

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

Present: Cllrs Terry Rich (Chairman), Ian Kinloch (Vice Chair); Lucy Guest; Peter Lord; Clerk: Jill Johnson

- 1 Apologies for absence** were received from Borough Cllr Jane Midwood. The Chairman welcomed Nissa French-Ramsteyn and two representatives from Speed Watch to the meeting.

*Chairman opened the public section of the meeting welcoming a representative from Friends of Withersfield.*

**2 Borough Councillor's report**

In giving her apologies, Cllr Midwood had asked for an update on waste bins for the flood control park. She reported that there would be a debate, and hopefully decision, at the meeting of St Edmundsbury Borough Council she was attending, on whether to have a Mayor or Chairman for the new West Suffolk Council. She also referred to the Boundary Commission recommendations, whilst not much affecting the Withersfield Ward, had met with consternation in Kedington and Hundon.

Clerk

**3 County Councillor's report**

There was none.

**4 Public Forum for parishioners**

No points for discussion had been raised.

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

**5 Co-option of new councillor following resignation of Cllr Wallington**

The Chair reported that when Cllrs Lord and Guest had been co-opted on to the Parish Council, interest had also been expressed by Nissa French-Ramsteyn. It was confirmed that the statement she submitted confirmed her suitability for co-option, and in the circumstances it was proposed by Cllr Wenham, seconded by Cllr Guest, that she be co-opted with immediate effect. The Chairman indicated that the Clerk would be contact to make arrangements for her induction.

Clerk

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

Cllr Kinloch referred to an application he had made to the Planning Department for tree work to be undertaken at his property (contained in Item 19 b)).

**7 Approval of minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 18 September 2018**

These were proposed as accurate records by Cllr Kinloch, seconded by Cllr Lord, and duly signed by the Chairman.

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

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

## **8 Matters arising**

### a) Litter and dog waste bins for the flood control park

It was reported that following Borough Cllr Midwood's contact with St Edmundsbury Borough Council there had been considerable communications between representatives from St Edmundsbury Borough Council, Haverhill Town Council, and the Environment Agency. It would appear that agreement had been secured in principle from the Environment Agency for the placement of fixed wheelie bins to be emptied by St Edmundsbury Borough Council, but that a permit would be required before they could be installed. The last communication from the Environment Agency representative had been that they were waiting for contractors to leave the site, and that there would be a site visit, if necessary. The Clerk confirmed that £500 towards the cost of the binds had now been received from Cllr Midwood's locality budget.

### b) Tenants at No 5 Queen Street

Following the delivery of the letter agreed at the September meeting of the Parish Council, the Chairman confirmed that there had been no response from the tenants. In the circumstances, he was now in touch with the letting agent who had agreed to take action. Cllr Kinloch reported that he had spoken to a tenant who had indicated the problems would be sorted.

### c) Celebration/commemoration of end of World War I

The event organised in the village hall following the services at the war memorial and the church had been well supported; this had been funded jointly by the Parish Council and Friends of Withersfield. Cllr Wenham reported that she had approached the Chair of the Village Hall Management Committee suggesting that no charge should be made for the hall. Councillors thanked all those who made the event such a success.

## **10 Report on recent meeting with Suffolk County Council Highways and determination of steps towards a future integrated traffic calming package**

The Chairman welcomed two representatives from the Speed Watch team. He explained that the meeting with the Highways representative had taken place following the sending of a letter to the Chief Executive of Suffolk County Council complaining about a lack of response from Highways in connection with various points which had been raised over a period of more than a year. When a reply to this letter was received County Cllr Evans had indicated that she was less than happy with the response and offered to arrange the meeting.

A number of different issues were raised at the meeting starting with suggested 40 mph buffer zones at the various approaches to the village.

Cllr Evans had agreed to fund survey work and it was confirmed that this was now taking place. The number of outpost villages and the speed at which vehicles entered the village would be taken into consideration along with the outcomes of the survey. Any decision to take forward these buffer zones would require a traffic order for all five sites and would cost around £5000 to introduce. Once the data from the survey was available, that held by Speed Watch could also be considered; this had shown not infrequent instances of vehicles travelling at 60-70 mph in the 30 mph zone.

Highways had also agreed to undertake a survey of the bridge in Church Street to determine its suitability for use by HGVs.

Speeds of vehicles using the village in order to access North Cambridge were raised and the increase in traffic following the development of more housing in the Haverhill area. It was wondered why Section 106 funds had not been made available in order to address some of these problems but confirmed that although an impact assessment of increased traffic in an area immediately next to a development area may have been undertaken, there would be no assessment of the impact on villages on the routes likely to be taken by drivers accessing their employment sites. In this connection, it had been raised at the meeting that it would be helpful for representatives of both Highways and the Planning Department to attend a further meeting, but it had not yet been possible to arrange this.

The Speed Watch team lead reported that he had been in touch with a councillor from West Wrating Parish Council. He had discussed the recent introduction of 40 mph buffer zones; the councillor had confirmed that in her view there had been some benefit to West Wrating and that funding was available for their introduction. However, the Speed Watch lead was concerned that other measures could have more impact, for example, speed tables, and in this connection he was attempting to get information on their use in France.

It was recognised that no one device would solve the problems being experienced and that there was no desire to detract from the rural character of the village. The Speed Watch aim was that the routes through Withersfield should be made as unattractive to drivers using it as a rat run. It was suggested by a member of the Speed Watch team that there might be more positive outcomes if the parish councils of Withersfield, Great Wrating and West Wrating worked together, and by a councillor that the Thurlow parish councils should also be contacted.

A further issue raised was the reeds obscuring vehicles exiting from the Arboretum Estate on to the A1307; it had been accepted by Highways that these were too high and the representative who had attended the meeting was taking this back for consideration.

Following this discussion, it was suggested that the Parish Council should establish a working group, with critical involvement of members of the Speed Watch team. This should consider all available evidence, costings of potential measures, what could be done in the short-term, and in the long-term. It would also be necessary to press for attendance of representatives of Highways and Planning at a further meeting. In addition, the South Cambridgeshire Council would need to be contacted in respect of potential violations of conditions for HGVs using local roads to

access the expanded Jellycat warehouse and the Home Brands warehouse opposite.

Problems at the lower end of Queen Street were also raised, for example, vehicles travelling over Meldham bridge, the speed limits, increased use by HGVs, and damage to fencing frequently caused by vehicles travelling too fast.

It was proposed by Cllr Rich, seconded by Cllr Guest, that the suggested working group should be set up; this should be led up Cllr Eve, and convened as soon as possible, and all councillors were invited to participate together with Speed Watch representatives. The working group should consider all the areas outlined above together with pressing for the meeting with Highways and Planning representatives, and should provide an update at the next meeting of the Parish Council. Cllr Eve

Finally, a Speed Watch representative invited all councillors to take part in a Speed Watch session better to understand the extent of the problem. In turn, Speed Watch was asked to consider whether they could monitor speeds along the 40 mph stretch of the A1307 abutting the Arboretum Estate and, if so, to invite Arboretum residents to participate.

In respect of a recent communication about changes to the provision of grit, it was proposed by Cllr Kinloch, seconded by Cllr Guest, that requests should be made for bins to be placed on Town Green, Burton Green, outside the recreation ground, half way up Hollow Hill and at the junction of Hollow Hill with Skippers Lane. Cllr Guest would check the situation in respect of the Arboretum and notify the Clerk as soon as possible.

#### **11 Update on the development of a Neighbourhood Plan, and agreement to form a working group/sub-committee**

The Chairman reported that there had not been much response to the reference to this in his article in the recent edition of Withersfield News, but that he was putting together the points raised from various interactions; these would include infill in gardens, the development of larger areas, the rural character of the village, and the separation between the more urbanised Arboretum Estate and Hanchett End areas of the parish, and the rural aspect of the village.

Cllrs Kinloch and Rich explained the rationale behind Neighbourhood Plans indicating that they do not have a full statutory basis but can influence future planning decisions and strengthen the position of the Parish Council views. It was pointed out that when considering the recent application for garden infill, the Parish Council had had no policy on which to base a decision as to whether garden infill was acceptable or not.

It was proposed by Cllr Kinloch, seconded by Cllr Guest, that a group should be convened by the Chairman, and that all councillors, together with local people with knowledge and expertise, should be involved. It was agreed that any plan developed should be parish-wide, ie including potential further development of the research park area. Chairman

**12 Final recommendations of the Electoral Review relating to the establishment of the new West Suffolk council**

These were noted, particularly as from a Withersfield ward perspective there would be little change.

**13 Arrangements for the negotiation of a new licence for village greens with Thurlow Estate**

The Chairman explained that the licence for the greens would come up for renewal next July, and that it had yet not been possible to get a response from Thurlow Estate to get the process of negotiation underway. A further attempt at contact with the Thurlow Estate should be made. Chairman

**14 Tender document for grasscutting/trimming for 2019**

It was proposed by Cllr Eve, seconded by Cllr Wenham, that a similar approach to that adopted for 2018 should be undertaken. Councillors had been asked by a resident to remember that acceptance of a cheaper tender had not been successful in the past. The Chairman explained that a tender process was necessary but in considering those received councillors had to be satisfied that the best possible service would be obtained. Clerk

**15 Strategy for litter management, initially for the Sports and Recreation Ground**

Councillors were reminded of approaches by parishioners in respect of litter, dog mess, and drug dealing, at the Sports and Recreation ground. It was thought that litter had reduced since the erection of a barrier at the entrance by Thurlow Estate but recognised that the impact of other potential factors could not be discounted. Following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Kinloch, seconded by Cllr Eve, that agreement should be sought from Thurlow Estate for the installation of a lock down wheelie bin, and that a sign should be purchased for display on the pavilion. Clerk  
Chairman

**16 Date for the 2019 Annual Spring Clean**

It was proposed by Cllr Wenham, seconded by Cllr Guest, that this should take place on Saturday, 16 March, and that this should be notified through Withersfield News and through display of notices on the boards. Cllrs Guest and French-Ramsteyn were asked to give consideration as to whether a community event along the lines of that which operated in Withersfield village for many years should be introduced for the Arboretum. The Clerk was asked to contact St Edmundsbury Borough Council with a request to clear the footpath in Church Street. Clerk  
Cllr Guest  
Cllr French-Ramsteyn

**17 Finance**

- a) Presentation of monthly accounts – Income and Expenditure and Bank Reconciliation
- b) Noting of payments made since last meeting

It was proposed by Cllr Eve, seconded by Cllr Lord, that the documents showed an accurate record of the current financial position. Payments made since the last meeting were noted.

c) Draft budget and precept submission for 2019/2020

The Chairman explained that in drafting the proposed budget a zero rate of increase in council tax had been assumed due to the current level of reserves; he also pointed out that unlike the last few years the precept level would not increase now that the Arboretum Estate was complete.

The Chairman identified the main changes in comparison with the current year. Elections were due to take place in 2019 and provision had therefore been made for a contested election based on the indicative costs supplied by St Edmundsbury Borough Council. Following the decision that parish councils would not be required to appoint an external data protection office, the previous provision had been reduced substantially but it had been thought prudent to retain some provision in case the need arose for consultancy services. Funding had also been allocated for waste collection and disposal following recent discussions about litter management in the village. Previous provision for a contribution towards Withersfield News had been removed on the basis that the newsletter was attracting sufficient advertising revenue to self-fund.

Following perusal of the draft budget, precept form and the Chairman's report, it was proposed by Cllr Wenham, seconded by Cllr Lord, that this position should form the basis of the Parish Council's finances for the next financial year.

d) Approval of Risk and Asset Registers for 2019

These were considered as an accurate record of the current risks and assets and accordingly it was proposed by Cllr Wenham, seconded by Cllr Lord, that these should be signed by the Chairman.

## 18 Correspondence

a) Email – Ash trees in churchyard

Cllr Wenham reported that the Tree Warden had been asked for advice about the state of ash trees in the churchyard; the Tree Warden had confirmed that he considered that these had ash die back and recommended that they should be felled at some point in the future. It was recognised that such work would need to go out to tender in order to show due diligence but accepted that no further action could be taken until spring when the trees come into leaf. It was recognised that it would be necessary to make budgetary provision for this work and recommended that the draft budget should be re-visited at the January meeting.

Chairman  
Clerk

b) Email – Adoption of South Cambridgeshire Local Plan

Noted

c) Email – Last village in Suffolk

It was recognised that the comments made should form a contribution to discussions concerning the contents of a future Neighbourhood Plan. The Clerk was asked to explain this to the parishioner who had made contact and thank him for his valuable comments. Clerk

- d) Email – SALC Membership Subscription 2019

Noted

- e) Email – Haverhill to West Suffolk Hospital bus

It was agreed that information regarding this service should be put in the January edition Withersfield News with a proposal made by Cllr Rich, seconded by Cllr Eve, that responsibility should be delegated to Cllr Kinloch who was asked in addition to research the possible routes taken by the bus and the cost to users. Cllr Kinloch

- f) Newsletter – Head Start Suffolk

Noted

- g) Email – Parish map

No action should be taken on the basis that an artist living in the village was currently preparing a map showing, amongst other things, footpaths. Cllr Kinloch, who had liaised with the artist concerned, was asked to contact her to request four copies of the map to be placed in the two bus shelters, and when possible, on the two parish noticeboards. Cllr Kinloch

## **19 Planning**

- a) Borough notifications since last meeting

Noted

- b) Applications received since last meeting

Noted

## **20 Meeting dates for 2019**

These were agreed as 22 January, 12 March, 14 May, 16 July, 17 September, and 19 November.

## **21 Agenda items for meeting to be held in January 2019**

- Re-negotiation of green licence with Thurlow Estate
- Update from the Highways and Neighbourhood working groups
- Attendance by Highways/Planning representatives
- Update from Cllr French-Ramsteyn re Rapid Response Vehicle
- Findings/report on Patients' Participation Group meeting – Cllr Kinloch
- Final confirmation of draft budget

*The meeting closed at 9.02 pm.*