

**Minutes of Withersfield Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday,
17 July 2018 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall**

Present: Cllrs Terry Rich (Chairman), Ian Kinloch (Vice Chair); Lucy Guest; Frank Eve; Russell Wallington; Rosie Wenham; Clerk: Jill Johnson

- 1 Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr Peter Lord, Borough Cllr Jane Midwood, and County Cllr Mary Evans.

Chairman opened the public section of the meeting welcoming new Cllr Lucy Guest, for whom this was the first meeting attended.

2 Borough Councillor's report

Cllr Midwood had provided written confirmation of her willingness to fund litter and dog waste bins for the flood control park (for which the Environment Agency has responsibility), assuming that agreement could be secured for both the cost and process of emptying them.

The Chair reported that to date such agreement had not been forthcoming, but that this was being pursued and he would keep on the case. It was proposed by Cllr Kinloch, seconded by Cllr Eve, that a formal request should be made for funding from Borough Cllr Midwood's locality budget.

Clerk

3 County Councillor's report

Cllr Evans had also provided a written report. She reported the appointment of PC Jon Gerrish as the new Community Engagement Officer for this area; his email address, should anyone wish to contact him, was Jon.Gerrish@suffolk.onn.police.uk.

Cllr Evans provided further information about the change of policy in respect of the entitlement for free school transport which would involve consideration of the 'Nearest Suitable School' in order to determine eligibility. Entitlement for free transport for children already in a school would continue until they left that school or moved house irrespective of whether it was the nearest or not.

She reported that a joint buying group has been set up Suffolk County Council to help residents and business buy solar PV panels with the confidence of knowing they reputable suppliers were being used. Previous schemes had realised a 20-35% saving on the current market price whilst ensuring quality levels were high. Savings were achieved through economies of scale; more information could be obtained at www.solartogethersuffolk.co.uk.

Finally, Cllr Evans informed councillors that in her new role as Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, she had launched a review of highways operations. In time she would be asking for views on a variety of issues, including how road closures, pothole repairs, and highways communications were managed. She also referred to current outstanding areas of concern including the improvement of visibility to The Arboretum, and outstanding matters which had already been raised by the Parish

Council. The Chair indicated that the opportunity should now be taken to pursue actions raised, but rejected, in the past, such as speed buffer zones, particularly as one had recently been introduced for The Common leading into West Wratting. It was proposed by Cllr Eve, seconded by Cllr Kinloch, that County Cllr Evans should be approached to attend the September meeting in order to discuss all outstanding matters, including the conditions of roads post harvesting. Cllr Guest agreed to communicate the new arrangements in respect of school transport via the Arboretum Facebook page.

4 Public Forum for parishioners

The Chair extended a welcome to the area's new Community Engagement Officer, PC Jon Gerrish, who was attending the meeting following a spate of thefts in the village of Withersfield. PC Gerrish reported that he had researched crimes in the parish from January to the current point in time and had uncovered nothing major apart from three separate, but connected, thefts from a farm in the village. He confirmed that in respect of these thefts everything had been logged and recorded and all possible had been done, including provision of advice by a crime prevention officer. He indicated that CCTV coverage obtained had been collated and would go to Crime Intelligence Units, both in Suffolk and nationally. Although the coverage had not shown faces or vehicle registration numbers, it might be possible to pin down the offenders in the future if the information could be tagged to other crimes committed. PC Gerrish confirmed that he would personally visit the parishioner involved.

Problems at The Arboretum, particularly in the area of the pond at the Haverhill Research Park, were also referred to; these involved both youths and adults and involved anti-social behaviour such as throwing rubbish, getting in the pond, loud music, and abuse of residents. PC Gerrish confirmed that these had been reported and informed councillors of a number of schemes to target anti-social behaviour, including a focus on drug dealing, and the seizing of alcohol. He admitted that police presence was occasional but that the police officers patrolling had been tasked with engaging with those causing the problems. Residents of the estate had already been in touch with a voluntary organisation focussing on engagement with youths involved in anti-social behaviour. It was also reported that following problems in previous years, security had been increased by the owners of the Research Park, but this had now been withdrawn. PC Gerrish cautioned residents against direct involvement with the perpetrators and urged them to keep the reports flowing, if possible accompanied by mobile phone footage, and/or descriptions of the people involved. Residents should call 101 if the problem was anti-social behaviour, but 999 if an urgent problem occurred. PC Gerrish confirmed that he would include the Arboretum pond on his list of areas to patrol.

PC Gerrish explained his role in more detail and how parishioners could assist the police and vice versa. The Police service had recognised that it had stopped engaging with people and therefore created nine community engagement officers throughout the area; PC Gerrish covered Sudbury and Haverhill. He had two aspects to his role, one to tell people what the community engagement officers were doing (including police colleagues), and second, to make contact with those providing services aimed, for example, at those experiencing loneliness, bereavement, or requiring financial advice, together with community speed watch teams. PC Gerrish

had been given a Facebook page (Sudbury and Haverhill Police) as a means of getting information out to communities and urged people to join, follow, share, and to provide information about voluntary services, and crimes committed. He was also attending fetes as a further means of bonding with communities.

PC Gerrish confirmed he would be happy to write an article for Withersfield News. He would not normally be looking to attend parish council meetings unless something specific was going on.

The Chairman closed the public section of the meeting.

5 Declaration of members' interests for any agenda item at the meeting

There were none.

6 Approval of minutes of the Parish Council and Annual Parish meetings held on Tuesday, 15 May 2018

It was proposed by Cllr Eve, seconded by Cllr Wallington, that those for the Parish Council formed an accurate record and they were duly signed by the Chair. A similar proposal was made by Cllr Eve, seconded by Cllr Guest, relating to those for the Annual Parish meeting.

7 Update on actions from previous Parish Council meeting

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

8 Matters arising

a) Management of Meldham Bridge entrance to the reservoir area

It was understood that issues previously reported were now under control save for the provision of litter and dog waste binds.

b) Outstanding issues relating to highways

See under Item 3 above.

c) Potential permissive footpath at Arboretum end of that running from White Horse

The Clerk confirmed that the current lease for the greens from Thurlow Estate expired in July 2019. It was proposed by Cllr Wenham, seconded by Cllr Kinloch, that Tim Barling, Estate Agent, should be invited to attend the November meeting of the Parish Council with a view to discussing both an extension to the lease, and outstanding issues relating to footpaths.

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.

d) Repair to bench adjacent to war memorial

Thanks were given to Cllr Kinloch who confirmed that he had carried out the repair.

e) Community Heartbeat – VETS

The Clerk confirmed that a further training session had taken place, and that contact had been made with Community Heartbeat as previously agreed, but that to date nothing further had been heard.

f) Extended use of the Sports and Recreation Ground and proposed Children's Play Park

Cllr Eve reported the success of the recent parish cricket match, and raised the matter of reimbursement of the cost of providing teas. It was confirmed that it had previously been agreed that costs associated with the match should be provided under the Parish projects head, but to date the focus had been on the hire of a portalo which had now been paid for. It was proposed by Cllr Wenham, seconded by Cllr Guest, that a further amount of £60 should be made available to contribute towards the cost of the tea, and that Cllr Eve should liaise with those involved to distribute this sum. Thanks were given to councillors and residents who had organised the event, and it was suggested that this may be made an annual event. A rounders match, perhaps a challenge between Arboretum and village residents, was also mooted, and Cllrs Wallington and Guest agreed to seek interest from the Arboretum.

Cllr
Wenham
Cllr Kinloch
Cllr
Wallington
Cllr Guest

On a more negative note, the match had not succeeded in attracting interest from Arboretum residents despite information being placed on the Facebook page, in Withersfield News, and through a poster placed on the noticeboard. Cllr Wenham indicated that there should now be a push towards securing attendance at the forthcoming September fete by residents in this section of the parish, and Cllr Kinloch considered that there would need to be further thought about how to engage with Arboretum residents. Cllr Wenham confirmed that there would be notices placed at strategic points in the parish but it was unlikely that banners would be used. Cllr Guest agreed to place information on the Arboretum Facebook page.

In respect of the proposed Children's Play Park, Cllr Eve reported that he had struggled to get support for this. He had placed two articles in Withersfield News and spoken to various people but there had been a lack of response to put together a business plan and application for funding. Cllr Eve was thanked for his work to date and asked to notify the person who had originally suggested this project (following receipt of contact details from the Clerk).

Cllr Eve
Clerk

9 Roles and responsibilities for 2018/19

Following discussion, the following was agreed:

Graveyard – Cllr Wenham, proposed Cllr Guest, seconded Cllr Wallington.
Village Hall Management Committee – Cllrs Wallington and Wenham, proposed Cllr Kinloch, seconded Cllr Eve.

Highways – Cllr Eve, proposed Cllr Wenham, seconded Cllr Wallington.

Website – Cllr Guest, proposed Cllr Rich, seconded Cllr Kinloch.

Planning – Cllr Kinloch, proposed Cllr Guest, seconded Cllr Wenham.

Data protection – Cllr Lord, proposed Cllr Wallington, seconded Cllr Eve.

Footpaths – Cllr Lord, proposed Cllr Wallington, seconded Cllr Eve.

Finance – Cllr Rich, proposed Cllr Guest, seconded Cllr Wallington.

10 Further actions arising from Annual Parish meeting

Cllr Kinloch briefed councillors that it had been suggested that further contact should be made with the Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group to follow up on points made at the Annual Parish meeting. It was therefore proposed by Cllr Rich, seconded by Cllr Wenham, that a further meeting between the CCG and Councillors should be sought towards the end of this year, and Cllr Kinloch was asked to lead in this respect.

Cllr Kinloch

11 Latest advice from NALC relating to the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and determination of appropriate action

The information provided was noted. It was proposed by Cllr Rich, seconded by Cllr Eve, that no further action should be taken pending more explicit recommendations from SALC, and that the role and responsibilities of Cllr Lord, the councillor with responsibility for data protection, should be based solely on SALC guidance.

Cllr Lord
Clerk

12 Recent presentation delivered by the Boundary Commission in connection with the current electoral review

The information was noted on the basis that, as there were no proposals for changes to parish boundaries, there were no immediate concerns about this review.

13 Update on the activity of Suffolk Accident Rescue Service (SARS) and consideration of request for a donation

The contents of the report were noted, and based on these, it was proposed by Cllr Wallington, seconded by Cllr Guest, that a donation of £100 should be made from budgetary provision already agreed.

Clerk

14 Consideration of request from Suffolk Constabulary for funding a PSCO

It was considered that the request contained insufficient information on which to base a judgement; for example, if £5000 of funding was provided would the parish receive 20% of the time of a PSCO – this was thought to be unlikely. In any event, a parish, such as Withersfield, with very limited income could only afford a contribution in the hundreds, not thousands. In the circumstances, it was thought that no action could be taken.

15 Possible celebrations of the end of World War I

Cllr Eve reported that his wife may be interested in organising something in recognition of this important event. Cllr Wenham confirmed that the church would be holding a service of commemoration and she will raise the matter of celebrations with the Parochial Church Council. It was suggested that a small budget could be made available and that Cllr Eve should bring proposals to the next meeting once a small working party had been established with volunteers providing input. This course of action was formally proposed by Cllr Guest, seconded by Cllr Kinloch.

Cllr
Wenham
Cllr Eve

16 Finance

- a) Presentation of monthly accounts – Income and Expenditure and Bank Reconciliation

It was proposed by Cllr Eve, seconded by Cllr Kinloch, that these formed an accurate record of the current financial position.

- b) Noting of payments made since last meeting

Those made were presented through consideration of the monthly accounts. The Chairman proposed, and Cllr Eve seconded, that the payments worksheet should be signed by him and attached to the minutes.

- c) Approval of end of year accounts 2017/18

The comment from instructions received from the external auditors about the order in which the annual return and end of year accounts was noted; the Chairman confirmed that he had presented the end of year accounts at the last meeting and that these had been agreed.

- d) Internal Audit Report

It was proposed by Cllr Rich, seconded by Cllr Eve, that the comments made within this report should be actioned by the Clerk.

Clerk

17 Correspondence

- a) Email – Orchids at Meldham Washlands

It was confirmed that any responsibility for these was held by the Environment Agency and that Haverhill Town Council had already notified them of this issue.

- b) Email – Rt Hon Matthew Hancock MP re celebration of Silver Sunday

Noted

- c) Letter – Seafarers UK

Noted.

- d) Email from a parishioner to the Chairman regarding Withersfield New report in connection with a planning matter

The concerns expressed were considered. It was explained that the article had reported the facts through hearing and communicating the views expressed by a majority of parishioners who had attended the public meeting organised by the Council, and through reporting the facts of the way the matter was dealt with at the meeting of the Development Control Committee. The Parish Council confirmed its support and agreement to the views as set out in the Withersfield News report.

- e) Seagull Rep – staging of the Hound of the Baskervilles between 2 and 28 May 2019

The Clerk was asked to send the details to the chair of the Village Hall Management Committee and parish councillor representatives on this committee would provide input at the next meeting.

Clerk
Cllr
Wallington
Cllr
Wenham

18 Planning

Borough decisions received since the last meeting were noted. The process of the Parish Council submitting comments or objections to an application were explained for the benefit of new councillors with the Chair indicating that in order to make such comments or objections, Parish Councillors must meet to discuss the matter, either at a special meeting of the Parish Council or at one of its scheduled meetings.

19 Agenda items for meeting to be held on Tuesday, 18 September 2018

- Discussion of outstanding and current highways issues with County Cllr Evans
- Arrangements for World War I celebration/commemoration
- Consideration of whether a neighbourhood plan should be developed; Cllr Kinloch to research and bring forward proposals

Cllr Kinloch

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm.