

**Minutes of Withersfield Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2014 at 7.30 p.m. in the Village Hall**

Present: Cllr. Terri Hardy (Chairman), Sian Gilligan, David Huckstep, Terry Rich and Rosie Wenham; Clerk: Ailsa Jobson; County Cllr. Mary Evans; Mr. Simon Curl (Suffolk County Cllr officer); Mr. Tim Barling (Thurlow Estate) and 9 parishioners

Action

- 1 **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr. David Brooks. The Chairman reported that Mr. Tom Mytton-Mills had resigned today from the Parish Council.

The Chairman opened the public section of the meeting

2 **Police Report**

The Clerk read out the report. There have been four crimes in Withersfield since 9<sup>th</sup> September – a theft of a cement mixer, an attempted burglary and an attempted theft from a motor vehicle. Residents were urged to be vigilant against people or vehicles they are unsure of in the area – dial 101 for non-emergencies or, if any doubt, ring 999.

3 **Public Forum for parishioners**

See 5 below.

4 **Borough Councillor's Report**

None received.

5 **County Councillor's Report to include a report/analysis of the traffic surveys and update from Simon Curl, Suffolk County Council's Highways Area Manager**

Mr. Curl presented an interim report on the traffic issues in Withersfield following the meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2014. Vehicle count, classification and speed data had been collected by automatic counter at 7 locations between 4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> July. To summarise this shows that the volume of traffic is not excessive. However, on Horseheath Road 67.6% are exceeding 35 mph and on Skipper's Lane 28.5% are. Suffolk County Council (SCC) collected vehicle routing data which shows that there is a "rat run" from Queen Street in Haverhill, over Melbourn Bridge into the village, turning left into Church Street and then right into Skipper's Lane. This is used by commuters to Cambridge who wish to avoid the congested A1307 and peak timing is 7.30 – 8.15 a.m. Issues potentially demanding intervention are rat running, vehicle speeds – 35mph plus within 30 mph limit, vulnerable road users (pedestrians, cyclists, children) and highway geometry (visibility). The remaining work to be done is the completion of traffic analysis, identify conflict locations, liaison with police, identify mitigation/correction measures, define budget needs and liaise with the community. The timescale to start identifying measures is February 2015.

A parishioner raised concerns about heavy farm machinery not being driven safely on the roads and that better use is made of headlands before they come on to the roads. The Chairman explained that on the Parish Council's tour of Thurlow Estate at harvest time this was what the Estate was doing.

Cllr. Terry Rich suggested that there should be graduated speed limits coming in to the village. County Cllr. Mary Evans explained that the procedure to change speed limits is hugely time consuming and expensive. However, SCC is looking at ways to enable Speedwatch groups to work effectively by taking the 30 mph speed limit further out of villages.

Mr. Curl reported that the repair to the potholes on the road on the corner of the green should have been started on 24<sup>th</sup> November. However, this is now scheduled for 5<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> January 2015 – he did not know why the date had been put back.

Cllr. Huckstep and the Clerk reported on the Melbourn Bridge subsidence. The Clerk had been passed from SCC to the Highways Agency and back again. Cllr. Huckstep had taken photographs of the problem area. Mr. Curl and County Cllr. Mary Evans kindly agreed to follow this up.

Concern was again expressed about the recurrent flooding on Church Street. Mr. Curl reported that there is a pipe too low in the stream which then backs up. SCC is trying to sort this out.

## **6 Report on Speedwatch**

Clare Talbot reported that the Speedwatch group is sharing the equipment with Lidgate. There are 6 people – they would welcome more people to join in order to have two or three teams at once. If parishioners could spare 1 – 1.5 hours of their time it would make a big difference. The group has liaised closely with the police who will write to offenders and then visit them. People are using the rat run in order to avoid the A1307. It was suggested that judicious hedge planting may slow people down on the Horseheath Road.

County Cllr. Mary Evans explained that Cavendish village coordinate their speedwatch sessions with police. The police camera van has proved very effective in Great Bradley.

The Chairman reported on her meeting with Tony Smith (Engineer, West Area Highways) to look at possible locations for Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS). Seven sites have been identified as possibly being appropriate – outside Hill Brow on Hollow Hill, outside Church on Church Street, outside Chestnuts on Turnpike Hill, outside Linchmere on Thurlow Road, opposite Whitehall on Burton Hill, outside The Church Lea on Burton Hill and outside number 19 on Burton Hill. Before any decision is made on how many VAS (if any) or locations a consultation will go out to the village – do parishioners want to see signs? A further detailed look at each site will be required. The posts would be fixed and the signs moved around. If this is progressed then a Memorandum of Understanding will have to be signed. The feeling at the meeting in June was that fund raising would be possible but it will require a coordinated approach. Possible sources of funding were discussed.

## **7 Declaration of members' interests**

Cllr. Wenham had declared an interest in item 19a).

## **8 To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2014**

Approval of the Minutes was proposed by Cllr. Wenham, seconded by Cllr. Rich and approved unanimously.

9 **To receive an update on actions from previous Parish Council meeting**

Jessica Hulbert, Community Officer, had been postponed to attend a Parish Council meeting until January 2015 as the agenda had been full at this meeting.

Clerk

The difficulties of reporting the subsidence of the Melbourn Bridge had been discussed under item 5.

With regard to the A1307 Cambridge Road bus stop outside Sainsburys, SCC Highways is still trying to determine how to fund this crossing – the preference is for a signalised crossing and the cost is £70k.

10 **Speeding/traffic calming**

Reported under item 5. It was agreed to include an article in the Withersfield News in the December/January edition.

Chairman

11 **Highway/footpath matters**

- a) To consider reported closures of Thurlow Estate permitted rights of way

Concern was expressed about a path from Whitehall which had historically been walked and made a circular route. Officially this is not a footpath and following a change in ownership the path has been ploughed up. After discussion Mr. Barling was asked if Thurlow Estate would consider opening this up as a permissive path and he agreed to look into this. Mr. Barling said that it was imperative that once a year permissive paths are closed to ensure that they do not have continuous use. Cllr. Gilligan was asked to mark this path on a map and pass to Mr. Barling.

Cllr.  
Gilligan

*At this point two police arrived and apologised for not being able to come earlier to give their report in person. Following discussion it was suggested that their reports also include crime in the neighbouring parishes. PC Sinclair said she was retiring after 31 years with the police and was thanked for the work she had done in the village.*

- b) To receive update from Cllr. David Huckstep following the Footpath Officer's annual report

Cllr. Huckstep reported that a number of footpath direction signs are falling over or are missing on walks. Mr. Barling explained that SCC are only obliged to sign from roads and thereafter they are not under any obligation to sign routes – this falls to the landowner, if they wish to do so. It was agreed to let Mr. Barling know which signs had fallen over and Thurlow Estate would put them up. The footpath from the Church was very narrow – footpaths should be 1m wide and it was agreed to mark this on a map and pass to Mr. Barling.

Cllr.  
Huckstep/  
Cllr.  
Gilligan

- c) To report any footpath issues to Suffolk County Council

None to raise.

- d) Agricultural spraying of the fields behind the rear gardens on Turnpike Hill

No further action to be taken.

12 **Village Hall**

- a) To receive a report on the electrical testing carried out by Farrants and update on

compliance with Fire Safety regulations. Mr. Tom Mytton-Mills had explained in an email that the work due to be carried out would be done on a Friday when the contractor was free. Following discussion it was agreed that this was unsatisfactory and the work should be done as soon as possible and no later than 20th December. Cllr. Wenham agreed to follow up with Mr. Tom Mytton-Mills.

Cllr.  
Wenham

b) Confirmation of date of AGM. Clerk to contact Sheila Tibbenham, Village Hall Secretary. Clerk

c) Confirmation of up-to-date insurance certificate and compliance of fire regulations. Current insurance certificate is now posted in Village Hall. Clerk to contact Sheila Tibbenham re compliance of fire regulations and to ensure that appropriate protocols are in place. Clerk

d) To review Withersfield Village Hall Management Committee accounts to the year 30<sup>th</sup> April 2014. Following discussion it was agreed that the Village Hall Committee be asked what their future plans are and whether they will use some of their reserves. As Mr. Mytton-Mills has resigned from the Parish Council there will need to be a new representative on the Committee from the Parish Council. It was agreed that Cllr. Rosie Wenham would join the Village Hall Committee as the Parish Council's representative. Clerk to obtain meeting dates. Clerk

### 13 **Friends of Withersfield**

Cllr. Wenham reported that the Friends of Withersfield had written to the parishioner who had asked questions about the charity. No further action required.

### 14 **Councillor's areas of special interest**

Cllr. Gilligan agreed to cover building/planning/policy consultation and requested that she go on appropriate training. Clerk

### 15 **Report on Broadband meeting arranged by County Cllr. Mary Evans**

Cllr. Gilligan reported on the meeting. There had been no progress following the previous meeting.

### 16 **One Suffolk Website**

Following discussion it was proposed by Cllr. Huckstep, seconded by Cllr. Rich and carried unanimously that the Terms and Conditions on the One Suffolk website be agreed. Cllr.  
Brooks

### 17 **Correspondence**

a) Letter from Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner on speeding – noted.

b) Letter of resignation from Parish Clerk – Ailsa was thanked for her work on behalf of the Parish Council.

Late correspondence received – complaint from parishioner about car parking on Burton Green. A discussion followed and it was agreed in the first instance that a request not to park on the Green should be put in the Withersfield News. Chairman

### 18 **Finance**

a) To consider tenders for grass cutting contract and appoint contractor for 2015.

One tender had been received from All Green Services (£2,380.00 for grass cuts and hedge cutting, no charge for spraying weeds around War Memorial). Advice had been taken with SALC with regard to lack of replies. As due process had been taken it was proposed by Cllr. Wenham, seconded by Cllr. Huckstep and carried unanimously that All Green Services be appointed as the contractor for 2015.

Clerk

- b) To consider and agree what maintenance may be required to the Parish Council noticeboard.

Cllr. Rich explained that in future money would be put aside in the budget for the maintenance of parish assets i.e. – noticeboard, village sign etc.

- c) Agree budget for 2014/2015

Cllr. Rich talked through the draft budget – both the breakdown of expenditure and the grant/precept form for St. Edmundsbury Borough Council. This year the grass cutting costs have been divided showing the costs of maintenance of the graveyard – grass cutting/hedge cutting etc. less the income. Two new headings have been included – maintenance of PC assets and Parish Council projects. This gives greater clarity to forward planning. The precept form has to be submitted by the end of January 2015 to St. Edmundsbury Borough Council so if there are any additional items to be added to the budget Councillors were asked to contact Cllr. Rich. The Parish Council will use £1,400 from its reserves to ensure that the Parish precept does not increase.

Cllr.  
Rich/Clerk

- d) Review risk assessment. The Parish Council reviewed the risk assessment and agreed that no changes needed to be made. Approval of the risk assessment was proposed by Cllr. Huckstep, seconded by the Chairman and carried unanimously.

- e) Review asset register. The Parish Council reviewed the asset register and agreed that no changes needed to be made. Approval of the asset register was proposed by Cllr. Huckstep, seconded by the Chairman and carried unanimously.

- f) Presentation of monthly accounts. The accounts were reviewed. Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Cllr. T. Rich, seconded by the Chairman and carried unanimously.

- g) Payments since the last meeting were noted.

- h) The following payments were approved – 1) £100 donation to East Anglian Air Ambulance 2) £100 donation to Suffolk Accident Rescue Service 3) Pest Control Services £65.00 4) Clerk's expenses £4.34.

- i) To consider request that Parish Council annual accounts be publicised to a wider audience. It was agreed that Cllr. Rich would prepare a statement at the end of the financial year for publication in the Withersfield News.

Cllr. Rich

## 19 **Planning**

- a) DC/14/2087/OUT -Outline Planning Application (Means of Access to be considered) - Construction of research/business park (Class B1) and hotel (Class C1) (previously approved under applications SE/11/1062 and SE/11/1063) - Haverhill Research Park, Hanchett End, Haverhill Suffolk. Cllr. Wenham declared an interest. No comments or objection.

DC/14/2159/LB – Repairs and alterations to restore timber grain store including i) insertion of window on south east elevation and ii) replacement door on south west elevation – Oak Barn, Silver Street. No comments or objection.

- b) Applications received by the Clerk between publishing the agenda and this meeting

DC/14/2140/FUL – Change of use of mixed use dwelling and childminding to dwelling – Exhibition Farm, Skippers Lane, Withersfield. No comments or objection.

DC/14/1959/RM – Submission of details under outline planning permission SE/11/1063 – the appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for the construction of a crèche – proposed nursery, Haverhill Research Park, Three Counties Way, Haverhill. Cllr. Wenham declared an interest. No comments or objection.

- c) Borough notifications (for information)

DC/14/1203/RM – Land between 10 Hanchet End and Button Cap Cottage, Hanchet End - approved

DC/14/1485/TCA – The Cottage, Church Street - approved

DC/14/1500/FUL/DC/14/1501/LB – Lilley Farmhouse, Turnpike Hill - approved

DC/14/1525/HH – 2 Turnpike Hill - withdrawn

DC/14/1681/TCA – Hillbrow, Hollow Hill - approved

DC/14/1407/LB – Twin Cottage, Turnpike Hill - approved

DC/14/1644/HH – Glebe View, Turnpike Hill - approved

DC/14/1720/HH – Fernie, Thurlow Road – approved

- d) Applications received since last meeting (for information)

DC/14/1720/HH – Single storey side extension – Fernie, Thurlow Road, Withersfield – No objection

DC/14/1407/LB - Twin Cottage, Withersfield – Parish Council had objected originally to the demolition of the building pending seeing plans for its replacement. The Council were asked to reconsider their decision and following discussion it was agreed to withdraw objection.

DC/14/2013/TCA - Trees in a Conservation Area Notification – 1 no Willow - Pollard to 3.04 metres - Windwhistle Rose Hill Withersfield Haverhill. No objection.

DC/14/2020/HH - Resubmission of planning application DC/14/1525/HH - (i) Proposed Two storey rear and side extension and (ii) Increase width of driveway – 2 Park View, Turnpike Hill. No objection.

- 20 Agenda items for next meeting. None other than those already mentioned.

- 21 To be held *in camera* - Recruitment of Parish Clerk.

Meeting closed at 10.00 p.m.