

Offton and Willisham Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at Offton and Willisham Village Hall on Monday 7th
February 2022 at 7pm.

Present:	Cllr S Warnes (Chair)	Cllr A Cox
	Cllr A Bye	Cllr A Rumsey
	Cllr C Pinson-Roxburgh	Cllr D Cattermole (V.Chair)
	Cllr A Chaplin	
	Dst Cllr D Pratt	
	3 members of the public	Clerk - T Davis

ACTION

1	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p>	<p><u>Meeting Administration</u></p> <p>Welcome by Chair and opening of the meeting The Chair welcomed everyone and opened the meeting firstly by giving thanks to the work of Ms Hardman, a lady who had worked and devoted her life for the betterment of the local community. A moment's silence in her memory was given by all.</p> <p>To Consider & Approve Apologies for absence Formal apologies were sent by Cllr I Gilson and these were accepted.</p> <p>Declarations of Interest A declaration of a pecuniary interest was given by Cllr A Chaplin for item 7ii.</p>	
2	<p>a)&b)</p>	<p>To Approve the draft minutes of the 6th Dec 2021 meeting and Planning Committee meeting of 20th January 2022 and for the Chairman to sign as a true record The Chair asked if there were any matters arising from the minutes of the meetings in turn. No matters arose <i>It was unanimously agreed for the Chair to sign both set of minutes as a true record.</i></p>	
3		<p>Public Participation Session (To hear reports from the County Councillor, District Councillor, and comments from the Public) The Chair began this item by inviting District Cllr D Pratt to speak. Cllr Pratt had forwarded a report and also advised that BMSDC would be recruiting a Bio-diversity Officer and one of the task to be undertaken by this officer would be the Offton Green. Residents were then asked if they wished to speak at this time but they had come to sit and listen.</p>	
4		<p>Chair Report nothing new to report since the last meeting</p>	
5		<p>Clerk report, with mention of emails & correspondence received up to 31st Jan 2022 Over the last few months we have had a good level of resident communication regarding our roads, footpaths, mobile phone signal and meetings, most have been passed to the Highways reporting system and</p>	

	<p>some are ongoing. Two have been listed on the agenda this evening, item 9 and item 10.</p> <p>Finance The third quarter accounts have been completed and checked by Cllr A Cox and this is item 11e under finance this evening. As usual these accounts are available to view at the meeting and you will note that we have had reimbursement for the Litter Bin Hoops from BMSDC. Thank you to Cllr K Oakes for sorting this out. The Precept was sent before the 31st Jan deadline and acknowledged as received by BMSDC.</p> <p>Parish Plan Questionnaire I have placed a draft questionnaire on the agenda as I know that the questions were to be reviewed. I also wanted to highlight that to get the questionnaire printed in time for distribution, it would be good practice to have a small committee or working party set up with the authority to get this done before the next meeting in May, or for authority for the Clerk to organise and authorise ready for distribution in May with formal acknowledgement of volunteer distributors of the questionnaire.</p> <p>Bank Change Over I have been in contact with Lloyds bank on a number of occasions and they still have suspended all switching and new applications for the Treasurers account.</p> <p>Co-option I have contacted a resident who has expressed an interest in joining as a parish councillor and has confirmed they will be attending this evening.</p> <p>Speeding in the Villages As you know our local Police contact has confirmed that we have been put on a waiting list for our roads to be monitored. It has been over 10 weeks now and I have not yet heard anything. I had hoped to chase this in January, unfortunately due to having covid, I was unable to but I have chased more recently and I am now waiting for a response.</p> <p>Website The contact us page has been removed, I'm yet to hear further on the website refresh.</p> <p>Other items reported/previously discussed and still ongoing Fly Tipping in The Channel The Offton Green Holly Road - bank degrading & Holly Road - tree trunks Footpath between school house and middlewood cottages Flooding in Fiske Pightle. It was at this point that residents wished to explain further in regard to the Tree Trunks on Holly Road. The Clerk confirmed that this was reported on 21st Dec under ref: 345541 and it was classed by Highways as “Our staff have visited the location of your report and assessed the issue you reported. We believe that at this time it does not warrant remedial action. However, we will continue to monitor the location as part of our routine inspections, and if the matter worsens significantly, we will take action.”. Councillors discussed this further and were concerned about Highways maintenance of The Channel over the road. It was tasked to the Clerk to contact the Environment Agency as well as Highways.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
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9	<p>Mobile Phone Signal Cllr A Bye had taken this topic over and had little new news. Since contacting Dr D Poulter MP, Ofcom and some mobile providers, as it currently stands according to the OFCOM coverage map https://checker.ofcom.org.uk/en-gb/mobile-coverage#pc=IP84RA&uprn=10023991277&vw=map No problems are shown within the parish. Due to this no outside help/assistance can be gained. All of the Council were frustrated by this as they are aware of the narrow band of residents who do suffer with what seems to be a poor connection black spot. Cllr Bye has previously referred the details of a local landowner who had given permission to have a mast placed on their land, but nothing has been heard since and the landowner has not been contacted directly. This might be a way of fixing the problem and it was agreed that Cllr Chaplin and Cllr Bye would look into things further.</p>	Cllr A Chaplin Cllr A Bye
10	<p>Resident Communication - To discuss contents of resident email and resolve if needed The residents email had been read by all councillors and a short discussion took place. It was agreed that the Clerk response of thanks and acknowledgement was sufficient and that there was nothing further to add as Council felt there was no further action needed.</p>	
11	<p>Finance</p> <p>a) Current Bank Balances as at 31st December 2021:- Community Account = £6,820.32 Premium Account = £0.34 Premium Savings Account = £9,004.40</p> <p>b) Income Received:- Bank Interest - £0.22 BMSDC (Litter Hoop reimbursement) - £68.05</p> <p>c) To advise Payments made following 6th Dec 2021 up to 1st Feb 2022 - Clerk Wages for December - £352.95 Clerk Wages for January - £352.95</p> <p>d) To approve payments and authorise cheques for signature (Resolution required) Clerk's Mileage Expenses & Office allowance - £72.90 It was Proposed by Cllr D Cattermole, Seconded by Cllr A Cox and Unanimously agreed to authorise payments</p> <p>e) Report from Cllr Cox on 3rd Quarter accounts Cllr A Cox confirmed the accounts had been checked. All was correct. The Chair expressed thanks from the council for continuing to undertake this task.</p> <p>f) To discuss and approve the Internal Auditor for 2022-23</p>	Clerk

ADDENDUM

1. County Council Report - February 2022

Council prepares budgets for its finances and the environment

Column by Councillor Richard Rout, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Environment

For the first time in its history, Suffolk County Council will be presented with TWO budgets at its Full Council meeting in February.

One of these budgets is the Financial Budget, which has been a regular feature of Full Council meetings ahead of the new financial year. This is where I present how we propose to generate and spend money to provide the best possible services for everyone in Suffolk.

But this year, for the first time, a detailed Carbon Budget will also be presented. This is an important step, as it will allow the Council to monitor its progress against our ambitious target of being a Net Zero organisation by 2030.

I'll explain more about the Carbon Budget shortly, but first I want to address our Financial Budget – what the last year has been like, what pressures the council is under, and how you will play a key role to enable the council to provide and invest in the services that many residents need to access.

It has been a very difficult budget to consider, especially with Covid continuing to make life challenging on every level, both professionally and personally. This is true of the council's finances too - we also continue to face rising costs. In addition, the demands on our services have hugely increased, particularly for our adult care and children's services.

The pandemic continues to have a big impact on our aim to help everyone stay active, healthy and lead independent lives – as well as supporting those with more complex needs, by providing social care, through our amazing team of care workers.

Covid has brought challenges to the services we provide to children and families, from childcare to supporting young children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). I'd like to thank our teams that have worked tirelessly to ensure children and families have been supported during this time.

I'm pleased to say that I've worked with my colleagues to propose a budget which will not see any reductions in our services, and invests further where it is most needed.

For example, we propose to increase our family services budget by £1.1m from next year, to specifically address the recommendations made by the recent independent SEND review – this is in addition to our previous commitment of £45m to develop SEND provision.

In the public consultation we ran at the end of 2021, you told us that highways and the environment were your top priorities, after children's services and adult care.

We plan to invest in these areas, for example an additional £1m over the next four years, to be spent on things like road signs and responsible verge cutting. Over the next 3 years, we have also committed to £10m to specifically deliver an increasing number of drainage schemes, and £10m to improve footpath quality and access. There will also be a £12.8m investment to decarbonise the buildings that we own.

To maintain the services we provide, and to invest further, we will be asking you for an extra 1.99% in Council Tax and an additional 1% in Adult Social Care Precept. We did have the option of asking for

another 1% on top of these increases, but decided against this as we believe that the lower amount will be sufficient to provide a balanced budget, with no need to reduce any of our services.

If you live in a Band B property – the most common type of property in Suffolk – this works out an additional £0.62 per week, compared to your bill last year.

In our public consultation, there were more people who agreed that council tax would need to go up, compared to those that didn't. This was especially true for funding adult care. By paying this extra each week, we are all helping the council to provide its key services, and supporting those who need it most.

As I mentioned, in February we will also be presenting Suffolk County Council's first ever Carbon Budget. We want to be a Net Zero organisation by 2030 -this means reducing our impact on climate change where we can. We do this by reducing our carbon emissions as much as possible, for example making our buildings more efficient, procuring goods and services from suppliers who have a similar Net Zero ambition, moving our vehicles over to electric, and investing in our environment.

A Net Zero Carbon Budget for the council enables us to evaluate the impact of decisions we take. It provides a baseline for measurement every year, against which we can track our progress.

These are two budgets which I'm extremely proud to be involved with. I think both will have a positive impact on Suffolk – both in terms of looking after our residents, but also protecting the environment and county in which we are privileged to live.

Suffolk County Council waives fees for Platinum Jubilee events

It was announced on January 18th that to mark the celebration of Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, Suffolk County Council will be waiving street party road closure fees.

On Sunday 6 February 2022, Her Majesty the Queen will celebrate her Platinum Jubilee, marking 70 years of service. To celebrate this milestone, events will be taking place across the Country, particularly over the four-day Bank Holiday weekend, between 2 and 5 June 2022. This bank holiday gives communities and people throughout the UK the opportunity to come together and celebrate with their neighbours.

For all events on Sunday 5 June 2022, which is being referred to nationally as the 'Big Jubilee Lunch', Suffolk County Council will not be charging fees normally associated with road closures.

The following website has been set up for those who are looking to organise a street party as a group of residents, or as a local authority, for an event in a large public space, such as a park:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/PlatinumJubileeEvent>.

As part of the main criteria for a road to be closed, the road must be residential with no through traffic (i.e. a cul-de-sac or traffic not able to access another road from the event road, etc.) and only resident traffic will be affected.

To be allocated traffic management to assist with an event, all applications must be received before 11pm on Sunday 27 March 2022. Traffic management will consist of 5 traffic cones, 1 road closure sign and an advance warning sign, which may be delivered to the chosen drop off point, up to Thursday 2 June 2022.

If any applications are received after 11pm on Sunday 27 March 2022, these may still be processed. However, Suffolk County Council cannot cover the costs of traffic management for the event, nor will Suffolk County Council be able to provide any form of traffic management equipment. This is due to possible supply chain constraints and other operational demands.

For full details, including street party event criteria, information on insurance and licences, please ensure you visit this link <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/PlatinumJubileeEvent>

If you have any queries, please contact Suffolk County Councils Customer Services team on 0345 606 6171 or email customer.services@suffolk.gov.uk
Find more information on how to get involved in celebrating Her Majesty's historic reign, at platinumjubilee.gov.uk.

Warm Homes Suffolk Fund to heat up cold homes this winter

It was announced on January 27th that residents can cut energy costs and reduce their carbon.

Suffolk residents who are struggling to keep their homes warm, can contact a new project which offers funding and free advice at www.warmhomessuffolk.org.

Suffolk's councils have joined together to establish Warm Homes Suffolk, which launches today. The team will be on hand to offer expert advice on reducing energy bills, energy usage and identify benefits that residents may be entitled to, to help keep their homes warm.

The work of Warm Homes Suffolk will also help the county towards its target of Net Zero by 2030, as the project aims to better insulate homes and provide more efficient heating, meaning less carbon is released into the atmosphere.

A successful bid was made to the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) for £2.7 million pounds of funding to run Warm Homes Suffolk - The Warm Feeling Fund. This is part of the Government's (Local Authority Delivery phase two) LAD2 Scheme, designed to improve the energy efficiency of Britain's homes.

The bid was led by Suffolk County Council, on behalf of all councils in the county.

Councillor Andy Drummond, Chair of the Suffolk Environment Cabinet Members group, said:

"With an imminent spike in energy costs for all households, Suffolk's authorities have joined together to offer valuable support and advice to residents. We want to assure people that help is out there, so that you don't have to live in a cold house, or become unwell, by worrying about your energy bills.

"If you, or anyone you know is having difficulty heating their home, or is concerned about their energy bills, please get in touch with Warm Homes Suffolk."

For eligible residents, the scheme can offer a range of home upgrades, including cavity, loft and external insulation, installation of solar photovoltaic systems and switching central heating to more efficient low carbon heat pumps.

The scheme is available to homeowners, those renting and landlords. There are some conditions to meet before being able to access funding, which is aimed at residents who are:

- earning under £30,000 per annum
- currently receiving benefits (or think you may be eligible)
- living in homes with a low energy rating

If you are a landlord with tenants and property that meet the above criteria, then you could receive a subsidy of up to two-thirds for work which improves the energy efficiency of your property, up to the value of £5,000.

More details and further information about eligibility can be found in the on the Warm Home Suffolk website www.warmhomessuffolk.org, or by calling **03456 037 686**. Lines are open Monday to Friday between 9am and 4pm.

2. District Council Report - February 2022

Joint Local Plan

We are still waiting for confirmation of timings for the new process for the Joint Local Plan. At present, the Inspector has stated that, with regards to housing, the Council should revert to the current plans which include the Core Strategy (2008), the Core Strategy Focused Review (2012), the Stowmarket Area Action Plan (2013) and Haughley's Neighbourhood Plan (2019) with any decision taking into account the most recent National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021).

MSDC Annual Monitoring Report 2020/21

This report gives details of housing completions and outstanding permissions and other data related to housing development in Mid Suffolk.

672 new dwellings were built in the district in 2020/21 - 131% of the current annual target (513 dwellings) set by the national standard methodology. Of these, 29% were affordable homes.

There are 7,444 outstanding planning permissions (as at 01/04/21) which are either not started or under construction.

CIL payments totalling £1,017,746.36 were made to town and parish councils.

Twenty-nine percent of all residential completions were delivered on previously developed land, against a target of 50%.

Mid Suffolk District Council Budget

The draft 2022/23 budget was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January and is due to be considered at full Council in February. Current indications are that the net budget is expected to be nearly £9 million. There are no proposals for council tax yet however the amount raised will increase by £285,000 (to £6.96 million) due to increases in households paying the tax. Currently the draft budget forecasts a surplus of nearly £6 million which includes a projected £4.8 million from the current financial year.

Fees and charges

An updated list of fees and charges for 2022/23 has been agreed by Mid Suffolk District Council. The majority of these are unchanged with no increase. There is a 3-4% increase for garden waste bin collections and for bulky waste items collection.

Funding for neighbourhood planning

Babergh and Mid Suffolk have been named as part of a pilot scheme to allow residents an easier way to shape and influence development in their area. The councils have been awarded £45,000 of Government funding to go towards a new post designed to encourage more people in both districts to engage with the planning system.

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