

MINUTES OF THE WHATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT WHATFIELD VILLAGE HALL 24th January 2018

The meeting opened at 7.45pm.

The Chairman started the meeting with a tribute to Leslie Legg who was a former Parish Councillor and had recently passed away. And expressed thanks her for all her work that she had done for our village. Clerk to get with sympathy card for the Chairmen to send from the PC.

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
Mr S Clifford	Parish Councillor
Mrs. Lynn King	Parish Clerk
Mr. R Lindsay	County Councillor
Mr. A. Ferguson	District Councillor

1. Apologies for Absence

Mrs C. Curtis	Parish Councillor
Mrs B. Smith	Footpath Warden
Mrs J. Green	Tree Warden
Mrs. M Eastman	Conservation Warden

2. Matters arising from Minutes of meeting held 6th December 2017 Minutes of 6th December 2017 meeting were accepted and signed. Prop Helen Landon: Sec: David Cross Unanimous.

3. Correspondence Email from Michael Craske - I'm planning on applying for a felling licence for those poplar trees near the road at Barrards and was wondering if you knew if there was a village meeting to be held in the near future and if so could you tell them of our intentions please ? I can't think many in the village would object but feel we should tell everyone beforehand - I'm just fed up with every year they keep falling down and causing such a nuisance! PC agreed but would like them replaced with some form of greenery.

We have had an email from David Moss with regard to the flooding on The Street. I reported this to the Highways Agency who informed us that it was Landex responsibility. David Dray has spoken to them and sent photographs of the problem and I informed Mr. Moss of our action taken but he has not replied

Email from St. Margaret's PCC. Asking if Whatfield Parish Council would like to participate in the 9 Lessons and Carol Service by decorating a tree. /it was agreed to do this Prop: Helen Landon Sec. David Cross unanimous.

4. Donation to St. Margaret's Church Kissing Gate Fund Chris Armour has asked if the council would consider contributing towards to replacement of the kissing gate at St. Margaret's Church. They have raised a considerable amount towards it and would be grateful if the Parish Council could help them out. David Dray abstained due to conflict of interest. David Cross proposed that the PC donated £500 towards this and Helen Landon Seconded this. Unanimous

5. County Councillor's Report - Cutting of free school buses and post 16 travel subsidy

The revised proposal to cut school buses, which I am opposed to, as is my group, is out for consultation which closes at the end of Feb. I am attending a meeting held by Thurston School on this on Feb 1st.

Plastic bottle deposit return Scheme

At the last full council on December 7th I am pleased to say I received unanimous support for a motion I seconded which asked the council to back Government plans for this and for Suffolk to be a pilot project. Single use plastic

Nursery funding in Suffolk – county to pass on an extra £1m

I'm delighted to report that the county has partially listened to opposition voices (including mine) on this issue. Back in October I and other opposition councillors backed a motion calling for the county to pass on more of the cash it receives from central Govt for supporting nursery schools. It currently retains 6.8% (amounting to £2m). It meant people running nurseries had just £3.87 an hour. This was voted down by the Conservative administration after cabinet members said they needed the money for administrative purposes. However there is now a proposal before the schools forum this week to retain just 3.8% of the funding. If approved, this will allow the base rate payments to nursery providers for 3-4 year olds to increase from £3.87 an hour to £4. Because the county is retaining less, it is proposing to cut the telephone service it offers nursery providers by encouraging a move to online communication.

Citizens Advice - £20k funding cut and CAB in Hadleigh

The cabinet is aiming to cut £20,000 from Citizens Advice Bureau across the county as part of their plan to meet a £27m budget gap. Every £1 invested in CAB services generated £1.96 in savings to government and public services last year, according to a national study. There is growing demand for the CAB's services. Mid Suffolk CAB in Stowmarket saw 12% growth in clients requesting help last year. So this cut makes no sense. Both I and my group will be making this plain to the cabinet and full council. Meanwhile I have provided £300 for Sudbury and district CAB to do two "outreach" sessions this year in Hadleigh.

Cycling and walking strategy

At last week's meeting of the Care, Wellbeing and Health cabinet committee, at my urging, the committee agreed to recommend that the cabinet commit to funding a proportion of the local transport budget every year for improving cycling and walking infrastructure, also to appoint a "cycling champion" at cabinet level. However I have yet to see the minutes and there is many a slip twixt cup and lip.

Speedwatch

I have just helped fund a speedar gun for Nedging PC and hope they can work together with Whatfield PC in creating a Speedwatch team.

6. District Councillor's Report – Introduction

It would be an understatement to say that a lot of things have gone on in Babergh since my last report. Perhaps the most high profile issue was a Motion raised by Opposition members, with some Conservative support, to demand a second referendum before taking any decision/recommendation on the merger of Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils.

This was heard at a full Babergh Council Meeting on 19th December when the Leader of the Council (Jennie Jenkins) resigned just before a motion was debated to remove her as Leader of Babergh DC. Had it gone to the vote, she would have been removed by a combined vote of Opposition and disenchanted Conservatives Members. Legal arguments were deployed to prevent the election of a new leader that night and an Extraordinary Council Meeting was convened for 4th January 18 to elect a new Leader. I will brief verbally on this process and the events that led up to the election of Cllr John Ward as the new Leader of Babergh DC and my current position as an independent member of the Conservative Administration.

Public Access I need to correct a previous incorrect statement concerning the new drop in locations for the electorate post closure of Corks Lane. I was led to believe that people who required face to face contact with Officers in Babergh had the option of going to Sudbury or Endeavour House in Ipswich. This is not the case as the facility has not been provided in Endeavour House. I do not believe that this is an acceptable solution to the less IT literate (mainly older) members of the electorate but I will tract the levels of concern that become evident and respond accordingly.

Boundary Commission The Boundary Commission for restricting the current Babergh Ward pattern will produce its final recommendations on 6th February 18 when the implications will then be debated by the full council. As I understand it, the Boundary Commission's recommendations will be agreed by the Secretary of State for implementation at the next local elections in May 2019. I fully expect the number of District Councillors to come down from 43 to 32 and if I stand again and if I am re-elected. Kersey will no longer be part of my Ward but Chelsworth, Monks Eleigh & Wattisham will be added to it.

Public Sector Housing Following the completion of 12 additional public sector properties in Lavenham in 2017, 15 additional houses are due to be occupied in Glemsford in 2018 with a further 34 (approx.) flats becoming available in Hadleigh following the refurbishment of Angel Court. I am currently not able to provide any further details of this particular project. Babergh also continues to buy suitable properties on the open market to increase the supply of Council owned houses. All in all, this is a good news story.

Work has now started on the McCarthy Stone retirement development in Hadleigh (the old so called Tesco site). As a reminder the plan is for 35 one/two bedroom flats and 28 two/three bedroom chalet bungalows. McCarthy Stone expect to start selling off plan in February 2019. This is a development that has the potential to allow older house owners (55 minimum age limit for the development) to sell larger houses and move to more suitable accommodation.

Merger of Babergh & MSDCs Thank you again for letting me have your feedback on the merger option. Like you I have reservations that need to be addressed before we move forward. I am pleased to say that we have been successful in that another referendum has been promised to ascertain the level of public support for merger. I acknowledge that much has changed in the 6 years since we last asked the people of Babergh to give their views. This will be explained in a business plan that is now being drawn up by the Chief Executive and his staff.

The process will now be a referendum (which I would expect/hope to be completed before the middle of the year). If the vote is in favour of merger, the decision must be agreed by a majority of Babergh Councillors before it can be submitted to the Secretary of State as a **recommendation**. Only he can take the final decision and I would not now expect this to happen before 2020.

Disposal of Corks Lane Buildings I was briefed on the disposal **recommendation** for Corks Lane facility on Friday 12th January 18. In a nutshell there is no appetite/interest for an office or hotel commercial solution for the Corks Lane site. This leaves the single option of a housing development. Assuming that it happens, the listed buildings will be retained, and some of the 1980s extension (including the Council Chamber) will be recommended for demolition. If the current outline plan is approved (lot of water to go under the bridge before that happens) we are likely to have 50+ flats/houses built there. As part of that process, the Council will have to decide if it is prepared to take the risk and develop the site itself with the expectation of profit or whether it should just be sold off. The key is to ensure that whatever solution is finally approved, it is viable in terms of a suitable return for Babergh DC. That is our responsibility to Babergh residents.

7. Reports –

i) **Footpaths** - Nothing to report everything going as should be this time of year, sorry I will not be with you tonight, company coming.

ii) **Tree Warden** – Joy has been approached by Babergh to ask her to come up with ideas to get local children interested in their local wildlife etc. She would like to run a photographic competition with two age groups i.e. Under 10s and 11 to 16s. She would like approval to go ahead with this and she will donate the prizes. If the PC agrees can an advert go in the Grapevine to advertise it? Proposed: David Dray Sec: Simon Clifford unanimous

iii) **Conservation** – We are now reaping the rewards from all the hard work Richard has put in over the years. The trees in the Drift are now developing well since Richard has cleared round them. The path has been maintained although the recent rain has made everything rather soggy. Both Buckles meadow and Hunty's are looking good. Barn owls have been seen flying but wet weather makes hunting difficult.

Questions from the public: None

8. Action Updates

SID We have now got contact details from Monks Eleigh and the transferring of the SID is now going well.

Allotments Another full plot has been rented.

Telephone Box David has the brackets in hand and just need shelves. He is going to visit Elmsett to see theirs.

Speedwatch After meeting local PC Garrad about 6 1/2 weeks ago. No assessment has been done and now being done. Delayed by 6 weeks. To walk the village to assess where Speedwatch can go. Then they will send forms for us to complete and talking to Nedging/Naughton.

Standing Orders – postponed to the next meeting

9. Planning Hadleigh Quarry seems to have been approved with conditions but we have not had anything in writing yet.

10. Health & Safety – None

11. Dates for next year’s Meetings Unfortunately I cannot attend the next meeting but would be happy to change the date to the following week or find someone to take notes on my behalf, whichever is easiest. I have been asked by Whatfield Players if we could move our meeting on the 3rd October to Thursday the 4th October or if we could have the PC meeting at the Salvation Army Hall if we cannot move the date. It was agreed to move the next PC meeting to the 21st March and Clerk to send out dates to the PC and agreed to have October’s meeting in the Salvation Army Hall. Clerk to inform Christina Dray.

12. Accounts and Payments - – As of our last statement from TSB we have a balance of £9,266.33 with no outstanding cheques. I have since deposited the Playground Insurance and one Allotment Fee making a total of £9,671.02

Next Meeting

21st March 2018, at 7.45 pm, Village Hall

Meeting closed at 9.45pm

Signed Date.....