



EARL STONHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held online via Zoom on **Monday, 1st March 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
County Cllr Hicks
District Cllr Morley

ES073/20/21 – PUBLIC FORUM

There were no members of the public present.

ES074/20/21 – TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE

None had been received.

ES075/20/21 – TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Budd declared an interest in item 14 on the Agenda.

ES076/20/21 – TO RECEIVE APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION

None had been received.

ES077/20/21 – TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 19th JANUARY 2021

It was AGREED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 19th January 2021 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

ES078/20/21 – TO RECEIVE THE POLICE REPORT

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

ES079/20/21 - TO RECEIVE THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – CLLR HICKS

Cllr Hicks' report was circulated prior to the meeting which would be published on the village website. He briefly went over the following points:

- **16 new COVID-19 rapid testing centres to open in Suffolk** - 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 were planned to open over the next two weeks and would serve more rural communities across the county. The 28 centres used 'lateral flow' testing to identify people who might have had coronavirus but who did not have symptoms. The tests were for people who did not have symptoms of coronavirus and could not work from home. It was because one in three people with coronavirus did not have symptoms so regular testing was vital in breaking the chain of

infection and keeping Suffolk safe. The test would take just 15 minutes and the results would be received within the hour. 12,780 tests had already been completed.

- **SCC increases budget to support most vulnerable residents and county's recovery from Covid-19** - Suffolk County Council (SCC) had agreed its budget for 2021/22 and following approval of its annual budget, SCC was increasing its planned spending once again in 2021/22 to £597.9million, some £41million (7.4%) more than 2020/21. As part of that, the council would be spending £15.3million to address its ongoing Covid-19 costs, arising from the continuing local response to the pandemic. There were no proposed reductions in council services or personnel in 2021/22. This year's budget was based on a 12-month financial settlement from government, rather than the 3 or 4 year agreement which was usually offered. Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic over the last 11 months or so, the Government had continued to support local authorities as they adapted to serve communities, redeploy staff into alternative specialist roles and see income streams such as business rates and council tax reduced significantly. SCC had 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 would continue. The council's income from council tax was going to be £7.9 million less than expected in 2021/22 and the shortfall would be met by using council reserves. Reserves could only be spent once and do not represent a viable long term financial solution.

ES080/20/21 – TO RECEIVE THE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – CLLR MORLEY

Cllr Morley circulated her report before the start of the meeting which would be published on the village website. She briefly went over the following points:

- **Budget to 'supercharge' district's recovery** - Councillors had agreed Mid Suffolk District Council's budget for 2021/22 – keeping council tax low while 'supercharging' the district's post-Covid recovery. The budget increased Mid Suffolk's share of council tax by just 1.66%. The equivalent of only 23p a month (£2.80 a year) for an average Band D property. The council recognised the financial challenges facing many residents and local employers as a result of the pandemic. The money raised through the council tax increase was therefore being ring-fenced to provide direct support for businesses hardest hit by the pandemic. It was also reported that Mid Suffolk was now also in a position to invest an additional £4m into the district's recovery. This money would be invested in the local economy, housing, the wellbeing of residents, and in its communities – with a cross-party approach adopted to develop recommendations to Mid Suffolk Cabinet for its use.
- **An extra £3m for warmer, greener Suffolk homes** - More Suffolk residents, including those in Mid Suffolk, were set to benefit from Government Green Homes Grants thanks to a further successful bid for £3m funding by a Suffolk consortium of local authorities. The funding added to a previous award of £1m secured last year. The funding, provided by the Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy, would provide energy efficiency measures for owner occupiers of properties with poor energy performance ratings. Partner local authorities were already working on delivering five projects by March 2021, and have a completion deadline of September for the five new schemes. Those were external wall insulation of 100 park homes in West Suffolk, 150 park homes in East Suffolk, and 70 Flagship Group properties, insulation and air source heat pumps on 100 homes in Babergh and Mid Suffolk, and internal wall insulation for 10 properties through Leiston Net Zero/EDF.
- **Everyone will benefit from Census 2021** - Households across Mid Suffolk would be asked to take part in Census 2021 this spring. The census, run by the Office for National Statistics, was a once-in-a-decade survey that gives us the most accurate estimate of all the people and households in England and Wales. It had been carried out every ten years since 1801, with the exception of 1941. Understanding the needs of the nation helped everyone from central government to organisations, such as councils and health authorities, plan and fund public services across England and Wales. Census outputs inform where billions of pounds of public funding was spent on services like transport, education and health – on cycle routes, schools and dental surgeries. Information from

the census was also important in helping lots of other people and organisations do their work. Charities and voluntary organisations often used it as evidence to get funding. It helped businesses to understand their customers and, for example, decide where to open new shops. Plus, those doing research, like university students and people looking into their family history, use census data. It provided important information on population diversity, allowing organisations to know whether they were meeting their responsibilities and triggering action where necessary. Census 2021 would be the first run predominantly online, with households receiving a letter with a unique access code, allowing them to complete the questionnaire on their computers, phones or tablets.

- **Plug in Suffolk** - Plug in Suffolk was now providing grants for the installation of Electric Vehicle charging points at non-profit locations such as community centres, parish council car parks and village halls.

ES081/20/21 – TO RECEIVE THE CLERK’S REPORT AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

a) THE CLERKS REPORT

The Clerk had nothing to report other than what was already on the Agenda.

b) 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 23rd February 2021 were £11,002.51.

c) TO AUTHORISE PAYMENTS AND NOTE RECEIPTS

The Clerk reported the following payments be authorised:

Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Pay (Mar)	£247.43
Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Office Allowance/Expenses (Feb)	£38.83
Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Pay (Apr)	£247.43
Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Office Allowance/Expenses (Apr)	£20.00

It was AGREED: That payments totaling £553.69 be authorised and actioned by the Clerk. It was also agreed that donations, as below, be ratified and actioned by the Clerk:

Stowmarket Citizens Advice Bureau - £125
 Forward Africa - £100
 Homestart - £50
 Livability - £50
 Stowmarket Foodbank - £100

The following receipt was also noted:

David Cook	Recorder Adverts	£30.00
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d) BANK RECONCILIATION

It was AGREED: That the Bank Reconciliation be approved.

e) INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR 2020/21

It was AGREED: That Trevor Brown CPFA (Local Council Financial Services & Internal Audit) be appointed as auditor for the purposes of the 2020/21 audit.

f) EXTERNAL AUDIT ARRANGEMENTS 2020/21

It was AGREED: That the same arrangements applied for external audit arrangements as last year, that the Parish Council did not need an external audit and therefore be classed as exempt.

ES082/20/21 – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

a) REVIEW OF INTERNAL CONTROL AND RISK MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

It was AGREED: That the Internal Audit Control and Risk Management Arrangements were reviewed and approved.

b) FINANCIAL REGULATIONS AND STANDING ORDERS

It was AGREED: That the Financial Regulations and Standing Orders be approved and adopted.

ES083/20/21 – DONATIONS

It was AGREED: That the donations be made as stated above in ES081 (c).

ES084/20/21 - PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Ref: DC/21/00528 - Householder Planning Application - Creation of new vehicular access, drive and parking area - Meadow Cottage, Norwich Road, Earl Stonham

It was AGREED: That the Parish Council have no objections to the application. **Clerk to action.**

Ref: DC/21/00515 - Full Application - Erection of general purpose storage building for forestry business - Mb Trees at Holly Bank House, Broad Green Road, Earl Stonham

It was AGREED: That the Parish Council have no objections to the application. **Clerk to action.**

ES085/20/21 - PLANNING DECISIONS

The following decisions were noted:

Land Adjacent Jockeys Farmhouse Blacksmiths Lane, Earl Stonham -APP/W3520/W/20/3256949-DC/20/01910 - Stationing of 3 no. holiday lodges – **APPEAL DISMISSED**

Ref: DC/20/05296 - Householder Planning Application - Erection of single storey rear extension; Insertion of rear dormers in conjunction with loft conversion. Insertion of bi-fold doors to rear. 2 Pembroke Cottage, Stowmarket Road, Earl Stonham - **GRANTED**

ES086/20/21 – FOOTPATHS

Cllr Budd reported that the waymarker was still down at the end of School Lane and Cllr Brenig-Jones reported that the footpath sign on Larters Lane was also still down. **Clerk to follow up.**

ES087/20/21 - ALLOTMENTS

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had forwarded informal information received from Lacey, Scott & Knight in relation to Allotment rent charges.

Cllr Woods explained that the rent fees had not been increased for many years and therefore felt that these needed to be reviewed and increased accordingly.

Cllr Stanford stated that the Parish Council had a duty to receive the best that they could from them.

Following a general discussion it was felt that an increase with inflation should be applied each year in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) (currently 0.9%). Once the CPI was raised in June of this year the

Clerk would write to all the tenants of the allotments to inform them that the rent would increase from September 2021 and each year thereafter.

It was AGREED: That the Allotment rent should increase each year in line with the CPI and the tenants be informed by letter.

ES088/20/21 – VILLAGE HALL

Cllr Budd informed members that the hall refurbishment had now been completed and was looking much better.

Cllr Turner reported that it was hoped that a formal opening of the hall could take place along with a BBQ on 19th June 2021 and it was also hoped the Picnic on the Green in September would be able to take place.

The Clerk informed members that she had been approached by Mr Turner from the Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC) in relation to the £2,000 previously agreed to be contributed to the entrance works at the hall from the Parish Council. Mr Turner had informed the Clerk that he was awaiting confirmation from Mid Suffolk District Council (MSDC) as to whether the VHMC could use the remaining money from MSDC's grant for the entrance works and until he had heard back from them he was uncertain as to which route to go down with the Parish Council's contribution. He had asked whether the Parish Council would be happy to use their £2,000 to purchase the chairs for the hall to which members all agreed.

It was AGREED: That the Parish Council would be happy to purchase the chairs with their £2,000 contribution and would then donate the chairs to the hall.

ES089/20/21 – SPEEDING / TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES

The Clerk reported that she had put in a Freedom of Information request to the Police to see speeding statistics through the village over the past 18 months to which she had had confirmation that she would receive the information by 7th March 2021.

She also reported that Cllr Gillett had very kindly offered to attend the Speeding Online Form on 8th March that was being ran by Suffolk Association of Local Councils.

ES090/20/21 – MATTERS TO BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE COUNCIL

- Seemed to be a lot of litter around the village.
- Recorder – Cllr Turner stated that when it is issued online rather than paper copies there were many in the village that would not be able to see it. Cllr Gillett stated that Google Analytics was installed in the webpage and so he would be able to see how many people had viewed the Recorder.
- Dog Napping – aware of incidents happening within the village and other local areas – caution needed.
- Cllr Stanford stated that church services would be resumed from Easter Day – 6am at Earl Stonham and 11am at Stonham Aspal.
- Bin Collection – delays had occurred due to Covid and recent snow.
- Cllr Wilkinson wished to thank Mr Parry for improving Balls Way which had been flailed recently.

ES091/20/21 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday, 10TH May 2021 at 7.30pm

The meeting finished at 8.40pm.

Chairman: Dated: