

A meeting of the Parish Council took place via Zoom video conference on Monday, 11th January 2021 at 7.00pm.

Present: Cllr. Fleming, in the chair, Cllrs. Abu-Hejleh, Clark, Cushing, Stangoe, Thomas, Cllr. Reid, SCC (7.25pm to 7.45), Cllr. Mallinder ESC (from 7.45pm), Mrs Clements and the clerk.

Apologies: Cllr Whitmore. (The clerk is to establish how Cllr. Whitmore can remain a councillor if he is unable to attend meetings for more than six months. Cllr. Clark suggested talking to Cllr Mallinder regarding providing a suitable facility for Cllr. Whitmore, if he would be willing to use this.)

There were no Declarations of Interest.

Minutes: Those of 9.11.20, and the planning meeting of 14.12.20, having been previously circulated, were taken as read and agreed as a correct record. (To be signed at a later date.)

Adjournment for Parish Forum.

Mrs Clements' full report had been circulated previously.

She and Cllr Cushing have planted several trees including 4 young red oaks, bought at a cost of £55.60. Mrs Clements wondered if the Parish Council would contribute half of the cost: £27.00. They are quite drought resistant, and stand a good chance of survival, and produce wonderful red leaves in autumn. There is always work to do clearing brambles, and a working party would be helpful in this regard. This will be flagged up in The Warbler, aiming for a date at the end of February.

The Parish Council agreed to the payment of £27.00, and thanked Mrs Clements for her continuing hard work.

Matters Arising:

1. Village Hall update. Cllr. Clark reported that the project is gathering momentum, with a successful bid for a £2,500 Community Partnership Grant, subject to providing a few more details. Other grants are being considered, and Cllr Clark asked whether the £5000 earmarked by the Parish Council could be doubled to assist with matched funding requirements, which are also subject to time constraints. This request was deferred to be discussed later in the meeting with other financial matters.

In 4 to 6 weeks it is hoped to get a working party together to clear the outside of vegetation, Covid rules permitting.

Kitchen installation costs are currently being explored, as the first step, and a project plan will be developed at the next online village hall committee meeting.

2. Financial Regulations and Standing Orders.

The Parish Council agreed to adopt the NALC Model Standing Orders 2018, including the following: 3f: the period of time in a meeting designated for public participation will be limited to 15 minutes; 3g: a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes; 9b: no motion to be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda, and the mover has given at least three clear days' notice of the wording in writing to the Proper Officer.

Model Financial Regulations and Standing Orders 2019. The Parish Council agreed to adopt these en bloc, noting that the Council would reinstate the quarterly check by a councillor other than the chairman or a cheque signatory of the financial transactions. Cllr. Stangoe agreed to do this. Given the small number of transactions this would not be an arduous task, and it remained to be seen if a quarterly check was necessary. It was also confirmed at this point that the clerk would be appointed as Service Administrator (6.15). This would be to facilitate the eventual move to online banking, as and when it is possible to arrange this.

3. Playground Inspections. The clerk has again contacted Nigel Campbell at Ipswich Borough Council, in the hope that he will liaise with Cllr. Cushing regarding the online facility for checking inspections have been carried out, and their results. The account for the inspections in 2019 is still awaited.

4. A company called Raymac Signs were recommended by Thurlow Nunn to provide a suitable sign for the rec. to deter trial bike riders. The clerk has spoken to them, and although they do not do one "off the shelf" they can almost certainly put one together, probably for around £20.00. Councillors will visit the website, and come back with suggestions.

5. The clerk reported that the Zoom account has now been upgraded, for a cost for the year of £119.90 plus vat (£143.88).

6. Village mower. Cllr. Fleming will take the mower to Thurlow Nunn as soon as possible for an estimate for service, and to obtain a price for a new, slightly larger model.

7. Parish Council news and information. Cllr. Clark felt that the Parish Council needs to reach as many people as possible, particularly in the current pandemic situation. Between them, the website and the Facebook page reach a lot of people, but there are still people who might miss out. It was agreed that the important, and more interesting parts of the minutes would be extracted, and with his agreement, forwarded to Mr Fisher for inclusion in the monthly Warbler, along with any other incidental information which was of interest. It was agreed that Mr Fisher should be paid for this. Cllr. Clark agreed to be responsible for this.

Reports:

1. Cllr. Reid. SCC. His monthly report had been previously circulated, so this was taken as read. His particular concern was the current situation with Covid. He foresees a further lockdown, and it is imperative that the guidance is followed.

Various vaccination sites will be up and running in the county in a few days, but everything is taking longer than projected.

He urged that we rally round our neighbours, to ensure everyone is safe, and to contact him if there is anyone in difficulties who needs further help.

2. Cllr. Mallinder ESC. His emailed report had been circulated and was taken as read. He stressed that East Suffolk is robust, and the staffing is there for those who need it most. There are issues with homelessness, particularly in the Lowestoft area, and food poverty. He asked that he is contacted if he can help in any way. A particular concern is the increase in visitors, notably in the Bawdsey and Shingle Street areas, with attendant parking concerns. There has been an increased police presence, but what is needed is stronger wording to discourage people from travelling.

He has a concern about how some people will get to vaccinations centres, if they do not have their own transport, but this is very much a case of learning as we go. The nearest site locally will be at Woodbridge Community Centre.

There has been an increase in fly tipping, perhaps as a result of all the clearing out which people have been doing in lockdown, and difficulties with accessing sites such as Foxhall tip. Cllr. Mallinder is still working hard to improve recycling measures.

3. Woodbridge and District ASB meetings. As these are held online, Cllr. Whitmore cannot attend. The clerk keeps the channels open and emails in information, requests etc. The next meeting is on 14th January, and the clerk has again mentioned the traffic problems, including the accident involving Sovereign Turf and two vehicles belonging to residents of The Street. It was noted that Cllr. Reid has said he will raise the concerns of residents about the large vehicles in The Street with the owner, and also with the Speed and Safety Team. Cllr. Thomas raised the matter of the dog which was run over and killed recently, and the fact that the driver did not stop. Little can be done about this now, but councillors were aggrieved that this could happen.

Other matters:

1. Traffic concerns. Councillors had received a copy of the suggested letter initiated by Campsea Ashe parish council regarding a meeting with ESC and SCC Highways to discuss the traffic assessment, monitoring and control in the local villages. The Parish Council is happy to support this.

An e mail was received earlier this year from a concerned Eyke resident living close to The Street, regarding the speed and volume of the traffic there. The police set up a check for a week, but he had not had a response at the time of sending the email (6th December). Cllr. Cushing had engaged with him and informed him of all the avenues pursued over the years, hoped that this would clarify the current situation, and hopefully encourage him to be involved in working to mitigate the problems in the future. The clerk had asked him to follow up on the police check made earlier in the year.

The issue of the traffic counter at Bentwaters was mentioned: Cllr. Mallinder will investigate this again, as the last figures received were nearly two years ago, and these were not complete.

2. Footpath and bridleway recording. Those created before 1949, and as yet unrecorded, must be recorded by January 2026, or they will be lost. Cllr. Cushing and Mrs Clements are exploring with the aid of various maps, any that exist in Eyke, although it would appear that there are not many. Cllr. Mallinder added that any missing or broken signs should be reported for repair or replacement.

Finance:

1. Draft budget 2021/2022. Councillors had received copies of this. The clerk had allowed for modest increases, and a bigger element for a rise in the clerk's pay, along with the addition of Zoom charges, forecasting annual expenditure of £8165. If the precept was held at the current rate, the income would be £9140, allowing for a small amount of interest. It was accepted, but not included, that funding for the village hall would be provided.
2. Clerk's pay. The clerk had provided a written justification for the need for a substantial rise in salary, last reviewed in 2008, and the latest information from NALC on the structure for agreeing a salary, based on hours worked and rates per hour. It was agreed to raise the annual hours from 214 to 220, and the hourly rate to SCP 19: £13.24, to apply from 1st April.
3. Mr Fisher on behalf of the PCC had enquired whether there would be donation from the Parish Council this year, to help with the churchyard maintenance costs. This had not happened at the usual time, May, because annual meetings were suspended due to the pandemic. The council supported this, and added 10% to last year's amount of £600: £660.
4. Account balances: at 31st December 2020. Current account: £21,163.80; Business Savings Account: £8,600.80; BPA: £118.63.
5. It was agreed that £10,000, up from £5,000, would be made available to the village hall when required, to facilitate matched funding grants, but retained by the Parish Council until that point.
6. Precept requirement. Cllr. Clark suggested leaving it at the current level, but Cllrs. Cushing and Fleming were concerned about needing to have money available for unexpected costs. It was agreed that a 2% rise would be fair. The precept requirement would be £9315.00. There will also be a grant payment of £120.00 from ESC, paid from the monies received by the District Council from Local Council Tax Support Grant.
7. Cheques to be agreed: PCC: £660.00 (churchyard maintenance); Zoom annual charge: £143.88; Mrs Pooley: £432.16 (salary, 3rd quarter); HMRC: £108.00 (3rd quarter); Mrs J Clements: £27.00. The payment to MJH Garden Services, agreed at the last meeting was confirmed as £540.00

To receive items for information:

1. The potholes on the track on the rec and in the village car park need urgent attention. Cllr. Cushing confirmed that for £480 inc vat TG Askew would deliver 20 tons of material to fill them. He estimated that 15tons would suffice for the rec. and the balance would be delivered to the car park. It was agreed that this was reasonable, so Cllr. Cushing will liaise with Cllr. Fleming, who will set aside the time necessary to fill the holes in both areas, if the material can be delivered at a mutually convenient time in mid February.
2. Cllr. Mallinder reminded the council that he has funds in his Enabling Communities Budget, and it would seem that putting money towards the cost of a new village mower would be a very good use of it. He would need an estimate of costs before a purchase is made, and that needs to be done by March at the very latest.

Next meeting: Monday 8th March 2021. 7.00pm

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.