

Minutes of Withersfield Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 14 May 2019 at 8.30 pm in the Village Hall

Present: Cllrs Terry Rich (Chairman), Ian Kinloch (Vice Chair); Frank Eve; Lucy Guest; Peter Lord; Clerk: Jill Johnson; New Clerk: Laura Crump; County Cllr Mary Evans; and District Councillor Peter Stevens.

1 Election of Chairman and Vice Chair

As this was the annual meeting of the Parish Council, the Clerk opened the meeting indicating that the first item of business was to elect a Chairman and Vice Chairman. Both Cllr Rich and Cllr Kinloch agreed to put themselves forward for the positions they had held to date and in the circumstances it was proposed by Cllr Lord, seconded by Cllr Kinloch, that Cllr Rich should be confirmed as Chairman, and proposed by Cllr Eve, seconded by Cllr Guest, that Cllr Kinloch should be confirmed as Vice Chair.

2 Apologies for absence

There were none.

Chairman opened the public section of the meeting

3 District (formerly Borough) Councillor's report

Cllr Stevens reported that the Saturday previously the new West Suffolk District Council had chosen the leader of the controlling group on the Council to be put forward for election as leader of the Council next Wednesday. The leader will then choose the cabinet members and appoint members of committees and outside bodies. He pointed out that the two councils which had merged to form the new council had run joint services over a period of 8 years, so residents will notice no difference with these. However, the political aspects of the merger were more challenging in that the election had thrown up a number of surprises particularly in the former Forest Heath area (apart from Newmarket), and as a consequence the majority of the controlling group had been reduced for 20 to 5.

4 County Councillor's report

Cllr Evans added to her report to the Annual Parish Meeting reporting that she was organising another rural crime meeting in early autumn with Community Engagement Officer, Jon Gerrish. There was a need to remind villages about safeguarding their properties from burglaries once darker evenings had set in following the clocks going back.

Cllr Evans said she would ask David Chenery about the costs of the buffer zones which were currently being considered as one aspect of tackling the problem of volume and speed of traffic but it was looking as though these could cost as much as £12,000. David's advice had been that the Traffic Working Group (TWG) should see how effective buffer zones were before introducing a further measure but also that the TWG should be encouraged to think radically, for example, considering a one-way system. Cllr Evans indicated that she could contribute some funding but not the balance of £9000 which was left following the Parish Council contribution.

5 Public Forum for parishioners

Parishioners who had attended the Annual Parish Meeting held previously had made their points before the Parish Council meeting commenced, and there were no additional areas to consider.

6 Declaration of members' interests for any agenda item at this meeting

There were none.

7 Approval of minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 12 March

These were agreed as providing an accurate record; it was therefore proposed by Cllr Guest, seconded by Cllr Eve, that these should be confirmed, and accordingly signed by the Chairman.

8 Update on actions from previous Parish Council meeting

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

9 Matters arising

- a) Policing session – 4 February
No further action had been undertaken in this respect.
- b) Parking on Town Green at Queen Street
The Chairman reported that he had had a useful conversation with the landlady of the tenants and, whilst recognising the problem, it was agreed that there was little a landlord could do to influence the resolution of the problem. In any event, the tenants involved had now left the property and it had been indicated that it would shortly be put on the market.
- c) Progress towards Neighbourhood Plan
See minute for Annual Parish Meeting. The Chairman confirmed that following the discussion he would pursue an application for funding in order to get development of the plan underway. Chairman
- d) Actions required by Thurlow Estate
The Chairman reported his conversation with the Agent of Thurlow Estate but indicated that he had heard nothing further. It was thought there would be no problem with an extension to the lease of the village greens but Cllr Rich agreed to chase up the Estate once again. Chairman
- e) Village Hall Management Committee
The Chairman reported that he had contacted Tom Mytton-Mills, the Chair of VHMC on two occasions but that no response had been received. He would continue to encourage Tom to take action, particularly in respect of the extension for which planning permission had been secured two years ago, but indicated that it might be necessary for the Parish Council to consider who might be able to take over from Tom if he is no longer able to fulfil the role as VHMC chair. Cllr Rich requested that all councillors seek to identify parishioners who might be willing to join and strengthen the VHMC and to pass on names to him. Chairman
All other
councillors
- f) Hosting of Haverhill Area Forum
The Clerk reported that the 4 June had now been agreed with the Haverhill Deputy Town Clerk for the hosting of the Forum in Withersfield Village Hall. The Chairman Cllrs Rich,
Kinloch
and Guest

encouraged as many councillors as possible to attend this event which brought together representatives from local town and parish councils. Cllrs Rich and Kinloch agreed to set up the hall before the meeting, and Cllr Guest confirmed her attendance. The Clerk(s) would organise refreshments.

Clerk(s)

g) Recruitment of new Parish Clerk

The Chairman had welcomed Laura Crump who had that day been confirmed as the new Clerk at the beginning of the Annual Parish Meeting and introduced her to all present.

10 Completion of Declaration of Interest and Acceptance of Office Forms

These were distributed by the Clerk and councillors completed them at the end of the meeting. Cllr Eve needed to check an entry made on a previous version before submitting his but would let the Clerk

Cllr Eve

11 Allocation of councillor roles and responsibilities

It was proposed by Cllr Guest, seconded by Cllr Kinloch, with all in agreement, that these should be as follows:

VHMC – Cllr Guest
Highways – Cllr Eve
Graveyard – Cllr Kinloch
Planning – Cllr Kinloch
Finance – Cllr Rich
Data protection – Cllr Lord
Website – Cllr Guest
Footpaths – Cllr Lord

12 Application for co-option of councillor for vacancy on Parish Council

The application received from Sam Molyneux-Summers to fill one of the two vacancies on the Parish Council following the election was considered. The Chairman reported that he had met Sam and had a separate telephone conversation with him and that he considered him to be a suitable candidate for co-option. In the circumstances, it was agreed, proposed by Cllr Guest, seconded by Cllr Rich, that Sam be invited to become a councillor with immediate effect. The Clerk would arrange Sam's induction.

Chairman
Clerk

The Chairman also reported that he had suggested to Jill Johnson, the present Clerk, that she should be co-opted on to the Parish Council as a councillor. Jill agreed to this on the basis that she would formally hand over the Clerk's role on 4 June, and on that date become a councillor. This was agreed, proposed by Cllr Rich, seconded by Cllr Eve.

13 Recognition of long service of former councillor Rosie Wenham

Cllr Eve referred to the sterling contribution of Rosie Wenham made to the Parish as a councillor over a period in excess of 25 years. He considered that such long service to the community and devotion to the village should be recognised. Various options were discussed and Cllr Stevens was asked to investigate whether Local Heroes awards were still available. It was agreed, proposed by Cllr Eve, seconded by Cllr Guest, that Cllr Eve should discuss holding a drinks reception at his residence with Rosie, and that arrangements should be co-ordinated between himself and Cllr Guest.

Cllr
Stevens
Cllr Eve
Cllr Guest

14 Report from the Chair of the Traffic Working Group

The full report had been given as part of the Annual Parish Meeting, but Cllr Eve also updated the meeting on discussions held at a recent meeting concerning Cambridge South East transport developments. He reported that plans were being made for a metro between Cambridge and Haverhill, with agreement being sought for the first phase at a further meeting in early June. Cllr Stevens reported that this would be a dedicated tarmac road for tram-like vehicles, although buses would be used initially. The first part of the route would be from Addenbrookes to Abington with a park and ride site likely to be located at the Four Wentways service station.

15 Finance

- a) Presentation of monthly accounts – Income and Expenditure and Bank Reconciliation
- b) Payments made since last meeting
The accounts were perused and agreed as being accurate. Payments made since the last meeting were noted, with no unanticipated items present. It was proposed by Cllr Eve, seconded by Cllr Guest, that these should be accepted as an accurate record.
- c) Signatory for cheques
With the retirement of former Cllr Wenham from the Parish Council, it was necessary to agree a further signatory to cheques in addition to Cllrs Rich and Eve. It was agreed, proposed by Cllr Eve, seconded by Cllr Lord, that Cllr Kinloch should fulfil this role.
- d) Confirmation that the Parish Council meets the criteria for exemption from external audit for 2018/19 and approval of draft Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2018/19 (AGAR)
The Clerk reminded councillors of the criteria for exemption and confirmed that these were met, and the draft AGAR was considered accordingly. It was proposed by Cllr Kinloch, seconded by Cllr Guest, that the Chairman should sign the AGAR. The Clerk reminded councillors that the internal audit to be undertaken by SALC was due in the week commencing 20 May.
- e) Approval of end of year accounts 2018/19 and Chairman's Annual Accounts Report
The Chairman provided a resumé of his report relating to the annual accounts indicating that expenditure had almost matched income and that overall there had been no major deviation from what had been originally budgeted. It was proposed by Cllr Lord, seconded by Cllr Eve, that the end of year accounts represented an accurate reflection of the Parish Council's financial position.
- f) Approval of Internal Controls 2019
It was proposed by Cllr Eve, seconded by Cllr Kinloch, that these should be adopted.
- g) Updated Standing Orders, and confirmation of Financial Regulations and Code of Conduct
The Clerk explained that NALC had updated the model Standing Orders to include reference to GDPR, and that the Withersfield Standing Orders had been amended accordingly. The Financial Regulations and Code of Conduct were briefly considered and deemed to need no further change. It was proposed by Cllr Kinloch, seconded by Cllr Guest, that the amended Standing Orders should be approved.
- h) Receipt of 2019/20 precept

Noted

16 Correspondence

- a) Email – Bins by village hall
A complaint had been made by a parishioner about the use of litter bins for the disposal of dog waste and the smell which emanated from these. It was agreed that the Clerk should investigate the costs of provision of dog waste bins and of emptying these and an item on waste management should be placed on the agenda for the next meeting. Clerk
- b) Email – Jamie Murphy – support for village halls in West Suffolk
This offer was considered and it was agreed in principle that there should be an application for a slot. Cllr Guest was asked to investigate that the organisation concerned was not a commercial venture, and if not, to draft an application in conjunction with the Clerk. Cllr Guest
Clerk
- c) PSMA newsletter April 2019 – free APGB Imagery
There was no interest in this.
- d) Letter, Seafarers – request for donation
Noted.
- e) Email – A real problem
It was noted that there had been a recent proliferation of notices along the stretch of the A1307 by the Arboretum. It was proposed by Cllr Rich, seconded by Cllr Guest, that an approach should be made to Cllr Stevens enquiring about the powers which the District Council Planning Department could bring to bear.
- f) Email – Field View, Thurlow Road
Noted, and not a problem.
- g) Email, SALC – SCC verge grasscutting
Noted

17 Planning

- a) Borough notifications since last meeting
Noted
- b) Applications received since last meeting
Noted

Cllr Stevens asked that he should be contacted if there were any planning issues councillors wished him to investigate.

18 Agenda items for meeting to be held on Tuesday, 16 July 2019

Waste management, including dog waste bins
Advertising – planning powers and enforcement – Cllr Stevens
Traffic Working Group – update and proposals

The meeting closed at 9.31 pm