

Offton and Willisham Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council EGM called by the Chairman and held at Offton and Willisham Village Hall on Monday 6th September 2021 at 7pm.

Present:	Cllr S Warnes (Chair)	Cllr A Cox
	Cllr A Bye	Cllr A Rumsey
	Cllr C Pinson-Roxburgh	Cllr I Gilson
	Dst Cllr D Pratt	29 members of the Public
	Clerk - T Davis	

ACTION

1	<p><u>Meeting Administration</u></p> <p>a) Welcome by Chair and open the meeting The Chair opened the meeting</p> <p>b) To consider & approve apologies for absence Apologies were given and accepted by Cllr D Cattermole and Cty Cllr K Oakes</p> <p>c) To receive Declarations of interest on agenda items No declarations were made</p>	
2	<p>To Approve the draft minutes of the 5th July 2021 meeting and for the Chairman to sign as a true record The Chair asked if there were any matters arising from the minutes.</p> <p>a) No matters arose <i>It was unanimously agreed for the Chair to sign the minutes as a true record.</i></p>	Clerk
3	<p>Public Participation Session (To hear reports from the County Councillor, District Councillor, and comments from the Public) The Chair advised that this meeting was to review the correspondence received from a developer, that it was not a planning application, and that the meeting had been called by the Chair due to the potential length of time that discussion would take up would not be suitable for a scheduled meeting, as evidenced by the attendance this evening. The Chair advised that this part of the meeting is where members of the public have a chance to speak, which would need to be done one at a time civilly. The Chair invited the developer to speak first. The developer identified themselves as representing the landowners, who would like to offer the parish land to build houses which would be under a local housing scheme. The developer went on to say that in 2014 within a Local Housing Needs Survey conducted by the Offton & Willisham Parish Council it was identified that there was a need for 9 homes. Now in 2021 this Local Housing Needs Survey is no longer valid (as it is valid for 5yrs) and offered to fund the cost of carrying out a new Local Housing Needs Survey to identify if Offton & Willisham Parish still</p>	

	<p>have a need for local housing. The developer had brought an example of a proposed plan that had been drawn up between the developer and the landowners.</p> <p>The Chair advised that the land was on a Rural Exception Site (a definition can be found in the glossary at the end of the minutes) and asked if the developer's plan would involve market value housing and the developer advised they were looking to provide only affordable local housing, as allowed under the local need housing scheme for a RES (Rural Exception Site).</p> <p>The Chair then asked the developer to stop speaking so that other members of the public would have time to speak.</p> <p>The Chair then asked for a show of hands and went round the room so everyone who wanted to speak could. A number of questions and statements were put to the Council (resident questions are in italics, statements from residents are not).</p> <p><i>Why do we need to have to accept a site before establishing a need?</i></p> <p>The Chair qualified that you don't. That a Housing Needs Survey identified housing Need (definition can be found in the glossary). It did not limit the parish to opting for only one site. If a Housing Need were identified in the survey, then it would be open to all landowners to offer their land as a site for the housing need.</p> <p><i>What are the grounds for having a Housing Needs Survey?</i></p> <p>It was qualified that there were no grounds, the 2014 survey had been done following the Offton & Willisham Parish Plan.</p> <p>A resident wanted to speak about the unsuitability of the site produced by the developer. Another resident advised of three previous sites that became unsuitable. As many people started talking the clerk was unable to record all information, it was at this time the Chair qualified that this meeting was not to discuss planning objections, but for the Parish Council to discuss the contents of the correspondence received.</p> <p>The Chair then resumed round the show of hands allowing people to speak.</p> <p><i>Would there be a meeting if the developer had not written?</i></p> <p>No. The Chair qualified that a meeting took place because the Parish Council are legally required to discuss issues at a meeting (Local Government Act 1972, Sch 12, 10(2)b). The Chair felt that the Parish Council overseen by the Chair was not one to hide issues but show them to their public openly and in good time.</p> <p>The Chair continued asking for anyone wishing to speak.</p> <p>A resident gave their opinion that no housing need survey is necessary. Another resident suggested that if a housing need survey is carried out, that it was not to involve the developer.</p> <p><i>If a planning application has been refused, can the developer keep applying?</i></p> <p>Answer given was Yes.</p> <p><i>Is there an actual housing need in Offton & Willisham?</i></p> <p>Answer given was Not currently known, the clerk is still waiting for BMSDC to provide the details.</p> <p>A resident advised that it seems that there was a demand for local housing in the past, but seems to not need it now.</p>	
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	The Chair having allowed all those who wanted to speak to do so once closed this item and moved to item 4a.	
4	<p>a) To discuss developer correspondence received To discuss obtaining a new housing needs survey The Chair asked for Councillors to give their views and a discussion took place. A councillor spoke that since the 2014 Housing Needs Survey, 10-12 sites were identified. Over a period of 3-4yrs (2014-2018) the small committee contacted the landowners of each of these sites along with help from a housing association, details of which can be found in the historical minutes of meetings. In 2018 a line was drawn as councillors were unable to find a landowner who wanted to take part in developing 6-8 small properties. Councillors continued to discuss if Council Houses had now become available and if there was a waiting list with BMSDC. Some councillors questioned if there was a need for a Housing Needs Survey due to changes such as the Willisham Barns Site which might fulfil housing needs, but not currently providing Local Need Housing. Councillors were also aware of the high feeling brought to the meeting and the need to ensure they were doing the right thing for all the parish as well as those attending the meeting. It was decided that Council did not have enough information to make an informed decision on whether to carry out a Housing Needs Survey. It was Proposed by Cllr A Cox, Seconded by Cllr C Pinson-Roxburgh and unanimously agreed with one abstention to defer the decision to the October meeting in order for the Clerk to gather housing information from BMSDC.</p> <p>b) To discuss the draft housing plan of 12 houses off Castle Road, Offton The Chair then asked for Council to discuss the draft housing plan brought to them by the developer. During the discussion it was highlighted that it was the wrong site, that original objections still remained, Councillors spoke about previous sites turning out to be suitable but declined by BMSDC as well as there being alternative sites that might be much better. Council had reservations regarding this site especially following the strength of feeling shown by residents this evening.</p>	Clerk
5	<p>To discuss the upcoming meeting for The Red Lion Pub The Chair asked the Council if they were happy for the Chair to attend the upcoming meeting as representing the Council. It was agreed that this was a good idea, that the Council supported the original idea of rejecting a change of use but obviously could not support an outcome from the meeting as it hasn't yet taken place. The Chair will report back to council.</p>	Chair
6	<p>a) Finance Current Bank Balances as at 31st July 2021:- Community Account = £7,287.41 Premium Account = £0.34 Premium Savings Account = £9003.96 The Chair read out the balances of the accounts</p>	

7	<p>Next meeting 4th October 2021 at 7pm at Offton & Willisham Village Hall</p> <p>The Chair advised details of the next meeting and closed the meeting.</p>	
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Meeting end 7:50pm

ADDENDUM

1. District Council Report

Dr Daniel Pratt
Mid Suffolk District Councillor

September 2021

Afghan refugees

Following the Government announcement of its new resettlement scheme for Afghan refugees, councils in Suffolk, including MSDC, have expressed their commitment to assist. We have already helped a small number of Afghan interpreters and their families to resettle in Suffolk. There will be ongoing work to support unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and other refugees entering the UK.

Gateway14

Proposals for the logistics and business park spanning 156 acres between the A14 and A1120 has been granted planning permission. This was a very sensitive application as Mid Suffolk District Council own the site (through its company Gateway14 Ltd.) and are also the Planning Authority making the legal decision whether or not to approve the application. A number of councillors in the opposition group were against the proposal on the basis of traffic impacts and landscape buffers reduced to 20 m from 40 m shown in the original plans. The application, despite its significance, was decided at a regular planning committee meeting with an agenda that included 7 other development proposals.

Development of Needham Market former HQ site

This development of homes for private sale is progressing well and show homes can now be viewed by potential buyers. This is the first phase of housing development being carried out by as a Public/Private Joint Venture. Further development will include a small supermarket and affordable homes for shared ownership and for social rent.

Cycling and Walking

Babergh and MSDC have set up a Joint Task and Finish Group to prepare a Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan (LCWIP) to prioritise locations across the Districts for new or improved cycle and pedestrian provision.

Taxi licensing

The council missed the opportunity to encourage the shift to electric vehicles when they put forward a new taxi licensing policy at the Licensing Committee meeting in August. Even though no new diesel or

petrol car can be purchased after 2030, our ten-year policy included no provisions to encourage cab drivers to move to electric vehicles. It contained none of the incentives already in place in other districts. The policy mentions no efforts to reduce emissions and was approved on the Chair's casting vote.

Compost Giveaway

The date for collection of free compost from Mill Meadow, Needham Lake has been changed and will now be Sunday 19 September from 9.00 to 12.00.

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2. County Council Report

Statement on behalf of all Suffolk councils regarding Afghan refugees

Statement on behalf of all Suffolk councils.

"On Wednesday 18 August, the Government announced its new resettlement scheme for Afghan refugees. Whilst the full details are yet to be confirmed, it is crystal clear that the Government needs local authorities everywhere to step up and support this national effort.

"All councils in Suffolk are committed to this cause. We have already helped a small number of Afghan interpreters and their families to resettle in Suffolk, in addition to ongoing work to support unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and other refugees entering the UK. In the coming days and weeks, the district, borough and county councils will continue working with the Government to do what we can to aid vulnerable refugees.

"Times like this call for acts of humanity. Suffolk will play its part."

Make one simple change today in a bid to tackle climate change

COP26 will bring into focus the need for us all to reduce our carbon emissions in order to slow climate change

A column by Councillor Richard Rout, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Environment at Suffolk County Council.

In early November, the eyes of the world will be on the UK. Glasgow, to be exact.

This is when the COP26 conference takes places.

COP26 is the UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties. It will be a momentous event and I expect some significant decisions and agreements to be made, as the world continues to combat climate change and reduce its carbon emissions.

But how will an international event affect each of us in Suffolk? Although COP26 will be an event attended by Presidents and Prime Ministers, it will impact us all.

COP26 will bring into focus the need for us all to reduce our carbon emissions in order to slow climate change. This has been the message for a long time of course, but we must all be changing our behaviours and choosing to use less energy.

And I do mean all of us.

Global industry, national corporations and governments must lead the way to enable us all to make greener choices. But slowing climate change is everyone's responsibility, we each have a duty to tackle this situation and play our part.

Suffolk County Council has been addressing climate change challenge for many years, but we know that the organisation must be doing more and doing it more quickly. This is agreed across all Suffolk's authorities which is why, together, we have recently approved the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan - a document to keep us accountable in our ambition to make Suffolk a carbon neutral county by 2030.

I'm proud of the work Suffolk County Council has been doing for several years now. We are planting trees and hedgerows. We are supporting businesses with advice and funding to reduce their carbon emissions. We are running schemes to reduce the cost of solar panels on homes. We are providing the infrastructure to encourage walking and cycling. We are providing greener ways to travel. We are installing electric vehicle charging points in rural areas. There is much, much more besides, but we are working hard to develop this work.

The www.greensuffolk.org website will be updated soon with these Suffolk events. I'd recommend it as a great place to start finding out more.

Suffolk targets devolution talks with Government

It was announced on August 17th that public sector leaders in Suffolk say they welcome early discussions with Ministers about a possible devolution deal for Suffolk.

In a joint letter sent to Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP, the leaders of all of Suffolk's six councils and Police and Crime Commissioner Tim Passmore, said:

"Suffolk has already demonstrated its credibility as a place where Government will find strong and ambitious delivery partners.

"The Suffolk Public Sector Leaders (SPSL) group... has a track record of effective partnership working. These robust relationships enable more innovative ways of working, including exploring opportunities for devolution as part of a County Deal.

"Suffolk... is an ideal place to help Government demonstrate how levelling up can work in diverse geographies. Suffolk has a strong offer to make to Government and we would welcome early discussions with MHCLG Ministers to explore proposals for a County Deal ahead of the White Paper being published."

The Government wrote to councils in July 2021, setting out its ambition to make available to county areas the kind of devolved decision-making powers and public funding currently enjoyed by larger cities and urban areas. It's part of the Government's Levelling Up agenda and will see a White Paper published in the coming months.

Councillor Suzie Morley, Leader of Mid Suffolk District Council and chairman of the SPSL, said:

"Suffolk is known for working well together. Whether it's partners joining forces during the COVID-19 pandemic, pooling public funding for the greater good or developing shared strategic priorities, collaboration is what we're good at.

"From inclusive economic growth and community safety to climate change and strong communities, we're focused on collaborative actions that deliver the biggest and best additional benefits for our communities.

"We believe this makes Suffolk a strong contender to work with the Government as part of its Levelling Up agenda."

It is understood that Suffolk's approach involving all councils is rare among other expressions of interest being submitted to Government, a point that has been welcomed by the county's seven MPs.

In an accompanying letter to Robert Jenrick MP, they said:

"We are...writing to wholeheartedly support the vision set out, collectively, by Suffolk County Council and all of Suffolk's District and Borough Councils. We believe this unity of purpose behind taking the next step in devolution through a County Deal cannot just help persuade you that we should be in the vanguard of the next stage of devolution, but also that Suffolk can use such a deal to deliver better services locally.

"This is not a recent or short-lived view. For many years local leaders in Suffolk at all levels have worked more closely together and have put forward constructive propositions for further improvements. We hope to work with you on your forthcoming White Paper to show that strong local leadership and strengthened local governance can deliver better."

Read a copy of [the letter sent to Robert Jenrick MP](#) (PDF, 207KB), as well the [supportive letter from Suffolk's seven MPs](#) (PDF, 205KB).

Suffolk homeowners can cut carbon emissions as successful solar panel buying scheme returns

On August 25th it was announced that Suffolk residents will come together to invest in renewables through a group-buying scheme for solar panels and battery storage.

Solar Together Suffolk, in conjunction with Suffolk County Council, helps homeowners feel confident that they are paying the right price for a high-quality installation from pre-approved installers.

This innovative scheme builds on three years of the highly successful Solar Together programme run in Suffolk. Since 2018, the scheme has installed solar panel systems in 1,028 households across the county. On average, homeowners have saved 33% on installation costs, £263 on energy bills in year one, and stopped harmful carbon emissions entering the atmosphere.

Suffolk residents have until 27 September 2021 to register their interest, for free and with no obligation, to join the group-buying scheme to have solar panels installed at their home. Not only does Solar Together Suffolk offer solar panels, but also optional battery storage and retrofit battery storage for residents who have already invested in solar panels.

How does it work?

- Until 27 September: Householders can register to become part of the group, for free and without obligation, at www.solartogether.co.uk/suffolk
- 28 September: Pre-vetted UK solar PV installers participate in an auction. They can offer competitive pricing as the volume and geographic concentration makes it possible for them to realise greater efficiencies, which they pass on with lower prices for installations.
- After the auction, registered households will receive a personal recommendation which is specific to the details they submitted in their registration.
- If they choose to accept their recommendation, the specifics of their installation will be confirmed with a technical survey after which a date can be set for the installation of their solar PV system.
- Telephone and email helpdesks are on-hand throughout the whole process which, together with information sessions, will allow households to make an informed decision in a safe and hassle-free environment.

Suffolk County Council brings [Solar Together Suffolk](#) to residents as part of the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership, on behalf of all of Suffolk's local authorities. This is in partnership with independent experts iChoosr to make the transition to clean energy as cost effective and hassle-free as possible. Across the UK, iChoosr has delivered almost 5,000 installations to date and over 80,000 tonnes of avoided lifetime carbon emissions.

Marie-Louise Abretti, iChoosr UK Solar Manager added:

“The Solar Together group-buying scheme offers a simple process and the reassurance of a trusted and vetted installer for residents of Suffolk who are looking for ways to reduce their carbon emissions, save on energy bills and increase their independence from the grid.”

Glossary

Housing Needs Survey - To identify housing issues and solutions that can be used to make strategic decisions related to the housing market and is often used as a basis for future housing and policy decisions and/or to secure financing for various housing programs and projects

RES (Rural Exception Site) - Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Under the scheme, a landowner provides land at below market value on the basis the land is used to build affordable homes for local people

Community land trusts (CLTs) - are a not for profit organisation set up and run by ordinary people to develop and manage homes as well as other assets important to that community.