

MINUTES OF THE WHATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT WHATFIELD VILLAGE HALL 3rd October 2018

The meeting opened at 7.45pm.

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
Mrs. M Eastman	Conservation Warden

1, Apologies for Absence

Mrs C. Curtis	Parish Councillor
Mr. A. Ferguson	District Councillor
Mrs J. Green	Tree Warden

2. Matters arising from Minutes of meeting held 12th July 2018 Minutes of 12th July 2018 meeting were accepted and signed. Prop Helen Landon: Sec: Simon Clifford Unanimous.

3. Correspondence - We had an email from Mr. Rice complaining about the use of motorised bikes on the footpaths/land to the rear of The Houses on The Street. An email was sent to him explaining that the Parish Council has no jurisdiction on this matter and he should contact Dairy Farm or Babergh.

4. Naughton Road Proposed Development – Mr. Robert Pomery and representatives from Notcutts attended the meeting to discuss the proposed new development at Naughton Road end of the village. They showed a draft plan of the development of approx. 16 houses behind Box Iron Corner. A robust discussion was had with some good responses and ideas from amongst the 40 or so villagers in attendance and asked for any ideas/suggestions for improvements to the plans. These plans are only at draft stage and have not been submitted to Babergh. They stressed that they wanted the village of Whatfield to have their say in this site.

5. County Councillor's Report - Public Sector Leaders Group - They have confirmed that they will hold five public meetings a year with minutes and agendas published – there will be some private meetings in between. I am told this is purely for planning rather than decision purposes.

Suffolk scheduled to overspend by £8.6m this year - Based on its spending in the first quarter of the 2018/19 financial year, the county council is forecast to overspend its £501 million budget by 1.7%. It is now attempting to reduce costs and make savings by 31 March next year. It says the overspend is mainly driven by 1. Rising care purchasing budget – as more people need care and prices of residential homes increase. 2. Increased costs in Children and Young People's Services, (accounting for almost £5 million of the projected overspend). This includes services for looked-after children, specialist social care for children and home-to-school transport. Cllr Richard Smith (Cabinet Member for Finance) has announced that there will be a further £25m of cuts in the 2019/20 budget. £25m of cuts

Special Educational Needs crisis - A report to cabinet is projecting a rise of 18% in SEN Children in the next two years, they will be short 300-400 places equivalent to three special schools. SEN kids already face either a long wait or are placed out of county, contributing to the budget overspend. Officers have consulted and are recommending cabinet provide new places via a mix of some new schools and provide specialist support centres within existing schools.

Unitaries - I have learnt that the new leader Cllr Hicks is not in favour of his predecessor Colin Noble's single unitary idea and is dropping the study that Respublica had been tasked with. However because Respublica has already been paid he is looking to task them with something else.

Cycling network plans for next five years - At full council in July, I proposed two motions. One asking a cross party working group to draw up a costed five- year plan for a network of cycle paths.

The other to commit 5% of the annual integrated transport budget, which the council gets from central government, to cycling infrastructure.

The first was unanimously carried, the second was voted down by the Conservative majority administration. I am awaiting further information regarding the cross-party group that will draw up a cycling plan, and will keep you updated as this progresses.

Grit bins – New policy is not to supply grit heaps but only to refill yellow bins. This is owing to damage to hedges etc. caused by rain washing salt away. This also makes the grit ineffective at melting ice. Grit bins have to be bought by parish council privately (£42 from gritbins.net). Have to be yellow unless in a conservation area.

Rise in schools rated inadequate or requires improvement - Suffolk County Council has revealed a sharp rise in the number of schools rated inadequate or requires improvement by Ofsted, to 1 in 5 Suffolk schools. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Education has admitted that some academies in Suffolk are not improving as quickly as he would like, or have deteriorated further. This is reflected in the data, which showed that only 65% of academies achieved "good" or "outstanding" ratings, compared to 79% of maintained schools. This has raised questions over the Council's "Raising the Bar" strategy, which was launched in 2012 with the express aim of ensuring all schools in Suffolk were rated "good" or "outstanding".

Orwell Crossings in doubt - In July it was announced that the Upper Orwell Crossings project had been put on hold following concerns about escalating costs. Since then, Suffolk County Council has commissioned an independent review of the costs associated with the project. This analysis concluded that cost will soar by another £43m which central Govt will not pay for. Cabinet will be asking officers to "investigate additional external funding opportunities" before reporting back in December.

6. District Councillor's Report - Introduction

Can I firstly apologise for not being with you this evening? In Derbyshire on grandparent duties

As you know, the Council tries to minimise business in August due to summer holiday plans etc. and for this reason alone, my report this evening will be short – mainly updates.

Boundary Commission

The Boundary Commission has confirmed its final recommendations for restructuring the current Babergh Ward patterns. As expected the number of District Councillors will come down from 43 to 32 and the new Ward (SE Cosford) will comprise the parishes of – Aldham, Elmsett, Whatfield, Nedging & Naughton, Kersey, Semer, Chelsworth and Lindsey – i.e. two more than the present arrangement.

As regards my position, I have been selected as a Conservative candidate for the Babergh District Council local elections in May 2019, and the process to select me as the candidate for the new Ward of SE Cosford took place on 24th September 18.

Private Sector Housing

You will be pleased to know that following a recalculation using the gov't's formula, Babergh DC now has a 5 year land supply for the private sector housing. This will allow the Planning Committee more flexibility when assessing planning applications than has been the case over the last two year or so. It's probably a good time to take stock as regards future developments and the Local Plan as it applies to Whatfield (still in draft) which is due to be briefed to us later this year.

Merger of Babergh & MSDCs

As you know, the proposal to merge MS with Babergh was put on hold until Suffolk CC had the results of a study initiated by Colin Noble (the then Leader) into a Unitary Authority solution for Suffolk.

The new Leader of Suffolk CC is less enthusiastic about the idea and he has stopped work on the unitary proposal. Whilst the merger proposal of Babergh/MS will undoubtedly be back on the Agenda at some stage, I recently asked the leader of Babergh DC to confirm that he will not press for a merger without first taking it to a referendum. He gave me that assurance for the current administration.

Disposal of Corks Lane Buildings

The recommendation for redevelopment of the old Babergh Council offices (about 56 houses/flats) is expected to go before the Planning Committee in October/November 18. I will keep you advised.

Angel Court

The plans for the redevelopment of Angel Court (21 x one and two bedroom flats) are pegged to the fence for inspection if you are really interested. Good news story for Hadleigh. Much needed.

Parish Liaison Meeting

You should have been notified, but just as a reminder, a Parish Liaison Meeting has been planned for Thursday 11th October in Pinewood Community Hall, Ipswich. Hosted by Chief Exec.

7. Reports –

i) **Footpaths** Nothing much to report really, seems to be a little improvement in dog owners being more responsible regarding clearing up after their dog, problem is , it seems to have shifted to the Churchyard . I wonder if another dog waste bin were situated somewhere near the Churchyard would help. We also seem to be losing a few footpath signs due to age (rotting), would it be possible to replace them at some point? I will have a word with J Bs manager Charles to ask if he could possibly cut some of the hedges back, they are tending to grow over footpaths in places. There doesn't seem to be any further problems with motor cycle using footpath behind the old pub. Just in finishing, it's nice to see so many people using the footpaths, makes it all worthwhile, remember, you don't have to own a dog to go for a walk.

ii) **Tree Warden – No Report**

iii) **Conservation - Buckles Meadow** - The meadow is looking good after the dry summer and the trees have not suffered. Richard has continued to cut the path.

The Drift. - Most trees seem to be thriving although I notice there are two older ones appear to be dead. The path is very walkable. Richard has reinstated Joy s seat which affords a rest and a view.

Huntys Vale - The paths have been cut. The trees have done well although one branch has split from the Rosy Blenheim. Otherwise the meadow looks good

Questions from the public: Bobby Smith asked if something could be done about re-staining the circular bench and Helen Landon informed the meeting that a young gentleman from the village was doing his Duke of Edinburgh award and is doing a large number of jobs within the village and this was in hand.

8. Action Updates

Neighbourhood Plan The first meeting was held on the 1st October. Overall feeling of group is that as a village we have done our fair share with new housing and so need to control any new development and ensure it benefits the infrastructure - e.g. roads must be sympathetic to rest of the village architecturally and be appropriate - i.e. affordable and for school numbers etc. (need to check school capacity)

We need to be compassionate to the UK housing crisis/what is needed for housing in the area but ensure it is what is best for our village (if people lived in homes with appropriate no of bedrooms crisis would be resolved!)

With previous major development, we have been left with an amenity field but it needs clarification - use, how long for, maintenance etc.

As well as needing a footpath it was felt the speed limit through the village needs to be considerably lower - any development will add to this issue and it's not particularly practical for works traffic or extra residential additional vehicles (good example is burst water main showed how Wheatfields really couldn't cope with any extra traffic. Could start speed limit signs further out with gates to side to start lowering speed before vehicles get in village. Specific concern was children playing in street on scooters etc. - they need to be able to get to a safe place to play.

We are on a signposted Cycle Route yet traffic not ideal - should be cycle lanes here

Sewerage needs redoing - seems to be common knowledge with longer standing residents but we all see how it doesn't cope at times, felt this needs reporting to AW rather than sorting by ourselves so they know how frequently it blocks

Specific comments re Riddleston field:

Houses should be more set back than plans suggest to echo Wheatfields style with more green/amenity land & landscaping, low density.

Was refused last time but still nothing has changed but more houses put forward - why? there is a lack of demand and Church Farm Place properties still for sale prove this - there is a 5 & 4 bed plus at least one affordable shared ownership STILL on market (on checking Rightmove tonight looks like the other 4 bed on there again so that's **five** in total) i.e. 1/3

Landowners wanting development are either end of village on the main approaches - feel victimised here, where there is no demand, no amenities, no buses etc. the village is not suitable

We have no information atm on the New Notcutts site

What we want/agenda for Babergh:

Control development - We have done our bit for next 5 years then after that 5-10 houses every 5 years so growth isn't overwhelming for a village this small village with a really good community, this mustn't be spoilt having few amenities is unlikely to change e.g. pub, shop unfortunately! (could we add a windmill/turbine to our village?) an asset is our school but it is nearing capacity and cannot be extended easily - over development might cause an issue with this

New homes should be sympathetic to locality

Be of high quality and style e.g. British bricks, tiles etc. & have chimneys (woodburners essential due to power cuts/no gas in village)

Eco-friendly

Affordable homes should be just that and interspersed throughout not all together in corner.

Need to improve the roads in the village i.e. make them safer, footpath, slow traffic etc.

All of the opinion green fields should be built on last, once this happens it sets a precedent...

We need to add more detail to the existing Village Plan which has worked and many desired points have been achieved.

Need a few more residents from Naughton Rd end - even if renting, if they want to be in the village they can have their say too.

<https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning-Parish-Profiles/Whatfield-Sept-2015.pdf>

<https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Parish-Plans/Whatfield2007.pdf>

Village Camera	We have now purchased a camera for the village and it has proved very useful already Mr. Dray has looked into all the regulations concerning the use of the camera. We have to be careful when we use it. David suggested that the camera could be used to record the local wildlife over the year and then could be shown on the projector to the school children of Whatfield. Another suggestion was to help people with concerns over security.
Allotments	The annual fees are due for rental of the allotments do we still want to keep the fees at the same rate. £15 per site for villagers and £20 for non-residents and for ½ sites £7.50 and £10.00. Invoices and letters to be sent out. It was agreed that the rent should remain the same. Prop: David Cross Sec: Paul Whittle unanimous An advert to be placed in the next addition of Grapevine
Telephone Box	David has now removed the Steel Plate and Timber beam from the telephone Box and it is now empty ready for the next step. Graham Smith has a suitable piece of timber boarding for the back and David is to go and see this.
Standing Orders	Postponed
Traffic Calming	Robert Lindsay to chase Mr. Gant

9. **Planning** - No new planning applications.

10. **Health & Safety** – None

11. **Accounts and Payments** As of our last statement from TSB we have a balance of £10337.19. We have three invoices to pay 1. Insurance for £477, 2. Rent for the Allotments for £150.00 and 3. CAS fee for the website for £60.00 all of these invoices are the same as last year. Prop: David Dray Sec: Graham Smith unanimous

Next Meeting

28th November 2018 at 7.45 pm Village Hall

Meeting closed at 9.50pm

Signed Date.....