to come. The announced initiatives and projects were as followed:
 - 1/ New booking system and automatic number plate recognition at Household Waste Recycling Centres – Improving the efficiency and customer experience across all 11 recycling centres by enhancing the online booking system using automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) and automated entry barriers.
 - 2/ Adult Digital Learning - Developing new virtual learning tools and techniques and setting up a laptop loan scheme to strengthen and extend access to the Adult Learning Service for those living in digital and/or rural isolation. This approach would enable people to enhance their knowledge and skills to secure employment. Building on the swift switch to virtual learning during lockdown, we would further develop virtual learning for adults across Suffolk and use new technologies to enrich and improve the quality of interaction and training, modernising the service's offer.
 - 3/ Youth Work - Developing and supporting growth of grass roots organisations to deliver accessible, high quality provision for youths across Suffolk. Included creation of a virtual 'Centre of Excellence' to share best practice and provide a 'one stop shop' of support for youth groups across Suffolk.
 - 4/ Discovering Suffolk – raising awareness of Suffolk's countryside and the county's rights of way network, promoting local (Covid-safe) outdoor activities across all of Suffolk with the development of a smartphone outdoor app and QR codes to engage new audiences.
 - 5/ Automated Numberplate Recognition Speed Indicators – Devices would be installed at the roadside to tackle localised problems with speeding drivers. The devices would be periodically moved between sites of concern and the data would be forwarded to the Police to assist with targeted enforcement.
 - 6/ Virtual Reality therapy - Engagement and coproduction with people living with dementia and their carers to explore and develop interactive and therapeutic experiences to support wellbeing. These would be delivered through mobile virtual reality headsets and included bespoke content and interactions based around archive media of Suffolk.
 - 7/ Mobile Community 'Care Hubs' - Digitally equip and staff selected community vehicles accessing rural communities within Suffolk. This would support digital inclusion and provide a

way to share information and provide help around the opportunities available with care technologies and other digital skills.

The work involved in setting up and enabling these projects would begin in early 2021, setting in motion a range of new community projects that would benefit people for years to come. The council's agreement to move forwards with these exciting projects listed above followed the successful launch of the first three Suffolk 2020 projects that were announced over recent months:

EV Vehicle Charging Points – Making grants available to install around 100 vehicle charging points throughout the county. Particularly targeting rural areas and sites owned and managed by not-for-profit organisations such as Parish Councils, village halls, sports clubs, libraries and charities.

Tree Planting - Increasing tree cover, through rural and urban planting schemes, planting approximately 100,000 trees over the next 18 months, establishing 'healing woodlands' to remember those lost to Covid-19, and increasing biodiversity along roadside verges.

Quiet Lanes - Encouraging the use of non-motorised vehicles and more considerate driving at lower speeds along a range of the community's self-selected rural lanes, with a view to adding 200 new lanes across Suffolk.

Whilst 2020 would live long in the memory for many reasons, the launch of these projects as part of the Suffolk 2020 Fund offers some real optimism and effort to bring communities together, supporting projects that would provide social, environmental and economic benefits in years to come. The Suffolk 2020 Fund was only made possible because of the decision of this council to use part of the Government's one-year financial settlement to invest up to £3million throughout 2020 to kickstart some of the beneficial community projects that ordinarily may not have received as much focus or opportunity, given the other huge, costly frontline services that the county council was responsible for.

- **Proposed changes to Sizewell C application are step in right direction but there is still work to be done** - On the 18th December, Suffolk County Council welcomed EDF Energy's movement towards reducing the number of additional heavy good vehicles on Suffolk's roads. As part of its response to EDF Energy's latest community consultation on its application for Sizewell C, Suffolk County Council had welcomed the energy provider's movement towards reducing the number of additional heavy good vehicle movements on Suffolk's roads and increasing the use of rail and marine freight deliveries during site construction. The Council had urged EDF Energy for many years to maximise freight deliveries by sea and rail and significantly, being of the view that the transport proposals were not sustainable, so it welcomed the proposals for an additional Beach Landing Facility on Sizewell Beach to bring construction materials in by sea, as well as an additional night-time rail delivery of materials to site. In its response, the Council also reflected that many of the proposals offered still lacked vital elements in detail and assessment at this stage – such as impacts of the proposals on the coastline or night-time disturbance of residents living close to railway lines. The Council would welcome the opportunity for further dialogue with SZC C to better understand details of the current proposals, and the evidence base which had led to them. It was encouraging to see that EDF Energy had begun listening to the concerns raised by SCC and Suffolk's communities. Recognising the need for further detail, the Council did welcome the principle of the changes proposed by EDF Energy, as they began to address some of the concerns we had repeatedly raised. However, SCC still felt there remained work to be done if the scheme was to be acceptable to SCC and its communities - not least in the area of further eliminating, minimising, mitigating, or compensating for the impact of the scheme on Suffolk's unique natural environment.

Cllr Hicks added that Suffolk were being reported as being behind with their vaccinations but that was not the case. Suffolk had a large elderly population which meant the vaccinations were taking longer. He confirmed that by the end of the week all the over 80s would have received a letter inviting them for their vaccination.

ES060/20/21 – TO RECEIVE THE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR’S REPORT – CLLR MORLEY

Cllr Morley circulated her report before the start of the meeting which stated:

- **An update on Covid-19 in Suffolk** - Regular bulletins were being produced to give a snapshot of the current Covid-19 situation in Suffolk - along with updates on the work being carried out as part of Suffolk’s Local Outbreak Control Plan.
- **Local Restrictions Support Grants for businesses** - National lockdown - With the announcement of a National Lockdown commencing on the 5th January, it was clear that many businesses would be impacted. MSDC were awaiting detailed government guidance on the operation of business grant schemes for the National Lockdown and would update their website as soon as the position was clarified.
- **Councils look to slash fleet emissions** - Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils would cut their fleet’s carbon emissions by up to 90% – supporting the councils’ carbon neutral aims. The move followed approval by both councils’ cabinets to switch their vehicle fleet to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO). Changes form a major step in the councils’ Carbon Reduction Management Plan, which set out how net zero carbon emissions aimed to be achieved by 2030. Both councils would see a significant reduction in pollutant emissions from their fleet, including up to a 90% reduction in CO₂. It would also support a circular economy, as the HVO fuel was produced from sustainable feedstock, including waste cooking oil. Currently, the councils’ vehicle fleet represented 26% of the councils’ total CO₂ emissions, approximately 880 tonnes per year. The fleet included the councils’ 35 waste lorries, as well as some vehicles used by the public realm and housing services. Moving to the new fuel would cost an initial £50k per council for new fuel tanks. A further estimated £56 - £97k per year, per council, over the next three years, would cover fuel costs.

However, by using HVO, lower maintenance costs and longer engine life for the vehicles were expected. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money collected from new development was anticipated to cover most of the initial cost of the two HVO tanks. Those would be located at the councils’ depots in Stowmarket and Sudbury.

HVO fuel provided an almost immediate and efficient way to reduce emissions. This was because, aside from slightly increased fuel costs and new tanks, the transition from traditional diesel fuel to HVO required minimal changes to the councils’ existing fleet. Formal procurement of a fuel supplier would start straight away, with the changeover expected to be fully rolled out by Summer 2021.

- **Stowmarket arts centre gets major boost** - Ambitions for Stowmarket to become a hub for arts and culture had taken a major step forward, following Councillors unanimously giving the go-ahead to lease 11 Market Place to the John Peel Centre. MSDC’s Cabinet voted in favour of giving the arts centre a new long lease on the empty property – providing the venue with a ‘front door’ on to the Market Place to bring arts, leisure and entertainment to the town centre. The 40-year lease, at a peppercorn rent, would fulfil the council’s aim to revitalise the former bank site. It would also pave the way for the John Peel Centre to expand its offer as a cultural and community venue, as part of the broader Stowmarket Vision. The decision would create the right conditions for the town to grow as a centre of excellence for creative arts, culture and technical innovations.

After NatWest closed its doors in September 2017, the council purchased the property and secured planning permission to enable the building’s use for food and drink, assembly, and leisure. By working with the John Peel Centre to give people a fresh and exciting offer the visitor numbers to the town would be increased, which would provide an economic boost as well. The centre’s expansion was among a number of exciting developments set to help the town’s post-Covid recovery:

The new look Regal Theatre was benefiting from £3.6m of investment for a comprehensive expansion and refurbishment programme which would see it boast three modern cinema screens, improved audio-visual experience, as well as a new front of house, café and bar area. Works were also being undertaken to restore and preserve many of the original features of the existing building built in 1936. Two additional auditoria and a new café had been added in recent months

Across the wider town centre, funding had also been secured from the department of Transport's Active Travel fund for the installation of bicycle storage in the town centre. Cycle parking bays had been installed outside the John Peel Centre, at the Stricklands Road junction with Ipswich Road and in Wilkes Way.

A second phase of Active Travel Fund would explore the potential to create new cycle routes through the town, linking key sites and open spaces. Proposals for the second phase had been published by Suffolk County Council and were now open for consultation.

Work as part of the wider Stowmarket Vision included proposals to create a National Museum of Food at the Museum of East Anglian Life in Iliffe Way, as well as a new Festival for 2021. There were plans to build on the town's hugely successful Innovation Labs, and develop the concept of reusing empty shops and show windows as alternative spaces.

- **Voting safely at next year's elections** - On Thursday 6 May 2021, residents in Suffolk would go to the polls to have their say on who represented them at Suffolk County Council and who would represent them as the Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner. The elections may be a way off, but MSDC were already making plans to help residents stay safe while casting their vote. There were a number of ways to have a say in the elections in May – residents could vote in a polling station, by post, or by appointing a trusted person to vote on their behalf, which was known as a proxy vote.

MSDC were planning for those elections now, so that members of the public could be confident that they would be able to cast their vote safely. As a result of COVID-19, Awareness needed to be raised, in particular for electors aged over 70, of the option of voting by post rather than visiting the polling station.

For residents that would still prefer to vote in person, be assured that COVID-19 secure measures would be in place at every polling station. For example you can expect to see many of the measures you had become used to in shops over recent months, such as the use of masks, hand sanitiser and floor markings.

ES061/20/21 – TO RECEIVE THE CLERK'S REPORT AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

i) THE CLERKS REPORT

The Clerk had nothing to report in addition to items on the Agenda.

ii) TO RECEIVE THE CLERK'S FINANCIAL REPORT

The Clerk reported on the Council's current financial position and movements since the last meeting. It was reported that the balance in the accounts on 11th January 2021 was £11,532.75.

iii) TO AUTHORISE PAYMENTS AND NOTE RECEIPTS

The Clerk reported the following payments be authorised:

Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Pay (Jan)	£247.43
Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Office Allowance/Expenses (Jan)	£44.57
Chris Hamilton	Website costs	£12.00

Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Pay (Feb)	£247.43
Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Office Allowance/Expenses (Feb)	£20.00

It was AGREED: That payments totaling £571.43 be authorised and actioned by the Clerk.

The following receipts were also noted:

A & RL Porch Farms	Allotment Rent	£371.28
Mrs F Northcote	Allotment Rent	£15.00
Mr D Coward	Allotment Rent	£7.50
Miss T Seaman	Allotment Rent	£15.00
Mr Perkins	Allotment Rent	£7.50
Mr Stiff	Allotment Rent	£15.00
Mr Beckett	Allotment Rent	£148.00
Bentley Group Ltd	Recorder Advert Fee	£30.00
Kelly Ashton	Recorder Advert Fee	£30.00
Mr Nunn	Allotment Rent	£1,327.40
Mrs J Arnold	Allotment Rent	£198.00

iv) **FINAL BUDGET FOR 2021/22**

It was AGREED: That the Final Budget for 2021/22 be approved.

v) **PRECEPT FOR 2021/22**

It was AGREED: That the Precept of £6,557 for 2021/22 be approved. **Clerk to action.**

ES062/20/21 - PLANNING APPLICATIONS

None had been received.

ES063/20/21 - PLANNING DECISIONS

The following decisions were noted:

Ref: DC/20/04062 - Planning Application. Erection of dwelling following removal of agricultural building and previous grant of residential conversion DC/20/00964 - Fen Barn, Fen Lane, Earl Stonham, Ipswich Suffolk IP6 8QD – **REFUSED**

Ref: DC/20/04710 - Application for Outline Planning Permission (some matters reserved, access to be considered) Town and Country Planning Act 1990 - Erection of 1No detached dwelling and garage; Creation of new vehicular access (existing access to be blocked up) Land South Of Fieldfare, Forward Green, Earl Stonham, Stowmarket Suffolk IP14 5EN – **GRANTED**

Ref: DC/20/04670 - Full Application - Change of Use of land for the siting of 3 no. shepherds huts for use as holiday lets. Beechwood Farm, Forward Green, Earl Stonham, Stowmarket Suffolk IP14 5EQ - **GRANTED**

ES064/20/21 – VILLAGE HALL ENTRANCE WORKS

Tony Turner was present at the meeting and reported that the refurbishment works on the hall would be completed by the end of the month. Once completed it was expected that the project would come in under budget with approximately £4,000 remaining, two thirds of which was Village Hall money and a third being part of a grant from Mid Suffolk District Council (MSDC).

He explained that he had approached MSDC to ask if they would be in approval of the excess monies being used for another project to which they agreed to look at a proposal.

He continued that possible projects for the monies would be to clad the outside of the hall or improve the entrance to the car park - the latter being the proposed one. In order to improve the entrance, to make it long-term stable, it would need to be dug out and made to road grade. It would be widened with the recycling bins being moved to a more appropriate area. The works were thought to cost in the region of £10,000. Therefore a contribution from the Parish Council and Trustees would be welcomed.

Members agreed with the project stating that it was an ideal time to make the improvements whilst the hall was closed due to current Coronavirus restrictions and that three quotes should be sought to give a clearer idea of cost.

The Chair asked the Clerk what monies were available at the current time in order to make a contribution to which the Clerk replied that £2,000 could be considered.

Jennie Griffiths from the Trustees and Phil Hurt, Treasurer of the Trustees were present and also agreed the improvements would be of benefit. They stated that they would be able to match the £2,000 being given by the Parish Council.

Cllr Stanford proposed and Cllr Turner seconded that £2,000 be given to the Village Hall to contribute towards the entrance works.

ES065/20/21 – FOOTPATHS

Cllr Woods informed members that the National Farmers Union had received many complaints that members of the public were walking on the crops rather than the footpaths as the footpaths were currently very muddy.

Cllr Woods hoped that Earl Stonham Parish were not amongst those being complained about and asked all members to please keep to the footpaths when out walking.

Cllr Budd asked if the Clerk could contact Suffolk Highways in relation to a strong smelling sludge that gathered in the ditch alongside the footpath at the end of School Lane. The ditch was often blocked and needed attention. **Clerk to action.**

ES066/20/21 - ALLOTMENTS

It was AGREED: That this item be deferred to the next meeting due to information not yet received.

ES067/20/21 – VILLAGE HALL

There was nothing further to report following an update earlier in the meeting.

Cllr Gillett and Cllr Glasse expressed their thanks to all volunteers who had helped with the refurbishment of the hall and stated that the hall had been transformed and looked very good.

ES068/20/21 – WEBSITE

Cllr Gillett reported that the website had now been transferred to Suffolk.Cloud and content had been added. He explained that Suffolk.Cloud had also set up two email addresses for the Clerk and the webmaster and would charge the Parish Council accordingly.

He added that there would no longer be adverts on the website due to accessibility issues.

Members of the Parish Council expressed their thanks for all Cllr Gillett's hard work on the website.

ES069/20/21 – SPEEDING THROUGH THE VILLAGE

Members and residents alike had witnessed a high number of speeding motorists through the village and felt that some sort of traffic calming measures should be sought.

The Clerk informed members that last summer whilst visiting the hall, she had spoken with a Road Safety Enforcement officer who was stood there with his camera. He had advised her to wait a few months then to contact the team who would be able to share the statistics of speeding offences recorded.

In December she emailed the team and received a reply stating that in November the village had been visited twice which resulted in 21 speeding offences being detected and in December (up to 18th) one visit had been made with 16 speeding offences detected.

Members felt that more information and statistics were needed in order to approach Highways to ask for some form of traffic calming measure to be considered.

It was AGREED: That the Clerk contact the Police, Road Safety Team and County Cllr Hicks for further information/advice.

ES070/20/21 - JUNCTION OF A140/A1120 (TAP JUNCTION)

It was noted that the site had been cleared of most of the equipment and hoped that it would continue to stay clear.

ES071/20/21 – MATTERS TO BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE COUNCIL

- Culverts on Church Lane – Cllr Gillett to report on Suffolk Highways Report it Tool
- Cllr Woods stated that one of the trees on the Green was looking very unhealthy and therefore needed monitoring (fourth one along from Blacksmiths Lane).
- Cllr Turner confirmed that the Christmas Tree would be removed from the Green once the Green had become less wet and muddy.

ES072/20/21 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday, 1st March 2021 at 7.30pm

The meeting finished at 8.45pm.

Chairman: Dated: