

**Minutes of Withersfield Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday,  
15 May 2018 at 8.00 pm in the Village Hall**

Present: Cllrs Terry Rich (Chairman), Frank Eve; Ian Kinloch; Rosie Wenham; Borough Cllr Jane Midwood; County Cllr Mary Evans; Clerk: Jill Johnson

- 1 Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr Russell Wallington. The Chair reported the resignation of Cllr Hilary Thomas and confirmed that under Item 10 there would be two vacancies to fill. Chair

*Chairman opened the public section of the meeting.*

**2 Borough Councillor's report**

Cllr Midwood had provided a written report which she presented at the Annual Parish Meeting. A copy would be made available on the Parish Council's website at *withersfield.onesuffolk.net/*.

**3 County Councillor's report**

Cllr Evans had also provided a written report for the Annual Parish Meeting, a copy of which would be made available on the website at *withersfield.onesuffolk.net/*.

This was subsequently added to at this meeting. In answer to enquiries about outstanding highways issues about which she had been contacted, Cllr Evans informed the meeting that a new head of highways would shortly be in post. Further, the new County Council Chief Executive *had previously been* in charge of highways at Essex County Council, and a new leader of the council had recently been elected whose campaign had included a focus on highways. In the circumstances, highways would be a priority. Cllr Evans indicated that *currently councillors can only approach Council Officers through an on-line system which makes chasing up on issues more difficult. She hopes that this will be reviewed under the new leadership.*

She referred to the state of Suffolk roads, particularly potholes, which had been made worse by the appalling winter. Unfortunately, highways personnel had not been able to keep up with pothole repair as they had been required to grit roads. However, the government had recently agreed to lend the county council sufficient funding to repair 1000 miles of Suffolk roads, and new criteria had been introduced for their repair together with the purchase of a new machine which should improve the situation for the future.

As far as enquiries about the state of roads post harvest, enquired about by Cllr Kinloch, Cllr Evans had discovered that the inspector had been on sick leave; she will continue to press for action to be taken. She reported that consideration was presently being given to the provision of numbered grit bins (as opposed to supplying piles of grit which contained salt and which were disapproved of by the Environment Agency).

Cllr Evans promised to follow up instances of problems with drainage experienced at two properties in the parish that had been raised with her by the Chairman. She also reported that consideration is being given to

visibility on exiting from the Arboretum Estate which is currently causing anxiety.

Finally, Cllr Evans informed the Parish Council that following the election of the new county council leader, she had been elected as deputy leader; appropriate congratulations were proffered to Cllr Evans.

#### **4 Public Forum for parishioners**

As the Annual Parish Meeting had immediately preceded this meeting, no further matters had been brought to the attention of the council.

*The Chairman closed the public section of the meeting.*

#### **5 Election of Chairman, and confirmation of other roles and responsibilities including vice chair**

The Clerk momentarily took over conduct of the meeting in order to elect a Chairman. The current Chair, Cllr Terry Rich, was proposed by Cllr Kinloch, seconded by Cllr Eve. He confirmed that he was willing to continue in that role and was declared elected. This was followed by a proposal from Cllr Eve, which was seconded by Cllr Wenham, that Cllr Kinloch should be appointed as vice chair. Following these elections acceptances of office were signed by Cllrs Rich and Kinloch respectively.

As far as other responsibilities were concerned, it was thought better to defer such appointments until the July meeting when a full complement of councillors would again be in place.

#### **6 Declaration of members' interests for any agenda item at the meeting**

There were none.

#### **7 Approval of minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 13 March 2018**

It was proposed by Cllr Kinloch, seconded by Cllr Eve, that these formed an accurate record and they were duly signed by the Chair.

#### **8 Update on actions from previous Parish Council meeting**

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

#### **9 Matters arising**

##### **a) Management of Meldham Bridge entrance to the reservoir area**

This issue had now been dealt with by the Environment Agency to the satisfaction of the parishioner who had brought it to the attention of the Parish Council. Following a suggestion from a Haverhill town councillor that there should be a joint effort to persuade either St Edmundsbury Borough Council or Suffolk County Council to take responsibilities for the provision and emptying of litter and dog fouling bins, it was determined that the Chair should contact the Haverhill councillor and an approach should be made to St Edmundsbury in the first instance.

Chairman

- b) Outstanding issues relating to highways
- The Clerk had undertaken a previously minuted action to compose a letter detailing all outstanding issues; the Chairman would check that this had been despatched. Chairman
- c) Potential permissive footpath at Arboretum end of that running from White Horse
- Cllr Kinloch indicated that there had been no response from Thurlow Estate. It was thought that the village greens lease might be about to expire and, if so, this would provide an opportunity to pursue the issue of footpaths further. The Clerk was asked to determine the position relating to the lease. Clerk
- In recognition that all parishioners live near and/or use Vestey land it was thought appropriate that the editor of Withersfield News should make contact with the Estate Office with a view to requesting an article. Editor, Withersfield News
- d) Repair to bench adjacent to war memorial
- As no quote had been forthcoming, Cllr Kinloch agreed to action this repair. Cllr Kinloch
- 10 Consideration of applications for co-option of councillor for vacancy on Parish Council**
- The Chairman confirmed that three applications had been received for what were now two councillor vacancies. Careful consideration was given to all three applicants based on statements provided by them. All were in favour of the appointment of Lucy Guest following a proposal and secondment from Cllrs Eve and Wenham respectively. It was also proposed by Cllr Wenham, seconded by Cllr Eve, that Peter Lord should be co-opted to fill the second vacancy. The third candidate should be thanked and encouraged to continue to be involved with the parish and to apply to stand for election next May.
- 11 Report from Clerk following meeting with Martin Render, Community Heartbeat, re: joining the Village Emergency Telephone System (VETS)**
- The Clerk explained how the system would work and informed councillors that Suffolk County Council had recently agreed to fund both set-up and operation for the first two years. This would be subject to a further meeting with Community Heartbeat and involving the parish trainer. It was proposed by Cllr Kinloch, seconded by Cllr Wenham, that the Clerk should contact Community Heartbeat to confirm involvement and arrangements for training, and that the code for the defibrillator cabinet should be placed in Withersfield News. This information together with that about arrangements for formal training (currently scheduled for 15 June) should be sent to the editor of Withersfield News as soon as possible. It was further agreed that involvement in VETS should be restricted to defibrillator use in the first instance. Clerk
- 12 Actions in respect of implementation of the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) following decision that Parish Councils do not require an external Data Protection Officer**

- The information provided was noted. The Clerk should take action according to advice received from SALC pending receipt of further information from the DPO Centre. Consideration should be given to a councillor appointment of a data protection champion. Clerk
- 13 Local Government Boundary Commission for England review of West Suffolk**
- The information was noted at this stage pending issue of the consultation.
- 14 Request from Speed Watch co-ordinator for contribution**
- Now that confirmation had been received that there would be no cost to the Parish Council in respect of replacement and/or replacement posts, it was proposed by Cllr Eve, seconded by Cllr Kinloch, that the £100 held over from the 2017/18 budget should be released for use towards the purchase of a speed gun by the Speed Watch group..
- 15 Updates on encouraging extended use of the Sports and Recreation Ground and proposed Children's Play Park**
- Cllr Eve confirmed arrangements for the parish cricket match to be held on 1 July were well underway; a captain had been appointed and teas were organised. In respect of toilet hire, he reported that the cricket club had decided to have existing refurbished as opposed to replaced. However, notwithstanding this, it was proposed by Cllr Kinloch, seconded by Cllr Eve, that funding already earmarked by the Parish Council should be used to hire a further toilet to be allocated for use by ladies. Cllr Eve
- In respect of a possible children's play park, Cllr Eve reported that an article had appeared in the last edition of Withersfield News but that no contact details had been provided. The article would therefore be placed in the next edition with such details, together with reminder details of the parish cricket match. CllrEve
- 16 Finance**
- a) 2018/19 accounts
- It was proposed by Cllr Eve, seconded by Cllr Kinloch, that these formed an accurate record of the current financial position.
- b), c) End of year accounts 2017/18 and Chairman's Annual Accounts Report Clerk
- The Chairman highlighted the main points contained in his report indicating that following advice received from an external auditor that reserves were unacceptably high, these had now been reduced to less than double the amount of the annual precept. In the light of this report a draft Annual Return had been prepared and Internal Controls updated. Following consideration of these it was proposed by Cllr Eve, seconded by Cllr Kinloch, that a final copy of the Annual Return should be prepared and signed.
- d) Consideration of current Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Code of Conduct

It was proposed by Cllr Kinloch, seconded by Cllr Wenham, that use of these should be continued for 2018/19.

- e) Receipt of 2018/19 precept

Noted.

## **17 Correspondence**

- a) East Anglia's Children's Hospice

Noted

- b) Calor Rural Community Fund

An application to this should be held in abeyance against potential future projects.

## **18 Planning**

Borough notifications and decisions received since the last meeting were noted.

## **19 Agenda items for meeting to be held on Tuesday, 17 July 2018**

- Delegated roles and responsibilities
- NHS issues – strategy for follow-up from those raised at Annual Parish Meeting
- Update on lease for village greens
- Plans for celebration of World War I

*The meeting closed at 9.20 pm.*