

# MINUTES OF THE WHATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT WHATFIELD VILLAGE HALL 29<sup>th</sup> March 2017

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The meeting opened at 7.45pm.

## **Present**

Mr. P. Whittle	Chairman
Mr. D. Cross	Parish Councillor
Mr. D. Dray	Parish Councillor
Mr. G. Smith	Co-opted Councillor
Mrs. H. Landon	Parish Councillor
Mrs C. Curtis	Co-opted Parish Councillor
Mr S Clifford	Co-opted Parish Councillor
Mrs. J. Antill	County Councillor
Mr. A. Ferguson	District Councillor
Mrs. Lynn King	Parish Clerk
Mrs. B. Smith	Footpath Warden

## **1. Apologies for Absence**

Mrs J. Green	Tree Warden
Mrs. M Eastman	Conservation Warden

## **2. Matters arising from Minutes of meeting held 25<sup>th</sup> January 2017**

Minutes of 25<sup>th</sup> January 2017 meeting were accepted and signed with an alteration to be made to include Prop: David Cross Sec: Simon Clifford Unanimous.

**3. Correspondence.** Community Action Suffolk have been in contact with me and I have renewed our membership, this is now free of charge. Letters of appreciation have been sent to Ruth Lucas and Ray Parker.

**4. County Councillor's Report** - The council is very quiet now as we are into the moratorium period ahead of the election on 4<sup>th</sup> May.

**Budget 2017/18** - This was passed by the Council on 9<sup>th</sup> February. The SCC component of the Council tax bill will rise by 3%, which represents the Government levy specifically to pay for Social Care. This is lower than the 5% increase being imposed by many councils in England, and the 4% national average.

**Annual Public Health Report** - Suffolk's Director of Public Health released his annual report on 26 January 2017 setting an ambition to improve mental health services in Suffolk over the next 10 years.

An estimated 1 in 100 people are affected by severe mental ill health in Suffolk.

The report, lists seven recommendations to promote good mental health and reduce demand in Suffolk over the next five to 10 years:

The report is divided into sections that correspond with different stages in people's lives, from pre-birth children to older people's mental health. It recognises that good mental health is a fundamental human right for everyone and that good mental health is essential for good physical health, and vice versa.

## **School Funding**

At first sight Suffolk appeared to be one of the winners under new arrangements for school funding recently announced by the Government. Suffolk schools will receive 2% more than before. However this still means that the County's schools will receive considerably less than schools in other parts of the country, and in real terms (taking inflation into account) there will actually be little change from the previous unacceptable situation. The Cabinet Member for Education Gordon Jones has written to complain about the settlement to the Secretary of State, as have head teachers in the County.

**Whatfield** - I understand that there has been some small progress in respect of the SID's that are to be shared with Monks Eleigh.

I am hoping to attend your Annual Parish Meeting on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May.

## **5. District Councillor's Report - A summary is as follows:**

### **Devolution**

- The devolution debate has in some respects come full circle. We originally started with a simple Suffolk option for consideration that was expanded to include Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. With lukewarm support from our western district potential partners, it was decided to split the proposals into 2 parts with Norfolk and Suffolk bidding separately from, Cambs and Peterborough. However 4 Norfolk Councils voted against the partnership and the decision was taken to bid for devolution as Suffolk alone. The "full circle" option now sits on the Minster's desk in London and we have no news regarding the nature/numbers that this smaller version of devolution will generate if the Government eventually decides to approve it for Suffolk alone.

### **Appointment of New Chief Executive**

- Arthur Charvonia, the new joint Babergh/Mid Suffolk started Jan 2017 after his other Suffolk District Council employer agreed to release him early. He joins the Council at a time of huge change but he know the territory and the significant challenges that 2017 will bring. First impressions remain very positive.

### **Future of Babergh accommodation Corks Lane**

- The decision to move both Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils to Ipswich (Suffolk C Endeavour House) was taken late last year. Babergh ^" & Mid Suffolk will remain independent Councils with shared co-located back office support.
- The move to Ipswich (Suffolk CC Endeavour House) will take place in May/June 2017 and will require a phased approach to maintain services to Ward members.
- Two "lading sires" have yet to be agreed. One in Sudbury and one in Stowmarket (detail of retained levels of staffing have yet to be agreed) where support will be provided to Ward members who cannot or do not wish to travel to Ipswich to meet District Council members and/or Officers.
- Disposal of current accommodation subject of on-going studies. There is very strong pressure to ensure that Corks Lane will not be left empty any longer than is absolutely necessary. The options will be discussed in the first half of 2017 and are likely to range from disposal to developments.

## Boundary Commission

- Babergh called the Boundary Commission last year to assess the structure of the District and the allocation of Councillors to geographical areas. The report is expected to be delivered early in 2017 with any changes implemented in 2019. It is entirely possible that the Commission will recommend a reduction in District Councillors numbers but this is entirely speculative.

## Government

- Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils have decided to adopt "Cabinet" governance rather than the current "Committee" arrangement. This should lead to more speedy decision making but it will also lead to greater responsibility for District Councillors who hold a portfolio e.g. housing growth etc.

## Finance

- With the reduction in Revenue Support Grants (RSG) from Central Government, without action on Babergh's part the Council would face a deficit in 3 year period 2018-2020. This would not be acceptable as the Council is required by law to deliver a balanced budget.
- For the Council and the Ward members, it means that hard decisions lie ahead if current levels of service are to be maintained.

## Summary

Babergh District Councillors remain confident that new procedures and processes will eventually bring tangible benefits to all the voters in Hadleigh.

6. **Review of PC Constitution** The matter of our PC constitution was raised and it was agreed that Charlotte would look into it and David to send templates to the PC. Several members of the PC were very happy with using the current Code of Conduct issued by SALCS.

## 7. **Reports** –

- i) **Footpaths** – Foot paths are fine.
- ii) **Tree Warden – No report.**
- iii) **Conservation - Buckles meadow** - Colin Goodchild has agreed to harrow and cut Buckles when he cuts the Old Rectory. Hopefully the orchids will not be affected. The nest boxes are being used.

**Hunty's Vale** - All the trees are looking good and are growing well and should flower in the next week or two. Richard has cut the pathways. The owl box is visited but doesn't seem to be occupied although the one in Richard's meadow is being used.

**Drift way** - The path is looking good and the trees are growing. Brian has planted out snowdrops and David has planted some daffodils. Gradually the wild flowers are increasing.

A suggestion was made to plan a walk looking for wild life. This is a possibility and dates and information will be posted on village hall and village notice boards.

Thanks must go to all the volunteers who help with the upkeep of the conservation area which many are able to enjoy. Any extra offers of help are always welcome.

Questions from the public:

PC was asked to contact Mr Grahams with reference to the tree outside 12a Wheatfields. As this is now dying after the effects of vandalism.

**8. Action Updates**

**SID** Monks Eleigh have bow has their posts installed and I have sent queries from Paul Whittle and David Cross to Nicola about the draft contract and she will get back to me asap.

**Welcome Pack** David has costed the printing of the welcome packs at 300 for £168.00 at 56p per copy and Landex have ordered 50. Proposed: David Cross Sec: Simon unanimous

**Allotments** Are all in good order and we only have 1 ½ allotments left to rent.

**9. Planning** - Plans for an manege to be built at Crouch Farm have been circulated

**10. Health & Safety** – None

**11. Accounts and Payments** I am still having problems with Barclays Bank and Paul Whittle has agreed to look into us changing to TSB. I need another Councillor to be approved for this account. I need their full address, how long they have lived there and if less than 3 years their previous address and date of birth. Simon Clifford agreed to do this. Prop: P. Whittle Sec: D. Dray unanimous. All outstanding invoices have been paid but I have just received an invoice from Babergh for emptying the Dog Bins and SALCs invoice due in April. All invoices approved. Prop: C. Curtis Sec: H. Landon unanimous. We have a balance of £10.054.30

**12. The land adjacent to Church Farm Place** - David Dray updated the council on situation at Church Farm. The original 106 agreement for open space. They will then transfer to Babergh. This area is to be duly landscaped. All to be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 and September 2019 Babergh will take over this land. David Cross expressed his concerns over the lack to parking within the village and would have liked to have seen extra spaces on the development.

**13. The land behind the Horseshoes** - The PC expressed concerns about the land behind the Horseshoes as it is in a terrible state causing an eyesore within the village and a source of vermin. The clerk will write to Mr. Chisnell expressing our concerns and asking him to rectify this.

**Next Meeting**

AGM/APM Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> 2017, at 7.15/7.45 pm, Village Hall

Meeting closed at 9.25pm

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