

**Minutes of Withersfield Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday,  
16 May 2017 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall**

Present: Cllrs Terry Rich (Chairman), Geoff Hayward (Vice Chair), Ian Kinloch, Rosie Wenham; Clerk: Jill Johnson; County Cllr Mary Evans; Chair of Village Hall Management Committee, Tom Mytton-Mills; 2 parishioners

- 1 Apologies for absence** were received from Borough Cllr Jane Midwood, Cllrs Frank Eve and Sheila Tibbenham. The Chairman reported that Cllr Murlis had resigned due to the requirement of his employment to travel frequently overseas, often at short notice, which militated against attendance at meetings. Thanks were given for his contribution to the Parish Council.

*Chairman opened the public section of the meeting.*

- 2 Borough Councillor's report**

See attachment to minutes for Annual Village Meeting of 16 May 2017.

- 3 County Councillor's report**

Cllr Evans had invited Tom Mann, Flood and Water Project Officer, who had attended the March Parish Council meeting, to provide an update on actions being taken to prevent further flooding incidents. Tom reported that a survey was currently being undertaken of the water course which had caused the June 2016 flooding in Church Street. He had appreciated the positive co-operation he had received from landowners whose properties abutted the stream. Once all the results were to hand it would take around 5 weeks to run a series of scenarios starting at 1 in 20 years up to 1 in 200 years likelihoods. Tests would show what would happen with various levels of water running through the vicinity of the stream. Tom reported a slight delay in commencement of the survey as he had been waiting for a particular surveyor, but was able to confirm that the water flow had been, and would continue for the time being to be, monitored every 3-4 weeks. The work had already identified that directly south of the road the water course was not easily accessible, but was confident that improvements to that stretch could be made which would facilitate an increase in water flow. He had also had meetings with members of the Highways Drainage Team. A fuller picture would be provided at the July meeting.

Cllr Evans referred to the water collecting in the front garden of a householder as a result of the re-surfacing of the Withersfield to Great Wrattling road. The householder had been battling for 2 years to get action taken; Cllr Evans emphasised the importance of householders approaching the Parish Council if problems occurred in that getting her involved earlier could have led to a speedier resolution.

In respect of the introduction of superfast broadband to the village, Cllr Evans reported that 2 cabinets were waiting to go live. The first would serve a small number of properties around the Horseheath Road/Skippers Lane junction; this would go live at the end of June. The second would serve the remaining properties in the village and would go live by the end of September. It was enquired why a cabinet could not be placed so that

properties at the Thurlow end of the village would get better speeds but Cllr Evans indicated that the placing of the second cabinet at the junction of Church Street/Turnpike Hill would provide a minimum of 50 Mbps download/20 upload nearest to the cabinet, and 30 download/10 upload for properties furthest away from it.

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

A parishioner enquired about placing a bench in the Parish graveyard in commemoration of his son-in-law who had recently passed away. This would be considered and he would be contacted again.

*Chairman closed the public section of the meeting.*

#### **5 Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman**

The Clerk reported that Cllr Rich had indicated his willingness to continue as Chairman; he was duly proposed by Cllr Hayward, seconded by Cllr Wenham, with the remaining councillor in agreement. Cllr Hayward indicated his willingness to continue as Vice Chairman and was duly proposed by Cllr Rich, seconded by Cllr Wenham, with the remaining councillor in agreement.

- a) Appointments and responsibilities
  - i Finance - Cllr Rich
  - ii Village Hall Management Committee - Cllr Wenham
  - iii Publicity and Website - Cllr Eve
  - iv Highways - Cllr Hayward
  - v Graveyard - Cllr Wenham
  - vi Sports and recreation - Cllr Eve
  - vii Planning - Cllr Kinloch
  - viii Defibrillator - Cllr Kinloch

Confirmation of all the above responsibilities was proposed by Cllr Wenham, seconded by Cllr Kinloch.

- b) Completion of register of pecuniary interests  
Forms were duly completed and would be placed on the Parish website. Clerk
- c) Councillor vacancy  
The Chairman had referred to the need to recruit a councillor in his last article in Withersfield News but had not received any approaches. It was known that Cllr Tibbenham would also need to resign as she was moving away from the village. The Chairman would put a specific advertisement box in the next edition of Withersfield News.
- d) Replacement Footpaths Officer  
Cllr Kinloch agreed to undertake this role.
- e) Alex Talbot had indicated that he was no longer listed as Tree Warden in Withersfield News. It was agreed that Alex should continue in this role and the Clerk should ensure his inclusion in the parish magazine. Clerk

#### **6 Members' interests for any agenda item**

None were declared.

**7 Approval of minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 14 March 2017**

It was proposed by Cllr Wenham, seconded by Cllr Hayward, with all in agreement, that these reflected a correct record and they were accordingly signed by the Chairman.

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

It was confirmed that all actions, save those appearing under Matters Arising, had been dealt with.

**9 Matters arising**

- a) Actions to alleviate flooding  
An update from Tom Mann had included the reason why work had stopped in Thurlow Road; this had been a concern of councillors and parishioners.
- b) Installation of defibrillator  
The Chair of the Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC) had indicated that this would be done in the next 2 weeks. Reassurance had been sought that the machine would remain fully charged. Cllr Kinloch, as newly agreed Defibrillator Officer, would ensure that this was the case. Cllr Kinloch
- c) Noticeboard for Hanchett End/The Arboretum  
The Clerk reported that despite chasing no reply had been received from Highways in connection with the suggestion that the noticeboard should be placed on the roadside adopted by the County Council. The Clerk was asked to request Cllrs Evans and Midwood to pursue this. Clerk
- d) Additional traffic calming measures  
It was reported that no reply had been received to the letter sent to Highways by Cllr Hayward despite a reminder. This should also be chased. Clerk
- e) Restoration work on war memorial  
The Clerk reported that the pre-application had been successful and that it was now necessary to submit a full application. Clerk
- f) Village pub  
The Chairman reported that this was now registered as a community asset.
- g) Battle's Over - A Nation's Tribute  
No response had been received from parishioners following the Chairman's request for suggestions in Withersfield News. It was agreed that the matter should left pending awaiting the outcome of the application to restore the war memorial, but that the centennial anniversary of the ending of World War I was important to recognise.
- h) Traffic volume and speeding  
This was dealt with under d) above.

**10 Receipt of copy of VHMC accounts for year ended 31 March 2016**

It was proposed by Cllr Hayward, seconded by Cllr Kinloch, that these should be accepted.

## **11 Presentation of Business Case and consideration of recommended solution for storage at the village hall**

Tom Mytton-Mills explained that in assembling the business case all involved had tried to be as objective as possible but that the recommended solution reflected what had been wanted in the first place. Many of the users who had been consulted were also happy at the outcome. Cllr Kinloch recognised the need for additional storage which was accepted as a basic requirement but wondered if the money could be better spent in making the village hall more attractive for users. Tom, in reply, considered that the storage option offered the best way forward for making the hall more usable. Cllr Wenham reported that the VHMC thought it important to keep reserves at a sensible amount. The Chairman confirmed that the VHMC had taken on board the questions asked by the Parish Council and congratulated the VHMC on the quality of the business case prepared. All councillors considered the case to be sound and were warmly supportive. The Chairman proposed that the recommended solution should be endorsed by the Parish Council, with Cllr Hayward seconding this.

## **12 Further action in respect of broadband issues**

Following earlier discussion in this respect, it was agreed that Peter Ingram, Clerk Programme Director for Suffolk Better Broadband Programme, should be invited to make an authoritative presentation at the July meeting. However, it would appear that the position in respect of superfast broadband provision was more positive than originally thought.

## **13 Finance**

### **a) Monthly accounts**

It was proposed by Cllr Rich, seconded by Cllr Wenham, that these presented an accurate position of the Parish Council finances.

### **b) Chairman's report on financial position 2016/17, end of year accounts and annual return**

It was proposed by Cllr Wenham, seconded by Cllr Kinloch, that the Chairman's report on the financial position 2016/17, including the budget, should be agreed. Approval of the end of year accounts and draft Annual Return was proposed by Cllr Hayward, seconded by Cllr Wenham. The Chairman referred to the recent notification of the successful outcome of the application to the Transparency Fund pointing out that this money was required to be earmarked for the equipment and software identified in the application. The Clerk was asked to prepare proposals for the acquisition of these.

### **c) Receipt of precept**

This was noted.

## **14 Correspondence**

### **a) Voluntary Network - noted**

### **b) SALC - Great Get Together - noted**

### **c) Michael and Felicity Slinger - request for permission for parking on Town Clerk**

Green - it was proposed by Cllr Hayward, seconded by Cllr Wenham, that this should be agreed.

- d) One Suffolk Silverstripe Upgrade Update - noted
- e) Bill Bulstrode, Suffolk Day 21 June - noted
- f) Screen Suffolk - noted

## **15 Planning**

- a) Borough notifications since last meeting  
Noted
- b) Applications received since last meeting  
The application for signage for the pub, incorporating the change of name back to the White Horse, was fully supported. It was proposed by Cllr Rich, seconded by Cllr Kinloch, that the Clerk should return the form to St Edmundsbury Borough Council confirming this support. Clerk

## **16 Agenda items for meeting to be held on 18 July 2017**

- Presentation by Tom Mann and other members of Flooding Team
- Broadband
- Ownership of sports pavilion - Clerk to check and confirm Clerk
- New bench in graveyard; Cllr Wenham to define a policy following consultation with the parishioner concerned; Clerk to confirm additional cost. Cllr Wenham Clerk

### **In camera - nomination of award for unsung village hero**

The profile would be presented to the July meeting. The Clerk was asked to enquire about the required format from Borough Cllr Midwood. Cllr Wenham Clerk

*The meeting closed at 8.50 pm*