

# MINUTES OF THE WHATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT WHATFIELD VILLAGE HALL 20<sup>th</sup> March 2019

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## **Present**

Mr. P. Whittle	Chairman
Mr. D. Cross	Vice Chairman
Mr. D. Dray	Parish Councillor
Mr. G. Smith	Parish Councillor
Mr S Clifford	Parish Councillor
Mrs. H. Landon	Parish Councillor
Mrs C. Curtis	Parish Councillor
Mrs. Lynn King	Parish Clerk
Mr. R Lindsay	County Councillor
Mr. A. Ferguson	District Councillor

## **1. Apologies for Absence**

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

**2. Matters arising from Minutes of meeting held 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019** Minutes of 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019 meeting were accepted and signed. Prop David Cross Sec: Simon Clifford Unanimous.

**3. Correspondence** – I have had an email from Jill Harris of Church Farm asking if it would be possible to move the location of the dog bin. .

The dog bin at the moment is in hedge along the road where very few people walk now that the bridge and meadow are used by dog walkers. It may remind them to clear up after their dogs if it is insight. Just saying....

I have spoken to Joy with respect of getting a TPO on the tree at the entrance of Wheatfields. She has left a message with Mt. Pizzy but thinks that we cannot apply for the TPO ourselves as the tree belongs to Babergh

The Keep Britain Tidy was thought to be a good idea but needs someone to organise it.

## **4. County Councillor's Report - Budget cuts approved by cabinet**

Council Tax is due to rise by a total of 3.99% - 2.99% increase in general council tax and 1% for the Social Care Precept;  
- The budget includes a savings requirement of £10.1m, divided across all departments.

This financial year's forecast deficit has reduced from over £8m to £5.9m. But a lot of this is due to not replacing staff, particularly social workers, who have left, so is not sustainable. However a big part of the cost over runs is to do with sending SEN children out of county which the planned £45m investment in Special Educational Needs places in Suffolk over the next five years should tackle.

### **Citizens Advice reprieve**

The NHS in the form of Clinical Commissioning Groups in Suffolk has come forward to match fund the county's cut grant of £184,000 for 2019/20. But the full cut is still going ahead next year and it is not clear whether the CCGs will renew their funding. I voted against the council's budget at the last full council meeting in February mainly because of this cut to CAB.

### **New opt in policy for school travel**

For pupils eligible for free school travel from September 2019, parents must now opt in to confirm their child has a seat on the bus from March 1<sup>st</sup> to the end of May. Under the former school travel policy, the seat was reserved automatically, even if pupils did not show up.

### **Suffolk fails its Special Needs inspection again**

Two years after failing its inspection, Suffolk County Council special needs service is still not meeting children's needs, according to Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission. The inspectors said they had made progress on improving governance but not on three other areas

- Parents are having to go to multiple authorities and are waiting too long to get the new version of "Statements" - (EHCs) "Education, Health and Social Care plans" for their children, particularly for autism where there is a backlog of referrals.
- Lack of understanding among parents of support available including access to child and adolescent mental health services.
- A lack of joint working to monitor outcomes for children.

### **Climate change motion**

Tomorrow (Thursday) I will be seconding a motion to ask the county council to declare a climate emergency and set up a cross party body to examine ways to cut carbon emissions and save money with a view to halving emissions from the council itself by 2030. A previous motion failed but I find it pays to keep trying!

**5. District Councillor's Report** - A short report today under the new reporting arrangements but I will be pleased to answer any supplementary questions as required.

You may wish to know that the pre-election period (usually known as purdah) for the Local Elections will begin on the 26<sup>th</sup> of March 19. From this date until polling day any materials prepared or released by council officers must not appear to be designed to generate public support for a political party or candidate. As such any press releases issued by the Council will contain statements by officers rather than Councillors during this period and Councillors will not be able to participate in any publicity for events. However, this does not prevent Councillors from continuing to undertake normal activities and officers will continue to support ward members working on behalf of their residents during this period.

### **Disposal of Corks Lane Buildings**

The plan to bring the disposal of Corks Lane to the Planning Committee early in 2019 were frustrated by an attempt to have the old Babergh Council Chamber listed grade II. This has now been reviewed by the Secretary of State and **refused**. The plan will now go to the Planning Committee on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> March. I will be a member of that Committee.

### **Babergh Joint Area Parking Plan**

This plan, which **does not include** any proposals to increase car parking charges in Babergh, sets out eight parking policy objectives and what they are intended to achieve. They include proposals that will:

- Establish a principle whereby parking will be allowed where possible and controlled where necessary
- Utilise off-street parking places to assist with traffic management and support local communities
- Set out how parking petitions and consultations will be managed
- Establish standard on-street parking scheme operating hours, with scope for different timings where need is proven
- Make clear the council's position on parking on footpaths

The policies will be used to guide councils' decision making around parking. The proposed plan does not set out specific proposals for parking restrictions for specific areas, nor is it a blue-print to change current paid parking arrangements.

More locally, I have an overriding concern that Babergh DC does not have a long-term strategic plan to provide additional parking in Hadleigh. With the likely growth in housing locally, this issue needs to be addressed by the new Administration as a matter of urgency.

### **Investments**

This has been mentioned before, but to update you, Parish Council members will wish to be aware that Babergh and Mid Suffolk DCs have the green light to double their lending from Central Government from £50M to £100M. The principle being our borrowing at a low rate of interest to then allow CIFCO Capital Ltd to invest in commercial assets for profit. To date the first £50M has been invested/allocated to the purchase of a mixed portfolio of assets including office, retail and warehousing space. When all £100M is invested, we expect to achieve a healthy return in the order of 6%.

I will be formally appointed as a Director of the Holding Companies at the next Babergh Council Meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> March 19. But having attended (as an observer) a meeting of the Holding Companies on 17<sup>th</sup> February 19, I was encouraged by the level of expertise and scrutiny involved. I was also pleased to hear that further investment in retail has been given a lower priority until we have a better understanding of Brexit and the likely future of struggling high streets in competition with the internet.

Irrespective, this will be a very important element of Babergh's future income stream if services are to be maintained.

### **Local Elections**

The Local Elections for the new 32 Councillor Babergh District (down from 43) will take place on **Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 19**. This will be your opportunity to either re-elect me or replace me as you prefer! Irrespective of who you will actually vote for, can I encourage you to drop into your local polling station on the day? Every vote really does count.

**6. Reports –**

- i) **Footpaths -** The Footpaths are in fairly good condition considering the time of year, apart from footpath No: 3 Impassable by foot. Awaiting for a bit dryer weather for it to recover and hopefully some repair work from the Farmer.
- ii) **Tree Warden – No Report**
- iii) **Conservation -** There's not a lot to report on the conservation. Colin is going to cut Buckles when he does the old Rectory. A pair of Barn owls have been about down at Joy's and have been seen to go in the box at Huntys. There has been a lot of rain which makes feeding difficult for them, we must hope for the best.

**7. Action Updates**

Village Camera	Hopefully we will be able to record the owls in the village very soon.
Allotments	They are fine with only 1 ½ empty plots. However 3 reports of damage/theft on the allotments. A shed was smashed/children's things taken. Reports at the Church and Village Hall have been reported. David Dray contact the Police and they are sending an Officer. The School is aware of the problem and it has been posted o Facebook
/Grapevine	but we are unable to determine if these youths are even from our village.
Telephone Box	This is now complete and only needs books to fill it.
Standing Orders	Charlotte has offered to meet with 2 or 3 members of the PC to go through her draft and try to make it smaller. David Cross has seen shorter versions and would like to research this and then send them to the PC for review.
Traffic Calming	We are awaiting a decision from the School (Lynn).
Car Park	Clerk to contact Babergh and obtain a copy of the Lease for the land and send to the PC.

10. **Planning -** Has been granted for a Single storey extension and loft extension at 5 The Street Whatfield

11. **Health & Safety –** None

12. **Accounts and Payments** As of the 19<sup>th</sup> March we have a balance of £11,112.60 with no outstanding cheques and a deposit of £1400.00. We have an invoice from Babergh for the Dog Bins which is the same as last year for £371.40. Proposed David Cross Sec: Charlotte Curtis unanimous.

**Next Meeting**

17<sup>th</sup> July 2019 at 7.45 pm Village Hall

Meeting closed at 9.15pm

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