

# MINUTES OF THE WHATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT WHATFIELD VILLAGE HALL 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021

## Present

Mr. P. Whittle	Chairman
Mr. D. Cross	Vice Chairman
Mr. G. Smith	Parish Councillor
Mr S Clifford	Parish Councillor
Mr R, Searle	Parish Councillor
Sarah Eastman	Conservation Warden
Mrs. L. King	Parish Clerk

## 1, Apologies for Absence

Mrs C. Curtis	Parish Councillor
Mr. D. Dray	Parish Councillor
Mr. L. Jameson	District Councillor
Mr. R Lindsay	County Councillor
Mrs J. Green	Tree Warden

2. Matters arising from Minutes of meeting held 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021 Minutes of 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021 meeting were accepted and signed. Prop Simon Clifford Sec: Graham Smith Unanimous

3. Correspondence Clerk has sent an email to SALXs with regard to the Playground Maintenance/Grass Cutting.

4. County Councillor's Report – Hadleigh Quarry – The appeal by the quarry developers was allowed by the planning inspector in a decision in mid-November. This means their application to expand the quarry can go ahead. The developers applied to have the county council pay their legal costs but the inspector refused this, saying that the council's grounds for refusal were reasonable. His written response is available here. <https://acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/ViewCase.aspx?caseid=3264295>

### **County council buildings to be made carbon neutral.**

The Cabinet met on the 9<sup>th</sup> November, and unanimously voted in favour of a £12.8m investment into ensuring Council buildings become carbon neutral. This is in response to the Council's climate emergency, declared back in 2019, and includes offices, fire stations, libraries, and other buildings owned by Suffolk County Council.

Schools are not a part of this investment, as the Council do not have budgetary control over their buildings, but they are working to provide support via knowledge sharing.

### **A12 widening:**

The Cabinet nodded through recommendations outlined for the Dept. for Transport's A12 Major Network Project, which would include duelling a stretch of current single carriage road north of Woodbridge. The Cabinet committed to spending £10m on drawing up a full business case for the £57m project and is hoping the Department for Transport and local developers will contribute much of the balance. The project includes a short stretch of cycle lane, and some footbridges. My group have brought up issues of large areas of natural beauty (including many oaks by the side of the A12) being cut down to incentivise more personal vehicle use.

### **Speed limits and road safety - full Council Meeting 2<sup>nd</sup> December**

Our Group were able to submit two motions to council since Labour did not submit their allowed quota of one. Our first motion calls on the County Council to urge Suffolk police to publicly commit to enforcing 20mph zones, in light of the newly amended Highway Code, which makes clear that all speed limits within a red circle are obligatory – including a 20mph limit. Our second motion asks the County Council to confirm its responsibility to making our roads safer for Suffolk residents and visitors, by committing to further education, enforcement, and engineering. Further commitments include expanding the Bikeability scheme, meaningful engagement via a visit from a Road Safety Specialist to every school at least once every academic year, and more coordination between services. **Councillors will vote on these motions on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December.**

### **Shortage of Flu Jabs in East**

On the 26<sup>th</sup> November, my political group met with Stuart Keeble, the Director of Public Health at Suffolk County Council to discuss recent shortages of flu jabs reported in Suffolk.

It was confirmed by Mr Keeble that there is a regional issue with the supply of flu jabs, and that the entire East of England is experiencing this. Our Group was concerned that Suffolk's agencies would not be able to provide the flu vaccine to all that fit the Government's new broadened criteria for those who are now eligible for a free flu jab. For further details on the new criteria for a flu jab, please see here: [National flu immunisation programme 2021 to 2022 letter - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/611112/national-flu-immunisation-programme-2021-to-2022-letter.pdf)

## **5. District Councillor's Report Babergh parking charges postponed**

Plans to introduce new car parking tariffs, including an hour's free parking, in Babergh car parks from January next year, have been postponed. The changes agreed by Babergh's cabinet earlier this year, were due to begin in January next year, to allow as much time as possible to work with the high street to find the best solution for everyone and avoid unnecessary uncertainty during the Christmas season.

However, the implementation date has been further postponed, which means that improvements due to be funded by car park income, such as signage, resurfacing and access improvement works, active travel improvements, and extended resident parking permit schemes, are also expected to be delayed.

### **Joint Local Plan delayed**

The hearings that are part of the examination process have been postponed. The process hit a roadblock during the hearing looking at the special distribution and site selection. The inspector expressed concerns about how the decisions were made to discount some proposed allocations. The inspector now requires more evidence to satisfy him that the process was robust.

To achieve this the Council now have to revisit and review all 600 of the rejected allocation sites. This work will take between 9mths and a year to complete and may result in more sites in our market towns and along the Ipswich fringe being accepted.

### **Considerate Constructors Scheme**

On the 21<sup>st</sup> September Council meeting I submitted a motion asking the Council to sign up as a client partner of the Considerate Constructor Scheme. This scheme aims to achieve best practice in the industry, particularly around areas of Safety, The Community, The Environment, and the Workforce. By becoming a Client Partner it demonstrates that the Council is an organisation that proactively chooses to demonstrate its commitment to raising standards in the construction industry.

### **Corks Lane**

It has been confirmed that there are still some non-material amendments to the planning consent that are in hand with the planning team. Some of the buildings are listed and work on these also still need listed building consent and LPA approval. The Council are also awaiting tenders from contractors, but the deadline for this has been extended to allow for the effects of Brexit and Covid on the construction industry.

### **Council commits to reducing light emitted**

The Council have committed to reducing streetlight intensity across their districts – protecting plant and wildlife, and reducing energy use, in line with biodiversity and climate change ambitions. This will include additional lighting control guidance within their Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), currently in development, was also approved.

## **6. Reports**

i) **Footpaths** Footpaths remain good and walkable.

ii) **Tree Wardens** (Community Award)

I am pleased to announce that (Suffolk County Council) has awarded Suffolk tree wardens a community achievement award for the greenest county. That is lovely, and means that we are doing a good job.

(Suffolk Tree warden on BBC Country file) A few weeks ago a seed gathering even took place at an ancient park in Redgrave Hall, BBC cameras were there to film Suffolk tree wardens collecting native tree seeds for our plant Britain campaign, this certainly puts a positive light on the Suffolk tree wardens.

(Tree planting this winter) The Suffolk tree wardens in partnership with SCC have managed to supply 15,000 trees and 4 kilometres of hedgerow. These are to be delivered next week ready for local planting events. This is a wonderful achievement.

(East Anglian Region forum) The annual regional forum took place on the 20th of November this year. It was so nice for local tree wardens to meet up and exchange ideas. Also there are always many speakers at the event that give the tree wardens new ideas for next year.

(Tree Planting in Whatfield) I understand that the parish council are having a discussion about planting trees somewhere in the Whatfield village next year, I have given my opinions on the matter by email, hopefully a site can be found for local villagers to do some tree planting. I think that Whatfield Parish council have already done lots of tree planting in the last 35 years; I think that they must be very forward thinking parish councillors.

iii) **Conservation Report** Winter is now upon us and both meadows are looking in good shape. Richard has cut and tidied some of the grass areas in Huntly's and this has been stacked in the top corner which may provide shelter for grass snakes, slow worms or mice. He plans to cut some of the hedges over the winter months. The Buckthorn plants, planted in

around 2016 are slowly growing and have survived the dry periods since I asked Richard if he thought that there were as many nests in the meadows this year and he thought there were fewer, possibly as a result of a cold spring. There were also very few apples on the trees this year in Huntly's and again frost may have been responsible for this. The two fruit trees planted this year have also survived the season and both had blossom and the crab apple has lovely red fruit. Richard seems to think that there is scope to plant a few of the trees that are available. Some in an area in buckles meadow possibly in a hedge format and also in the drift area. He also mentioned the church farm piece of land. A hedge of some description would certainly use up surplus plants.

**Questions from the Public – None**

**6. Action Updates**

**Allotments** seem to be in generally good shape, with some changes of tenancy in recent months. I have collected all rents, have paid them in to our Parish Clerk, have prepared an updated plan of the tenancies and have an updated list of all tenants with appropriate contact details. Copies have been given to Lynn. I intend to surrender the role of managing the allotments at our next AGM, after several years in the post. Like other PC members, I have no allotment myself, and living at the opposite end of the village does not enable easy monitoring. The role is mainly administrative, and the allotment tenants are a very pleasant group of people who include experts on producing excellent results! It would be a positive role for a PC member who has not yet experienced a direct practical 'hands on' role on behalf of the community. Sarah Eastman has agreed to become in charge of the Allotments in May.

**Playground** .It was agreed that the Playground Account needs to be added to the Parish Council Accounts.

**7. Neighbourhood Plan** Still no changes.

**8. Planning -** 8 the Street, Hollies, Ash Street and the Old Rectory. Whatfield. Planning has been approved for Crouch Farm.

**9. Health & Safety** –None

**10. Accounts and Payments** . . As of the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021 we have a bank balance of £10,502.52. We have no outstanding Invoices but I have banked £325.00 from the allotment fees.

**11. Donations** £300 St. Margaret's Graveyard Fund, Richard Mower £220 and Graham Smith £120: Prop David Cross and Sec Paul Whittle unanimous.

**12. Precept** The Precept for 2022 was agreed to keep the same and the forms were duly signed.

**13. Dates for Next Year's Meetings** the Dates for all of next years meeting were agreed subject to booking with the Village Hall.

**14, Trees** Roy has submitted to Babergh approval for placement of Trees. Wheatfield' Road approx... 25 Trees. (Native English plants) Green space i.e. 30 Trees, 10 Oaks for the School, Church Farm place has a? Over if they can plant any. Buckles Meadow 10, Drift Area or other sites where. Minimum 150

Next meeting 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022 at 7.45pm

Meeting closed at 9.15pm

Signed ..... Date.....