

MINUTES OF THE WHATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT WHATFIELD VILLAGE HALL 30th November 2022

Present

Mr. P. Whittle	Chairman
Mr. D. Cross	Vice Chairman
Mr. G. Smith	Parish Councillor
Mr S Clifford	Parish Councillor
Mr. D. Dray	Parish Councillor
Mr R, Searl	Parish Councillor
Mrs Jilly. Harris	Parish Councillor
Mr. R Lindsay	County Councillor
Mr. L. Jameson	District Councillor
Sarah Eastman	Conservation Warden
Mrs. L. King	Parish Clerk

1, Apologies for Absence

Mrs J. Green Tree Warden

2. Matters arising from Minutes of meeting held 22nd September 2022 Minutes of 22nd September 2022 meeting were accepted and signed. . Prop David Cross Sec: David Dray Unanimous

3. Correspondence . We have had a request from Babergh re the Dog Litter Bin at the Junction of The Street/Naughton Road this needs to be repaired Graham Smith to repair this..

4. County Councillor's Report

Bus motion

At full council this Thursday (1st December) I will be proposing a motion to try to get a proper strategy in place for investing in buses in the county, the county having failed to win a penny in its latest bid for "Bus Back Better" money.

Many of our former rural scheduled routes have disappeared to be replaced by dial a ride services. But dial a ride services are not properly promoted, nor is there any check on them by the county to see if they are working. My motion asks that SCC and the community bus provides monitor demand annually and aim to bring back scheduled routes for those routes that prove popular. The motion also asks the county to recognise in the next iteration of its Local Transport Plan (currently being drawn up) that we need to increase the ratio of journeys by bus to journeys by car in the county. We are also asking that it investigates a workplace parking levy for Ipswich, as has been recommended by officers.

Special Educational Need services – Update

Last year, Suffolk CC's SEND services were criticised in a damning report conducted by Lincolnshire Council which contained 32 recommendations. This month our political group on the county was told that 22 of the 32 recommendations have been actioned, and the remaining 10 will be completed by the end of 2022.

The delivery of 1,317 new specialist school places by 2026 has been agreed and 826 of these places are now open. The number of Education Health Care Plans (EHP) has increased to 6,847 in September 2022, from 5,849 in September 2020.

Suffolk looks for more hosts for Ukrainian refugees

New hosts coming forward to help accommodate guests that are already in Suffolk can sign up via the Suffolk County Council website, by **completing our online form** or emailing **refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk**.

Accommodation must be available to guests for a minimum of 6 months. Hosts will be eligible to receive the £350 thank you payment for up to 6 months or more, depending on the date your guests arrived in the UK (12 months starting from the date your guests first arrived in the UK). If you know anyone that might be interested, please encourage them to visit **Ukraine: Could you help a family in need? | Suffolk County Council**

Suffolk to have a "Directly Elected Leader"

Suffolk County Council's leader has agreed to a deal with central Government that will create the post of directly elected leader of the county council. This person will be able to appoint their own cabinet from existing county councillors. But the

Government have at this stage not made clear what powers, if any, it is devolving from itself to the elected leader. The prospect of an elected leader of a different political party to the majority of county councillors could create stalemate.

Automatic Number plate Recognition

This week, (8th November) Suffolk's cabinet is likely to decide to apply to the Government to give itself powers to enforce moving traffic offences. This will allow it to use number plate recognition cameras to fine people for driving on streets or through bus gates where private motors have been banned. It intends to pilot four roads in Ipswich to start with. Each camera costs around £20k plus £5k annual maintenance fee and it wants the fines at each site to at least cover the costs at each site.

Roundabout Magazine

Roundabout magazine's printer is on its last legs and they need £10k-£12k. They have about £4k already in their kitty so I have match funded that with another £4k from my locality allowance. Nedging PC are holding that £4k contribution in their account until the magazine publishers purchase the machine.

Budget

Suffolk County Council is predicting a £16.2 million overspend on its £625m budget for the full year to March 2023, according to its Q2 projections. This is mainly due to a surge in spending on children in care. There are six children in particular who warranted very intensive care which required purchasing places in very expensive special homes.

But there is also more spending on specialist school travel (taxis) for Special Needs children and higher inflation is driving costs higher than expected. The overspend will be met by extra cash from reserves.

5. District Councillor's Report

Measures to protect Waterways

Councillors at both Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils voted unanimously to support measures to protect local rivers and waterways. Both councils agreed motions designed to address concerns over water quality, and the impact of regular wastewater discharge – including untreated sewage – into local rivers and seas.

The Green party proposal in Babergh, by Cllr Robert Lindsay received cross-party support, with councillors hearing how there were 288 sewage storm overflow spills into Babergh's rivers last year. Measures agreed include inviting officers from Anglian Water, together with representatives from the Environment Agency and Natural England to a public scrutiny meeting to answer questions on current levels of sewage discharge.

The councils will also introduce requests for further information as part of the planning process.

Retrofitting Motion

I recently, successfully, submitted a motion to Full Council asking the council to investigate working with other councils in Suffolk and Essex to help Retrofitting of Council Owned Properties.

By combining resources and finances it may be possible to increase the number of properties that can be retrofitted. Not only is this a good thing environmentally, but it could be good for the local economy as the economies of scale would allow local companies to target there business effectively and will help with training local people.

Online climate change awareness course launches for Suffolk

A free, online course has been launched to support individuals and businesses to learn about the impacts of climate change in Suffolk. The course, which aims to improve understanding of the environmental issues facing communities in the county is free and easy to access through the Creating the Greenest County website

Council Property arm generates income

Babergh and Mid Suffolk's commercial property company CIFCO made a £6.7m profit last year and generated £3.7m in net income for the councils to plough back into services, councillors heard this week.

This means that since CIFCO Capital Ltd was established it has maintained its debt repayments and generated net income last year of £1.7m for Mid Suffolk and £2m for Babergh, bringing the total net income received by the councils by the end of the last financial year to £9.25m.

I did raise concerns regarding the potential risks that the cost-of-living crisis could bring, but these were largely dismissed as mitigation is in place.

Bird flu outbreak

The Animal Plant and Health Agency (APHA) has detected a number of cases of bird flu (avian influenza) in poultry, and wild and captive birds, across the east of England, including in Nedging in Babergh. The situation continues with outbreaks reported daily across the East and nationally.

This means there is now a legal requirement for all bird keepers in our districts, and further afield, to implement enhanced biosecurity measures to help protect their flocks. Our teams will be supporting APHA and Suffolk Trading Standards over coming days as required, with more information available on the Government's website including posters for town and parish noticeboards if required. We need to advise residents to report dead wild birds to the Defra helpline (03459 33 55 77) if they find:

- one or more dead bird of prey or owl
- Three or more dead gulls or wild waterfowl (swans, geese, and ducks)
- Five or more dead birds of any species

Otherwise, it is landowner's responsibility to safely arrange safe disposal of the carcasses.

2023 Review of Parliamentary constituencies

The Boundary Commission for England will publish its revised proposals for new constituency boundaries on Tuesday 8 November 2022. This will trigger the final four-week consultation period of the 2023 review, which will close on Monday 5 December 2022.

If you have any queries, you can contact the Boundary Commission via email or on 020 7271 1102.

Response to the Government Rent Cap Consultation Paper

The councils have now responded to the Government's open consultation regarding Social Housing Rents published on 31 August.

The view of both councils is that local authorities should not be subject to any national rent cap and that rents should be determined in the context of the local HRAs, taking account of local needs and pressures and the views of tenants.

Parking strategy

The councils' have now approved their first ever joint parking strategy. The strategy includes prioritised recommendations to improve all types of parking, from council-owned car parks to on-street parking.

The recommendations include updating signage and markings, increasing safety provisions, providing more EV charging, and cycling facilities, and introducing resident permit schemes to allow overnight parking.

6. Reports

i) **Footpaths** Footpaths are holding up well considering wet weather. Perhaps some improvements will be adapted to the footpath alongside water treatment works by JB this winter.

ii) **Tree Wardens** None

iii) **Conservation Report** . Graham Hart from Suffolk wildlife visited both Buckles meadow and Huntys Vale meadow in October. Both I and Richard met him. He then looked at Richards's meadow. He has recently joined the organisation and wanted to familiarise himself with wildflower meadows known to them. It is entirely up to us how we manage cutting etc., He made a two or three suggestions to encourage habitat and cover for wildlife and plants.

1. letting hedges grow to ground level.
2. Leaving a strip uncut for hay in Buckles meadow allowing insects and seed to complete their cycle.
3. Encouraging a rough area between the trees at this end of Huntys where brambles have already begun naturally growing to create cover for small birds. It can be managed so as not to become a problem. These seemed good suggestions and worth doing and Richard is going to talk to Colin Goodchild at an appropriate time if this is agreeable to the parish council?

Richard would like to do some thinning on the left hand side of the drift this winter. He suggests removing approximately six 20 foot sycamore trees and replanting with Ash and Maple saplings he has collected. He also wants to purchase a couple of Pussy willows and plant one at the top of the drift and one in Buckles Meadow near the wet area. These will provide a host for a large number of insects apparently. Mandy Squirrel and I planted a gage plum tree a couple of weeks ago at the top of Huntys meadow.

Questions from the Public – None

6. Action Updates

**Allotments
Playground**

All allotments are fine.

Dan the man has kept the grass and surrounding weeds under control following the ideal autumn growing season following a summer of little growth. It is a pity we didn't see the tropical 'growing season coming or we would have seeded the areas around swings, slides etc. This can wait 'till spring. I made an inspection of the playground this morning but was disappointed to find the litter bin ripped from the bolts securing it to the ground. Many of its contents were spread on the ground - contents that included an unbelievable number of nappies! I have cleared up as best I can but the bin needs a good wash and re-bolting to the ground. At the time of writing I have stuck the sign back together and plan to tie the bin back against the railings as exposed bolts could be hazardous to young knees. The above is the basis for some discussion this evening.

7. **Planning** - An application for works to trees on Church Farm Place with preservation order on them.
8. **Health & Safety** -None
9. **Accounts and Payments** As of the 1st November 2022 we have a bank balance of £9,949.68 with an outstanding invoice of £150.00 for the allotments
10. **Church Farm grass cutting** this has now been done.
11. **Precept** The Council agreed to keep our Precept the same as last year. Prop Paul Whittle Sec: Jilly Harris unanimous
12. **Dates for Next Year's Meetings** All the dates for next year's meetings were agreed.
13. **2023 Daffodil planting 3 locations** Roy Searl to prices for more Daffodils etc.
14. **Christmas Tree** David Mason and Lynn King to go and purchase this year's tree. Prop:
15. **Speed Camera** It was agreed to pay Monks Eleigh for their share of the Speed Camera for £450.00 Prop: Roy Searl Sec: David Cross unanimous

Next meeting 18th January 2023 at 7.45pm

Meeting closed at 9.15pm

Signed Date.....