

A meeting of the Parish Council was held on Monday, 15th January 2018 at 7.00pm in Eyke Village Hall.

Present: Cllr Fleming, in the chair, Cllr Abu-Hejleh, Cllr Cushing, Cllr Howlett-Thomson, Cllr Whitmore, Cllr Andrew Reid, SCC and the clerk.

Apologies: Cllr Thomas.

Declarations of Interest: None.

In the absence of any members of the public, there was no adjournment for a parish forum.

Minutes: Those of 13th November 2017, having been previously circulated, were taken as read, agreed and signed as a correct record.

Cllr Reid's Report:

School Travel Consultation. Currently school travel costs Suffolk taxpayers £21m per annum, providing a service which is above the legal requirement, and significant savings need to be made, while providing an affordable and sustainable service which meets the growing demand. Options to be considered are to change the policy from September 2019 so that it is line with the legal requirements; introducing the change year by year from September 2019, or keeping the status quo and making savings from other services. The consultation runs until 28th February.

Business Rates. Suffolk has been chosen as one of ten pilot areas to retain 100% of business rates. Currently it is not possible to say how much additional income this will generate.

Fully funded first time central heating systems for Suffolk residents. Funding has been secured to allow 514 fuel poor households, in owned or rented accommodation in Suffolk to benefit from this scheme over the next three years.

Ground investigations for Upper Orwell Crossings. Structural and environmental tests are set to begin early this year, to finalise the detailed design for the Upper Orwell Crossings.

Cllr Reid has spoken to Cllr Storey regarding her lack of response to the Parish Council's letter of 20th November, asking for a meeting to discuss traffic capacity on the roads in the area. It was agreed to write again, and Cllr Abu-Hejleh will also telephone her.

Cllr Reid then left the meeting.

Matters Arising from the Minutes:

1. Village Hall. A conveyancer who lives in the village has kindly offered to undertake any conveyancing work required free of charge. The clerk met with a solicitor from the team in which she works to get an idea of costs which could be incurred in putting the village hall on a more secure footing. These could range from about £450 plus vat to draft a trust deed and constitution, to £1200 to £1400 plus vat if the hall became a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

Cllr Cushing was also contacted out of the blue by Robert Horn, from Groundwork Suffolk, whose organisation has experience in dealing with just the situation the Parish Council finds itself in with regard to the village hall and is keen to help regularise the situation. This service is free. The clerk has now spoken to him, and will liaise with him with a view to arranging a meeting when he can speak to the Parish Council.

2. Repairs to Play Equipment. Sovereign has completed the repairs, and confirmed that there is no issue with the small swing fixings.

3. Woods Lane Closure. A letter from Dr Coffey MP, acknowledges that things "went somewhat awry" when the builder consulted with SCC Highways Authority over the use of the highway to undertake necessary works. Although SCC had to grant permission "a lot of assumptions were made by officers in agreeing the traffic management and road closure plan." No meaningful consultation was undertaken.

4. Data Protection Officer. It has now been clarified that a clerk cannot be the data protection officer. The clerk has registered an interest with a company put forward by SALC, The DPO Centre, which offers an off the shelf solution. The cost would be in the region of £150 for the first year, and £50 per annum thereafter. More information on this should be available by the next meeting.

5. Phone box. Cllr Whitmore will finish clearing the weeds etc from around the back of the phone box.

Reports:

1. SNT Tasking Meeting 23.11.17. Cllr Whitmore attended. There was nothing to report from Eyke.
2. SCDC Budget Liaison Meeting. Cllrs Cushing and Stangoe attended. The main message of the meeting was that there will be further cuts to save money across the board: the police, SCC and SCDC. Cllr Cushing expressed the view that these cuts are already felt in dealings with the council, particularly with regard to planning, when it is impossible to get a response from an officer.

As with previous communications, there has been no response to the Parish Council's letter to Mr Ridley, dated 14th November, regarding the film studio application at Bentwaters. Cllr Cushing felt that taking the matter to the Ombudsman is the only way forward. It will not solve current problems, but it could force Suffolk Coastal to reply, and not just ignore local residents. It was agreed to pursue this. The clerk will provide Cllr Cushing with all the paperwork she has concerning the film studio application, for him to start working on this.

Cllr Abu-Hejleh expressed continued concern about the escalation of traffic to Bentwaters, and being unaware of what new businesses are starting there. She would like the owners to provide a site plan with annual updates, but it was agreed that they are unlikely to do this without any legal compulsion.

Other Matters:

1. Planning Application DC/17/4666/FUL. This application to install fencing at 3, White Woman's Lane was received in November and as it was very similar to one already passed for the neighbouring house, it was agreed that a meeting was not required.
2. Grit bin: Church Lane. A local resident had requested this following the short cold snap in early December. Councillors were not in favour of this feeling there is not enough icy weather to warrant the installation and that the lane does not have any hills or slopes.
3. Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders. Councils are encouraged to sign up to www.roadworks.org to receive notifications relevant to their area, which should be more efficient and should reduce unwanted e mail traffic.
4. Registering the Elephant and Castle as an Asset of Community Value. Cllr Thomas reported by e mail that this application is still going forward. The pub had been broken into, but it appears that nothing was taken and no significant damage done.

Finance:

1. Cheques to be agreed: Ipswich Borough Council (playground inspections 2017): £378.89; Mrs Pooley (Salary October-December): £432.16; HMRC (3rd quarter): £108.20.
2. Account balances: Current Account; £14367.36; Savings Account £8524.20. Interest of £1.87 added on 2.1.18
3. Draft Budget: Councillors had received draft budget figures prepared by the clerk. The projected expenditure in 2018-19 is £7170, up£305 from the current year, and the projected income is £7925, if the precept remains at the same level. Allowance had been made for increases in electricity, playground inspections and insurance. However, provision for paying for the Data Protection Service was not included (£150).
4. Precept requirement. It was agreed that the precept should rise by £400, to £8000.

To receive items for information:

1. Cllr Abu-Hejleh is considering organising a dog show later in the year, and would welcome suggestions of good causes to fund raise for. She is also considering a suitable date, not too close to the fete.
2. Cllr Whitmore reported that the car park is breaking up again quite badly. Cllr Fleming agreed to supply about three buckets of planings.
3. Cllr Whitmore removed some signs advertising slimming club events which have already taken place from the village gates. He also reported that cars are going to the rec after dark, which is usually the sign of drug taking activity.

Date of next meeting: 12th March 2018.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.