

MINUTES OF THE WHATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT WHATFIELD VILLAGE HALL 4th October 2017

The meeting opened at 7.46pm.

Present

Mr. P. Whittle	Chairman
Mr. D. Cross	Vice Chairman
Mr. D. Dray	Parish Councillor
Mr. G. Smith	Parish Councillor
Mrs. H. Landon	Parish Councillor
Mrs C. Curtis	Parish Councillor
Mr S Clifford	Parish Councillor
Mrs. Lynn King	Parish Clerk
Mrs. B. Smith	Footpath Warden
Mrs. M Eastman	Conservation Warden
Mr. R Lindsay	County Councillor

1. Apologies for Absence

Mr. A. Ferguson	District Councillor
Mrs J. Green	Tree Warden

2. Matters arising from Minutes of meeting held 12th July 2017 Minutes of 12th July 2017 meeting were accepted and signed. Prop: Helen Landon Sec: Charlotte Curtis Unanimous.

3. Correspondence We have had a letter of thanks from Richard Mower for our donation. Also we have received a letter from Mr. Chris Armour (Church Warden) on behalf of St. Margaret's Church asked if the Parish Council can donate a sum of about £400 to go towards the replacement of the kissing gate at the entrance to the church. The PC agreed to this in principal but would like estimates to be supplied. Prop: David Cross Sec: Charlotte Curtis unanimous

4. County Councilor's Report - Highways reshuffle

A highways reshuffle means the usual points of contact for you and me have gone and we are being asked to report standard defects on the Highways reporting tool <https://highwaysreporting.suffolk.gov.uk> You will then get a reference number and if nothing happens you can chase over the telephone on 0345 606 6171 and quote the reference number. If this doesn't get you anywhere contact me to chase up.

Secret cabinet committees

Suffolk County council at their July proposed new cabinet committees which would have seats for councillors from all three political groups. However, the final proposal was that these committees would sit in secret. I introduced an amendment to say they should be in public as are all other council meetings. This was defeated the Conservative group, although several abstained. The unamended motion was then carried. I will be sitting on one of the four cabinet committees and am quite prepared to report anything significant to you and my constituents.

Cabinet members vote to boost their allowances

The council in July also proposed to increase the allowance for cabinet members, but for no other councillors. I and most of my group, voted against this. Again the Conservative majority were whipped to vote it through. I believe councillors need to make the arguments over allowance increases after they have served four years, not just after they have been elected.

Hadleigh Quarry - gravel washing plant and silt lagoons

This application is to Suffolk County Council, not Babergh, since the county is responsible for planning relating to quarrying. The application has been referred to Suffolk development committee (next meeting 12th December) because Hadleigh Town Council has objected.

Cutting of free school buses and post 16 travel subsidy – a rethink?

The cabinet last month decided to move to consultation on a plan that from Sept 2019 would:

1. End free travel for 11-16 year olds, where a student is not attending their nearest school (even if that school is their catchment school).
2. End subsidised travel for 16-18 year olds.

There will be 789 pupils in Cosford affected. For secondary school pupils, our division will be the worst hit in Suffolk with 37% having their free bus withdrawn and parents facing with the choice of changing school, having to arrange their arrangements. I and four other councillors in my group called this decision in to scrutiny committee and last week scrutiny committee vote 7 to 4 to send it back to cabinet for reconsideration. I believe the plan would have put more cars on the road and upset the education of children whose parents aren't able to drive them to school.

Traffic calming in Whatfield

I met councillor Dray in the summer and we discussed some measures that might slow traffic particularly coming into the village from the Hadleigh direction. I am prepared to contribute to whatever measures you might see fit, bearing in mind the cash limits I have.

5. District Councillor's Report – Introduction

Can I firstly apologise for not being able to join you again this evening, we are in Derbyshire looking after grandchildren for the week. For this reason, in my report I have gone into greater than normal and I will be happy to meet with the Parish Council separately to speak about planning applications or any other matter of concern if you wish.

The summer months are traditionally a quiet period for Council business and in most respects that has been the case in 2017. However, the move from Babergh to Endeavour House, Ipswich has generated significant activity that's the main source of update in this report apart from your 41 houses concern.

Public Access - The move of Babergh/Mid Suffolk Council staff is planned to be completed by the end of September. Then, anyone wishing to visit Council Officers will have to go to Sudbury or Stowmarket unless a special meeting is arranged. The new arrangement will be significantly beneficial for the Babergh/MS Officers but it's clearly a reduction in service for those who don't have cars, and those who are not computer literate/owners of smart phones etc. It's important to get the message around that a single phone number has been introduced to make it easier to contact an individual of department in the new building. It is: **0300 123 4000**.

In theory at least this should make contact with Council Officers easier but it has been subject to teething troubles. Please keep me advised.

Boundary Commission - The Boundary Commission has 3 inputs for a restructuring of Babergh to come down from 43 to 31 District Councillors (in 2019). They can be inspected on the Babergh website and eventually on the Boundary Commission's website too. One input is from the Conservative Group for 30 DCs; one is from the opposition Group for 32 Councillors, and the third is one that Councillor Sian Dawson and I developed for 31 Councillors. This number (31) was the proposed number from the Boundary Commission. We will be given the Boundary Commission's proposal on 14th October when the next consultation period will start. Cllr Dawson and I were uncomfortable with the proposals for some of the Wards, hence our decision to submit an alternative solution to the Conservative Group option. I should stress, however, that they all carry equal weight and the Commission will decide its own Ward structure based largely on about 2500 voters per Ward.

Housing – Private Sector

The Babergh Planning Committee has approved applications for almost 500 houses in the last three months. Our target for **houses built rather than just approved is 335 per annum**. Some of these approvals have been as a direct result of Babergh no longer having a 5 supply of land bank of potential building sites and it's a concern to me that it might be a blunt instrument and we are discussing how often the "absence of a 5 year supply" can be reviewed. You should be aware that as a Hinterland Village, Whatfield will be under pressure to accept growth and

we need to marshal appropriate arguments for refusal of applications if that's how the PC wishes to proceed. As a starter, I suggest that you check the number of houses that have been approved/built in the village in the last 5 or 10 years as a % of the number of dwellings to show that you are bearing your fair share. The urban developments of the Ipswich fringe, Sudbury and Hadleigh can't accommodate the entire requirement.

New Joint Local Plan (Draft) - The new draft Joint (Babergh & Mid Suffolk) Local Plan has identified just one possible site for housing development in Whatfield and this alone will naturally be a cause for concern. Please take the opportunity to comment on the draft as this will strengthen your case later when draft proposals become real proposals. I remain firmly of the view that it should be: "the right number, the right place and the right style". There is much to play for.

NB it's important to appreciate that their inclusion in the new Joint Local Plan carries limited weight when they go to a Planning Committee. If they get that far they will be subject to the full standard Planning Committee scrutiny.

Drawings For Planning Applications

As you will be aware, Babergh no longer provides large scale drawings to Parish Councils when they consider for planning applications in the village as a routine. However, you can request them and I strongly recommend that you do so. In my experience the larger drawings are essential if the PC is to have a full understanding of the application. If you do so, state that you want the **large A3 etc.** as they will send you the A4 version if you don't. Your call !

Babergh DC Bye Election – Sudbury

Following the recent resignation of a Babergh Council Conservative Member in Sudbury a bye election was held on 5th September 17. The Labour candidate won the seat **by one vote after several recounts. "Every vote really does count"**

Rumour Control Merger Babergh & MS

You may have seen the article written by Paul Geater in the East Anglian about the resurrection of discussions concerning a possible merger of Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils. It would be dishonest to tell you that the option is not being debated following the move to Endeavour House. However, I can absolutely assure you that no decision has been taken and from a personal perspective I am very aware that 6 years ago Babergh voters elected **NOT** to merge in a referendum by 60% to 40%. Even if another referendum is not required this cannot be ignored in any future discussion of the option.

6. Reports –

- i) **Footpaths** –With all the rain plus lovely sunshine the grass keeps growing so Graham is still cutting as much, but some people forget to put their hands in their pockets take out a little plastic bag bend their back and pick up maybe one day they will remember.
- ii) **Tree Warden** – Autumn has arrived early this year what lovely colours. Rectory road hedge below the Beacon has now been cut and now meets road safety standard's' and some new hedging has been planted by Mr Bentley wall's. The wildflower on the conservation area has been cut by Brian Green and footpath 11
- iii) **Conservation Buckles Meadow** - The meadow has been cut by Colin Goodchild when he cut the old rectory, hopefully if ask him well in time he will be willing to combine it next year. The year has been particularly good for pyramid orchids and they have been occurring in places we haven't seen them before. Richard has had success with his bird boxes which are in various places in the conservation area.

Hunts Vale - Richard has continued to cut the meadow in sections. The trees are doing well many are beginning to bear fruit and blossom time was especially attractive.

The Drift - The trees are growing well and the path has been cut and is very walkable in dry weather

The gardening club had an interesting talk on Monday about the value of conservation areas. It was pleasing to realise that our conservation areas are fulfilling such an important part in the story of preserving wild life and that will continue into the future.

Questions from the public: A question was raised by several members of the public with regard to the land to the rear of the Horseshoes and it was agreed that the Clerk would write to Mr Chisnall.

7. Action Updates

SID	The costing for the SID are now final and are as follows	
	3 extra brackets at £50	£150
	Extra Data £50	£ 50
	Cost for sign	£2800
	Data Analysis	£250
	Total	£3250 plus VAT
	Less £1000 from Jenny	£1000
	Total to pay	£2250

Divided makes £1125 before Vat Prop: Helen Landon Sec: David Cross unanimous

Allotments

The allotments are all going well and the letters are ready to be sent out for the next years Rent and a prize to be given for the most improved allotment and best kept one.

Telephone Box

David Cross to draw up plans for shelving.

Speeding/Footpath

As we have a growing concern about the speed of traffic through the village David Dray is to make enquiries with regards to all our options and inform the PC of his findings

Standing Orders

David will email Charlotte with all of his findings for her to look at.

Emergency Plan

Postponed

8. Planning

David Dray summarised his findings from the meeting he attended with reference to the Joint Local Plan It was decided that Charlotte will draft and distribute a letter for approval for the Joint Local Plan (Draft

9. Health & Safety – None

10. Accounts and Payments = I have now had the accounts back from the BDO and we have an invoice for £36.00 to pay and I have the Notice of Conclusion of Audit to display in our noticeboard. Following recommendations were made from the Audit. That in future the smaller authority should ensure all standard information is submitted for audit. Also to ensure that minor issues do not occur in future years i.e. unbanked cheques. Our TSB bank account have received the £1000 towards the SID and has a balance of £10,780.00. Barclays balance is £2027.69 which includes the precept at the beginning of September making a grand total of £12807.69

Next Meeting

6th December 2017, at 7.45 pm, Village Hall

Meeting closed at 9.30pm

Signed Date.....