

A meeting of the Parish Council took place on Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at 7.00pm in the Village Hall.

**Present:** Cllr. Fleming, in the chair, Cllrs. Abu-Hejleh, Clark, Stangoe, Whitmore, Cllr. Mallinder, East Suffolk Council (*briefly, at the start of the meeting*), the clerk and eight members of the public.

**Apologies:** Cllr. Reid SCC, Cllr. Thomas, who is unwell and Cllr. Cushing who met with a serious accident last week and is in hospital. Good wishes for a speedy recovery were extended.

As Cllr. Mallinder had to leave early, he was invited to speak. He mentioned the local elections taking place on 4<sup>th</sup> May, and stated that his main aim is to protect our local area and provide better controls to protect and enhance the environment. An initiative is in the pipeline to offer bulbs to parishes in September, to plant in suitable areas, and possibly also to create a small electrical recycling facility, which could incorporate a mobile collection, all while trying to keep the budget as low as possible. He stressed his willingness to support the parish however he can with its response to the planning application for 65 houses in the village, and that it is important to involve the County Council in matters to do with the road system.

*There were no Declarations of Interest.*

#### **Adjournment for Parish Forum:**

Mr Tatum raised the issue that although the village is advertised on the internet as having full fibre broadband, this is not the case in Church Lane, Eyke, where BT is refusing to upgrade existing copper connections. He is about to take the matter to Ofcom and the parish council will raise the issue with Cllr. Reid.

**Minutes:** Those of 21<sup>st</sup> November 2022, having been previously circulated, were taken as read, agreed and signed as a correct record.

The clerk pointed out that the notes of the parish council meeting with Denbury Homes were available to read on the website, and had been pinned up in the village.

#### **Matters Arising:**

1. Neither the school nor the parish council has received a donation from the company who used the school and the village car park for filming over the last half term. The head teacher, Ms Fairweather, who was present at the meeting, will chase this up.

2. Village Hall update. Cllr. Clark reported the positive news that the hall has reached phase 2 in a bid for National Lottery funding, and now a full funding bid has to be prepared for a sum in the region of £105,000, which would fund the project to completion. . A bid for the Levelling Up fund for a lesser amount is being prepared as well, in the hope of success with one or the other. A very important factor has been the amount of volunteer hours given to the project: without this, much less would have been achieved, and for which the committee is very grateful.

The works currently in hand are the plastering in the toilets and the hall, the electrics and then the toilets will be refitted, with the aim of making the hall in a fit state to hire out by the end of March. Quotations are being invited for installing the doors for the back of the hall, to include the necessary work on the back wall.

3. Denbury Homes Development. The clerk explained that the planning application was not yet in the public domain, but was currently being “actively reviewed”. The parish council would arrange a public meeting once parishioners had been able to consider the application, and she hoped to be able to have a paper copy of the set of plans available.

Ms Fairweather explained that she had met with the representatives from Denbury Homes, and although she is very supportive of the development because it will bring extra pupils into the school, she was dissatisfied with the way she felt “closed down” by them, when she raised the

safety of children walking to school across the front of the busy village car park. Ideally, a way should be made which keeps them off the road. If a way could be found to improve parking and walking arrangements, she would be more than happy to trade off some of the land being given to the school.

The Parish Council experience was similar, being told that to make a new access through the development was not viable. It was agreed that this issue would be followed up when the application is available for comment.

4. Response from Stephen Baker, Chief Executive, East Suffolk Council to the letter sent regarding traffic issues. The response stated that Eyke was “aggrieved” by the adoption of the local plan, and ignored the main thrust that the inspector was not given certain information which could have impacted on his decisions. Cllr. Cushing drafted a response to this, as Mr Baker has now retired and there is a new Chief Executive, who he felt needed to be brought into the picture. Councillors agreed that a response is required, but the letter needs to be clearer in its intended objectives. Cllr. Clark agreed to look at this over the next few weeks, and hopefully to involve Cllr Cushing as well as the rest of the parish council in preparing a letter for final approval.

5. The repair works have now been finished to the recreation ground barrier, and Cllr. Fleming will purchase the necessary padlock.

6. Cllr Cushing had met with Mr Allsopp to discuss the cutting back needed on the green, but the clerk has no current update on this. However, she contacted Sir Michael Bunbury regarding the turkey oak, to which he responded very promptly and attended to the low hanging branches.

7. Lights in Church Lane. The saving on electricity to the 5 lights in Church Lane could be in the region of 74-78% per lantern, which could be around £70 - £80, annually, as a rough indication, if new LED 20w lanterns are installed to replace the 80w MBFU lanterns. It was agreed to go ahead and do this, at a cost of £2086.76 plus vat. The outlay should be recouped in a few years, and is the sensible option given the current uncertainty over energy costs.

There could be extra cost associated with light number 36, on a wooden pole, but this will be assessed by the contractor, who will report back if replacement is unviable.

It was agreed that it is desirable at the moment to have the lights on throughout the night, as Church Lane is used by many vehicles, often unlit, in the small hours.

**Reports:** Those from Cllr. Reid and Cllr. Mallinder had been previously circulated to councillors, and would be posted on the website.

#### **Other Matters:**

1. Local elections take place on 4<sup>th</sup> May, for both parish and district councils. Information about this will be available in due course.

2. There is a Rural Cost of Living workshop on 26.1.23 at 2pm at East Suffolk House.

3. The East Suffolk Community Partnership Annual Forum takes place on 3.3.23 at Trinity Park. Cllr. Clark expressed an interest in this, and will check her diary.

4. *Cllr. Abu-Hejleh expressed an interest in this item* Planning Application DC/22/4617/LBC. To install an en suite to a bedroom to replace an existing built in sink and modern wardrobes. Councillors had no comment to make on this.

#### **Finance:**

1. Draft Budget and Precept. There was considerable discussion on this, particularly in view of the significant energy price rises, and also the decision to upgrade the street lighting in Church Lane. At the end of the financial year, barring unexpected costs, there will be about £7000 in the community account, and £8700 in savings.

The clerk's projected parish spend over the next year could be in the region of £10,533, allowing for a steep rise in electricity charges, and a small percentage rise in other costs. This does not allow for unexpected costs, which would need to be paid for from savings. It was therefore agreed unanimously to precept for £11,600.

2. Account balances: At 2.12.22: Community Account:£10,099.28; Savings Account: £8602.49.  
At 30.12.22: BPA: £118.75

3. Cheques to be agreed: Mrs Pooley, quarterly salary: £582.60; HMRC 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter: £145.60;  
Metalfix, for work on the rec barrier: £120.00: Zoom charges (Mrs Pooley) £143.88.

4. It was agreed to cancel the Zoom subscription at the next renewal.

PKF Littlejohn LLP have been confirmed as the auditor for smaller authorities for the next 5 years.

**To receive items for information:**

The clerk reported on the poor state of the noticeboard in the churchyard. The PCC is happy for it to be replaced. The clerk will look into costs for the next meeting. The bus shelter could also do with some attention.

In the absence of other business, the meeting closed at 8.20pm.

**Next meeting:** Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at 7.00 pm in the Village Hall.