

MINUTES OF THE WHATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT WHATFIELD VILLAGE HALL 21st October 2020 Via Zoom

Present

Mr. P. Whittle	Chairman
Mr. D. Cross	Vice Chairman
Mr. D. Dray	Parish Councillor
Mr. G. Smith	Parish Councillor
Mr S Clifford	Parish Councillor
Mrs C. Curtis	Parish Councillor
Mr. R Lindsay	County Councillor
Mr. L. Jameson	District Councillor
Mrs. L. King	Parish Clerk

The Chairman Paul Whittle opened the meeting with the news that Molly Eastman (Conservation Officer) had sadly past away this week. He expressed the Parish Councils thanks for all the hard work Molly had done for the Council and Village over the years. Clerk to send card to Sarah and Emma with our condolences. David Dray to email Clerk with the documents Molly created about the flora and fauna of our village. Clerk to attach to minutes. The Parish Council agreed that there should be something in the Village to commemorate Molly and maybe a Tree and Plaque.

1. Apologies for Absence

Mr R, Searle	Parish Councillor
Mrs J. Green	Tree Warden

2. Matters arising from Minutes of meeting held 9th September 2020 Minutes of 9th September 2020 meeting were accepted and signed. Prop Simon Clifford Sec: David Cross Unanimous

3. Correspondence - I have received the George Scott Annual Return which I have sent to you all and added to the APM minutes. I have been in correspondence with Babergh and they agreed to a litter bin at the Over gang but will only empty it so we need to buy the litter bin. They range from around £45 for a post mounted one to £121 upwards for a ground level one. Babergh suggested we use Glasdon

4. County Councillor's Report – Hadleigh Quarry

I spoke against this application for the third time at the last Development and Regulation committee which has finally turned it down. The strength of feeling in the committee against it seemed to grow with each successive meeting. It is now up to the developer whether to appeal or make an amended application.

Wheatfield Road surface

I have asked SCC about this and they have said they will examine making a claim against Babergh. They acknowledge the Babergh sweeper is lifting off an aged surface. They have no money to do immediate resurfacing.

Motion for 20mph default limit in villages and towns in Suffolk

I am proposing this motion (seconded by a Lib Dem colleague) to full council on 22 October. I have long felt the county's piecemeal approach to changing speed limits is overly expensive and complicated.

Consultation on division boundary changes begins again for 2025

The boundary commission has begun consulting on changes to Suffolk county council division boundaries which will bring the number of county councillors down from 75 to 70. In the Babergh area it will mean nine divisions rather than the current ten. The changes, initially meant to come into force in the May 2021 election will not now happen until May 2025. The proposals have to cut the current ten divisions and ten councillors in the Babergh area to nine divisions and nine councillors. Under the current proposal, Brent Eleigh remains in Cosford, but Cosford goes from 18 to 24 villages, losing 2 and gaining six villages.

The draft recommendations and boundary changes are available to view on the Boundary Commission's website: <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/eastern/suffolk/suffolk-county-council>

The consultation on these recommendations will run from 15 September – 23 November and can be found here: <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/have-your-say/18495>

Quiet Lanes

The cabinet has given Highways £235,000 from last year's budget surplus to promote Quiet Lanes where parish councils request them. I understand that these are generally for roads where the national speed limit applies but there is low traffic and demand for use by pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders. The aim is not to calm traffic but to make drivers more aware and encourage more foot and cycle traffic. I have heard from one parish that they feel it has worked to reduce speeds of traffic but they would like more national publicity about what a Quiet Lane is.

Suffolk County Council decides to oppose Sizewell C

The Cabinet at Suffolk County Council agreed on 22 September that they can no longer support EDF Energy's proposals for Sizewell C in their current form. However, the Cabinet maintained their support for the principle of a new nuclear power station in Suffolk.

This year's Suffolk Covid spending gap plugged by Government

Suffolk County Council has published their Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring Report. This focuses heavily on the impact of Covid-19 on the council's finances.

The headline figures are that the budget for 2020-21 council is currently looking more or less on track with a net overspend of just £0.4m. A hole of £41m due to extra spending and lost revenue from Covid was plugged by £39.1 Covid grants from Government.

4. District Councillor's Report

• Local update

- Aldham Quarry application was refused at SCC
- Wheatfields road damage was down to the road sweeper; however the company concerned have blamed the damage on poor road condition. Highways have acknowledged this but have no plans to remedy the situation in the near future.
- Church Farm Place open space – I have spoken to Landex regarding this who confirm that the field is to be handed back to the parish, but the delay is allegedly the fault of Babergh. However, they also confirm that this is now progressing following some frustrating delays.

• Babergh Chairman re-elected to serve a second term

Babergh Council finally had its much-delayed AGM in September. The meeting, which was due to take place in early summer finalised the structure of the council for the coming year.

Councillor Kathryn Grandon was dually elected to serve a second term as Chairman of Babergh District Council for 2020/21. Cllr Grandon is the Independent ward member for Hadleigh South, and her chosen charities for 2020/21 are the Hadleigh Dementia Action Alliance, the Hadleigh Scouts, and the Hadleigh Guides. Cllr Adrian Osborne was also returned as Vice Chair.

In fact there were no great surprises on the night as the councillors chairing other committees also remained unchanged. The only challenge of the night involved the planning chairman – Councillor Peter Beer, who was challenged by Councillor Stephen Plumb. After a close vote Peter Beer was returned 18-16.

• Potential return to Covid restrictions

The council are revising their business continuity plans and internal response structures in light of lessons learned earlier in the year. All groups linked to the Collaborative Communities Board have also now been stood back up. These include –

- Food
- Logistics
- Housing
- Communications
- Community development

Data on people who may need help shielding if shielding returns is also being analysed.

It is estimated that the number of people claiming Universal Credit in Suffolk has increased by 75% since March and there has been a 238% increase in the amount of food handed out to single adults and families, from Suffolk's foodbanks. There are also 104,000 people still furloughed from their jobs.

In response to this, the Suffolk Resilience Forum has recently launched a phone line to help resident's access information or support relating to debt, benefits, housing or employment from the Citizens Advice Suffolk Alliance. Calls can be made free of charge to the phone line on 0800 068 3131, from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

- **Planning Concerns**

The Government recently published two consultation papers outlining major changes in planning. One sets out proposals for a completely new national planning system – the 'Planning for the Future' white paper. The other suggests shorter-term amendments to the current system, which would take effect more quickly.

Included in the suggested short-term changes is an amendment to the method for assessing local housing need, which could see an increase to undeliverable rates in Babergh. As a result, the district would be under pressure to deliver more homes in all areas.

Proposals also suggest increasing the small sites threshold – below which developers are not required to contribute to affordable housing – from ten to 40 or 50 homes. It is estimated that this could almost halve the number of much-needed affordable homes. Another proposed change, the introduction of First Homes, could also significantly reduce the number of affordable homes in the districts and the proposed First Homes scheme is also set to be exempt from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Following cross-party discussion, concerns raised have been highlighted in a response to the proposed 'Changes to the current planning system' consultation. The same cross-party group of councillors will submit a response to the Government's longer-term overhaul of the planning system following further discussion.

- **Public Realm Changes**

Babergh's cabinet has approved plans which will see the management of public open spaces, playgrounds, and litter bins move in-house, in line with neighbouring Mid Suffolk. Bringing the service in-house, which is already the case in Mid Suffolk, will allow for consistent service standards and increased flexibility. It will also enable the council, jointly with Mid Suffolk, to manage land more holistically to increase biodiversity. Planting wildflower meadows to replace strict grass cutting regimes where suitable and creating wildlife corridors are all options currently being explored by the councils' biodiversity task force sub-group.

- **BMSDC receive £100,000 government funding to tackle rough sleeping/homelessness**

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have been awarded £100,000, through the Next Steps Accommodation Programme. This is to help cover the costs of commercial hotels needed to provide accommodation and support during the colder weather.

- **5 Year Housing Supply**

A report into the current 5-year Housing Land supply in Babergh has demonstrated that the council currently has enough approved developments for 6.75 years. The council is required to have 2184 properties, but actually has 2943 – 35% more.

5 Reports –

i) **Footpaths** Must say haven't been along footpaths for a while but assume all ok, cut back brush and overgrown bushes and trees behind church to widen footpath, top end to be tackled a bit later, thanks to all who spared their time and sweat in clearing afore said, should be cutting footpaths from this weekend for possibly last time, weather permitting. Hopefully JB will honour his word and trim back hedgerows where impeding footpaths.

ii) **Tree Warden**

The Tree Warden's had their AGM on 1st October.

The Chairperson report. We been informed that the Tree Warden Scheme is 30 years old. Two of our local tree wardens are stepping down due to ill health. She also highlighted to us the challenge ahead of trying to do our tree warden work. It was also pointed out that Babergh no longer pays for the Tree Warden's Insurance, we will not be covered if we have an unfortunate accident, I was informed that this now is Whatfield Council's responsibility. As I am unable do much at moment, I do not think that this is very important, it's something to be considered for the future. The Tree Warden's secretary has sent me an email about ash die back, it's an owners Guide, now available on the Tree council web site. The free tree pack scheme has now closed, but they still have a few trees left over.

(Heath safety matter)

The hedge below my bungalow has now been cut, with the owner's co-operation, I know Whatfield council had previously had problems in getting it cut but think that's sorted out now.

(Wildflower area on Whatfield conservation area Rectory Road). Brian has now cut back grass ready for next spring lovely snowdrop to come through and the wildflowers. It lovely to see all small bird flocks down Rectory road area they are eating all berries, that seem to be very plentiful this year, it certainly been good year for wildlife.

(Over gang Ford)

Also I would like thank Babergh who going to provide the litter bin at ford and Whatfield councils secretary Mrs King for a arranging it.

Questions from the Public – None

6. Action Updates

Allotments The Allotments are all doing well with only ½ an allotment vacant. 1 plot of ½ size will be asked to leave as they have not attended to the allotment. David is collecting this year's fees and it was agreed that this should be the same as last year. Unanimous

Playground Hopefully the company who installed the playground will be carrying out repairs to the swings on Friday 23rd October. The issue of the Playground Committee. The 7 members of the committee are no longer interested in running the group and are giving David Cross letters of resignation. David proposed that 2 members of the Parish Council and the Parish Clerk become signatures on the account at Ipswich Building Society and that the Parish Council would now take over the running and maintenance of The Whatfield Playground. It was proposed that David Cross Parish Councillor, Charlotte Curtis Parish Councillor and Lynn King Parish become the representatives on the Ipswich Building Society Account. Proposed: David Cross Seconded: Paul Whittle Chairman Unanimous.

7. Neighbourhood Plan We are in the green block, "*review consultation results and amend the plan*". Andrea has prepared comments, suggestions and any amendments to the plan covering all parties who responded and these groups ranged from members of the public/residents, Babergh DC, Suffolk CC, Suffolk wildlife trust, Anglian water, Natural England, Kersey PC, National Grid, CCG, District councillor.

The team are currently looking at Andrea's comments and a meeting is being scheduled next week for the team to agree any changes.

I would like to add that all of the responses from all the groups above were positive, well received and constructive.

I do need to mention a positive comment from the CCG not sure if we want to pursue this as the parish council but they are offering to meet with us to any discuss current or future health care provisions in Whatfield. Note the CCG really like the plan..

Again, sorry I can't make tomorrow night but now please see the following from our planning consultant.

STATEMENT OF WHERE WE ARE WITH THE NEIGHBOROURHOOD PLAN

Hopefully the information below will be helpful to the Parish Council. The diagram gives a quick visual guide, but i have included some practical detail and timetable underneath. My guess is that as an SG you would want to move quickly on this and have the plan submitted to Babergh before Christmas – we would then have an examination around Feb/March 2021.

Neighbourhood Plan Process Flow Chart – Whatfield October 2020

	Completed Stage
	Current Stage
	Future Stage

We are currently in the position of reviewing and analysing the consultation results and deciding what amendments to make to the plan.

The indicative timetable will be something like this:

7th October – Consultation closes

By 14th October - AL will process (acknowledge and record) all responses and produce a Table of Representations for the SG to consider
 By End of October - SG will meet to consider all responses and decide what changes they wish to make to the plan
 1-14 November- AL will amend the Plan following SG discussions
 AL will also produce supporting documents – Basic Conditions Statement and Consultation Statement and send round to SG members for comment
 By end of November SG will meet to (hopefully) sign off the two supporting documents and the amended Neighbourhood Plan
 2nd December Amended Plan and all supporting documents to be considered by Parish Council (who hopefully) will agree the plan for submission to Babergh DC.
 W/c 7th December revised plan submitted to Babergh DC

We are hoping to have two SG meetings and as the PC are due to meet on 2nd December so we are aiming for that meeting to get final sign off.

- 8. **Planning** - No new plans have been submitted.
- 9. **Health & Safety** –David thinks that a risk assessment needs to be done to the Playground in view of Covid 19. David has drafted a small poster and has asked for everyone to look at it and give their views.
- 10. **Accounts and Payments** . As of the 11th October we have a bank balance of £15.393.02 including Octobers precept payment. All donation cheques have been sent out and cashed.

Next Meeting

2nd December 2020 at 7.45 pm via Zoom

Meeting closed at 9.05pm

Signed Date.....