

**Minutes of Withersfield Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday,
22 January 2019 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall**

Present: Cllrs Terry Rich (Chairman), Ian Kinloch (Vice Chair); Frank Eve; Nissa French-Ramsteyn; Lucy Guest; Peter Lord; Rosie Wenham; County Cllr Mary Evans; Clerk: Jill Johnson

- 1 Apologies for absence** were received from Borough Cllr Jane Midwood.

Chairman opened the public section of the meeting.

- 2 Borough Councillor's report**

In giving her apologies, Cllr Midwood had indicated that she was pleased that progress was at last being made with the placement of dog waste bins at Meldham Washlands.

- 3 County Councillor's report**

Cllr Evans referred to the recent report received from David Chenery of Suffolk County Council Highways following the speed checks undertaken on each of the five roads leading into Withersfield. This had confirmed support for 40 mph buffer zones at four locations. The key issue now was to secure funding which would be needed before preparatory work could commence. Cllr Evans indicated that she currently had no available funds but that something may be possible in the new financial year. The cost would be between £5,000 and £10,000 depending upon whether there were objections to be dealt with.

Cllr Evans informed the meeting that she chairs the Suffolk Road Safety Board; this is pushing for a strategic review of speeding problems as it is considered that there is not a coordinated approach. She reported that the Police had had a crack down on speeding during January and were shocked at the level of the problem.

Cllr Evans referred to the extra £420 million made available to county councils in the last budget with Suffolk receiving £9.6 million of this. As this needs to be spent by the end of March, three thermal patching machines had been hired to deal with potholes. These provided a much better finish and as they were virtually silent could also be used at night. Highways workers were being trained to use the machines with a view to keeping the machines for the future. Larger jobs currently being tackled included relaying of the pedestrianised section of Haverhill High Street, areas which frequently flood, and foot bridges.

It was reported that gritters had not been as busy as last year; the resultant savings have been used to recalibrate routes in order to make the process more effective. Good news was that the government had allocated Suffolk County Council an extra £8 million next year for adult and childrens' services which currently used 65% of the total budget for 5% of the population.

Finally, Cllr Evans encouraged attendance at a session at Hawkedon village hall on 4 February with PC Gerrish who would talk about local

Cllrs
Kinloch and

policing. Cllrs Kinloch and French-Ramsteyn confirmed that they would be prepared to go. French-Ramsteyn

4 Public Forum for parishioners

No parishioners attended this meeting.

The Chairman closed the public section of the meeting.

5 Declaration of members' interests

Cllr Rich indicated that he could be a beneficiary of one of the 40 mph buffer zones, if introduced.

6 Approval of minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 20 November 2019

Cllr Wenham pointed out that she had in fact been present despite not being listed and the minutes were amended accordingly. Apart from this it was proposed by Cllr Eve, seconded by Cllr French-Ramsteyn, that they formed a true record of the meeting and were accordingly signed by the Chairman.

7 Update on actions from previous Parish Council meeting

All actions, save those appearing under Matters Arising, had been completed.

8 Matters arising

a) Litter and dog waste bins for the flood control park

It was confirmed that the necessary licence had now been received from the Environment Agency and it was accordingly signed. A question of the siting of the Queen Street entrance bin should be raised with the Environment Agency and the bins now purchased. Clerk

b) Tenants at No 5 Queen Street

Cllr Kinloch reported that in his view there had been no improvements apart maybe for slightly less parking on Town Green. It was suggested that a diary of the problem should be kept coordinated by Cllr Kinloch, with sitings reported to him by all. This would enable the Chairman to write once again to the tenants and the landlord with definite evidence that the problem still persisted. All councillors
Clerk

c) Progress towards Neighbourhood Plan

The Chairman indicated that he was liaising with a local planning consultant with a view to arranging the first meeting of the working group. Cllrs Kinloch and French-Ramsteyn would also be involved. The Chairman reported that he had received little in the way of new comments since discussing the working group in his article in Withersfield News, particularly in respect of the grounds on which the Parish Council would support infill proposals. The first meeting would review the issues raised to date and consider how these would be tested out with the wider parish Chairman

community and how to elicit further views. There was broad support from councillors that the plan should cover the whole parish and address such issues as the options for the future of the Research Park if light industrial/research uses did not materialise and housing applications were submitted. The comments received to date would form the basis of a survey to be carried out by the working group.

d) Annual Spring Clean

It was confirmed that the date of 16 March had been communicated through Withersfield News but that all should encourage parishioners to participate. The question was asked if The Arboretum should fall under the arrangement but it was pointed out that the management company was responsible for litter control.

All
councillors
Clerk

e) Haverhill to West Suffolk Hospital bus

Cllr Kinloch confirmed that he had obtained additional information about this service. The bus had main and peripheral routes which included Withersfield but which did not run to a specific schedule. In principle, anyone who wished to use the bus has an entitlement but it would be necessary for an early request to be made. Cllr Kinloch should obtain the available leaflet and poster to put in an article for the next edition of Withersfield News.

Cllr Kinloch

f) Parish map

Cllr Kinloch reported that this was still in course of preparation by a local artist.

9 Traffic calming

a) Report from first meeting of Traffic Working Group

Cllr Eve reported that the Traffic Working Group met on 17 December. He gave thanks for the Terms of Reference which had been provided, and asked for one amendment to include looking at the north Haverhill development especially in terms of S106 allocations and whether or not consideration of the potential impact on surrounding villages had been taken into account. The Group had agreed respective responsibilities and actions, and minutes prepared which Cllr Eve would circulate. The next meeting had been scheduled for the end of February.

Cllr Eve

Potential measures had been discussed and it had been agreed to make contact with surrounding parishes to ascertain their actions in connection with speeding and determine whether there was common ground.

A presentation had been made by a member of the Speed Watch team showing that there had been an increase in traffic using Queen Street since the last readings.

The Chairman commented that the terms of reference for the working group asked for consideration of the impact of the 40 mph buffer zones on the measures that the group was considering, should approval be secured for their implementation.

Cllr Eve

Cllr Eve confirmed that he would bring a further report to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

b) Consideration of outcomes of traffic survey recently conducted by Suffolk Highways

Councillors welcomed the agreement that four out of the five roads leading to Withersfield could potentially benefit from the implementation of 40 mph buffer zones. It was confirmed that the road not included would be Withersfield Road leading to Great Wratting. The funding required could be as much as £10,000 although it was felt that parishioners were unlikely to object, so the figure could be substantially lower than this. In the circumstances, it was proposed by Cllr Lord, seconded by Cllr Kinloch that implementation should be pursued. Cllr Kinloch

The question of funding was discussed, both for this measure, and for further measures which could be put forward by the Traffic Working Group. It was agreed, proposed by Cllr Lord, seconded by Cllr Eve, that there should be an initial allocation of £3,000 from reserves towards the buffer zones and an overall sum of £10,000 for traffic calming schemes; however, in making this decision councillors were aware of other potential calls on reserves, for example, the village hall. The balance would need to be sought from other sources, but first S106 allocations should be investigated and Cllr Kinloch had been tasked with this. It was noted that the Working Group was exploring whether there were any Section 106 funds that could be bid for to support the impact of traffic arising from the north Haverhill housing developments. Clerk

Speeding along the road adjacent to The Arboretum was raised and Cllr Eve was requested to ask the Speed Watch team leader whether activities could be extended to include this area and to determine whether or not this would be possible in what was already a 40 mph zone. The Clerk was also asked to chase up the issue of reeds obscuring vision at the exit from The Arboretum with Suffolk County Council Highways.

10 Quotations received for Environmental Works 2019

The three quotations received were considered. The cheapest was from a contractor not used previously; the most recent contractor had upped his price considerably, and the third was way too high. In practice, councillors would prefer a cost less than all those submitted. It was agreed, proposed by Cllr Guest, seconded by Cllr French-Ramsteyn, that the highest quotation should not be pursued and the contractor informed accordingly. The other two bidders should be asked to reconsider their quotations, and references should be taken up for the contractor not used before. In the meantime, the Clerk and Chairman were authorised to buy in an extra cut if this were to be needed prior to the March meeting. Clerk

11 Action from Thurlow Estate

The Chairman reported that he had recently had a conversation with the Thurlow Estate agent in connection with the renewal of the lease for the village greens. It was acknowledged that the previous licence had taken a long time to negotiate but the agent's view was that for the renewal it could merely be re-issued and re-signed. It was agreed, proposed by Cllr Eve, seconded by Cllr Wenham, that this was a satisfactory position and

that councillors would await the receipt of the new licence from Thurlow Estate.

In respect of litter problems at the Sports and Recreation Ground, this issue still needed to be followed up. Clerk

As far as outstanding issues relating to footpaths were concerned, it was proposed by Cllr Guest, seconded by Cllr French-Ramsteyn, that Cllr Lord should look again at the position relating to the footpath leading from the White Horse to the A1307 with a view to requesting the creation of a permissive path for the section which was currently being used as a cut through to the Arboretum Estate. Cllr Lord

Finally, it was agreed, proposed by Cllr Rich, seconded by Cllr Wenham, that the forms required by Suffolk County Council for the placement of grit bins should be signed by the Chairman on the grounds that the Parish Council was the licence holder for the sites in question.

12 Graveyard maintenance

a) Sunken graves

Cllr Wenham reported that as a result of the very dry weather last summer further graves had collapsed. A larger quantity of top soil than that used when sunken graves were dealt with on a previous occasion would be needed. Cllr Wenham was asked to contact Field Composting to request work to be undertaken. Cllr Wenham

b) Tree planted on grave

This was recognised as a problem, but was one which could be resolved in due course if the grave involved was a double one (subsequently confirmed that this was the position).

c) Rubbish heap

Cllr Wenham reported that this had become somewhat large and needed dealing with. The Clerk was asked to contact West Suffolk Council with a request for its removal. In addition, moles were yet again a problem and the Clerk was asked to commission the pest control contractor to deal with these. Clerk

It was accepted that the budget currently allocated for the management of the graveyard may not be sufficient; on the other hand, the graveyard generated income from reservations and interments. It was therefore proposed by Cllr Lord, seconded by Cllr Eve, that the Clerk and Cllr Wenham should be authorised to spend up to a further £200 to address the areas which required work to be undertaken.

13 Finance

a) Monthly accounts

b) Payments made since last meeting

The accounts, and specifically payments, were considered, and proposed by Cllr Guest, seconded by Cllr Kinloch, as showing an accurate position of Parish Council finances.

- c) Allocation of budget for graveyard maintenance

See Item 12 above.

- d) Approval of budget and precept submission

It was proposed by Cllr Eve, seconded by Cllr Wenham, that these should be confirmed as drafted, and the precept form was accordingly signed by the Chairman.

14 Correspondence

- a) Email – Enchanted cinema

This was considered interesting by councillors but the view was that the parish was not sufficiently large to generate enough income to pay for an event such as this. The Clerk was asked to notify the owner of this position.

Clerk

- b) Email – Adult social care user research

It was proposed by Cllr Guest, seconded by Cllr French-Ramsteyn that a link to this information should be created on the Parish Council's website, and that it should also be placed on the Withersfield Facebook page.

Cllr Guest

- c) Email – Suffolk Trading Standards

Noted.

- d) Email – Kim Barnes Clark, West Suffolk

Noted.

15 Planning

- a) Borough notifications since last meeting

Noted.

- b) Applications received since last meeting

Noted.

16 Agenda items for meeting to be held on 12 March 2019

- Village hall

The meeting closed at 9.23 pm.