

STRADISHALL PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 4th January 2016

Parish councillors present: Ady Swift (Chairman), Adrian Lee (Vice-chairman), Debbie Gates, Martin Hurst and Robert Deeks

Also present: Joanne Kirk (clerk) and County Councillor Mary Evans.

- 1. Acceptance of apologies for absence**
 Apologies were received from Ian Hutchinson and Gemma Raymond
- 2. Declaration of Interest in items on the agenda**
 No councillors declared an interest in any items on the agenda.
- 3. Approval of minutes of meeting held on Monday 2nd November 2015**
 It was resolved that the minutes were correct. The chairman then signed the minutes.
- 4. Police issues**
 No issues were raised.
- 5. Report from Councillor Evans**
 Mary Evans spoke about the following:
 - The new Safecam van which will be deployed in areas where 40% of vehicles exceed the speed limit by 10% or more.
 - The Ministry of Justice plan to sell off the garages on the Highpoint Estate has been shelved.
 - The proposal for some of the land on the Highpoint Estate to be used by St Edmundsbury Borough Council to build new housing with a S106 agreement to be put in place to improve the existing roads.
 - The consultation on the proposals for the fire service.
- 6. Borough Councillor's report**
 No written report was received. It was resolved that the clerk would write to Jeremy Farthing to express concern about the Borough Council's decision to start charging for brown bins to be emptied which is proving very unpopular with residents.
- 7. Update on list of actions agreed at the last meeting**
 There were no outstanding councillor actions.
- 8. Finance**
 - a) Approval of payments and signing of the Schedule of Payments**
 It was resolved that the following payments would be approved:
 - J P Ince - expenses - LGA 1972, S111 - **£19.80**
 - Greene King - playing field rent - Open Spaces Act 1906, s10(b) - **£150.00**
 - HMRC - PAYE - LGA 1972, S111 - **£128.20**
 Martin Hurst and Robert Deeks signed the Schedule of Payments and Ady Swift countersigned it.
 - b) Approval of the record of online payments made since the last meeting**
 It was resolved that the record of online payments would be approved. Martin Hurst then signed it.
 - c) Checklist of Internal Controls**
 Martin Hurst completed the checklist of internal controls.
 - d) Statement of receipts and payments made since the last meeting**
 It was resolved that the statement of receipts and payments was correct.
 - e) Approval of the final budget for 2016/17 and signing of the Parish Estimates form**
 It was resolved that the budget would be approved. As a result of St Edmundsbury Borough Council's cut in the Parish Revenue Support Grant and the Local Council Tax Support Grant, the amount received from the Borough Council has reduced by a further £400 in addition to the £400 reduction last year. This decrease has had a serious impact on the Parish Council's budget. In order to minimise the impact on the amount householders pay as part of their Council Tax bills, the Parish Council has looked at ways to reduce its spending whilst maintaining a healthy reserve.

 It was resolved that the precept request would be £6,131 an increase of 3.57% which equates to £1.34 per band D property. The Chairman and clerk then signed the Parish Estimates form.
 - f) Changes to the audit regime in 2016/17**
 From 2017 smaller authorities with a turnover of less than £25,000 will be exempt from having to submit an annual financial return, but will still need to have an auditor appointed in case there are questions from electors to be resolved.

From the start of the 2017/18 parish councils can choose to have an auditor appointed to them by a new 'sector-led body (SLB)' or they can decide to procure their own. Those smaller authorities who wish to participate in the SLB do not need to do anything as all smaller authorities are automatically opted in to the new body and will have an auditor procured for them.

A small fee will be charged for this to cover the whole five year period and will be payable before the start of the new audit arrangements in April 2017. The one-off SLB fee is estimated to be less than £100, however this may be subject to change as the SLB is set up.

All authorities who wish to opt out must make their own arrangements with auditors, which will include but is not limited to the following:

- establishing an Auditor Panel;
- following a statutory appointment process set out in regulations;
- appointing an auditor by 31 December 2016;
- providing the SLB with the contact details of your auditor.

It was resolved that Stradishall Parish Council would not opt out of the Sector Led Body scheme.

9. Planning

DC/15/1477/FUL - Land at former Clopton Hall Cold Store, Edmunds Hill, Stradishall - (i) Demolition of former warehouse and replacement with 5 no detached dwellings and garages (ii) associated access and landscaping - application refused.

10. Highways/rights of way matters/tree or transport issues:

Mary Evans has reported the broken bollard on Stradishall Crossroads, but agreed to report it again.

11. Playing field matters

a) Play inspection report

The following issues were raised in the last play inspection report. The timber on the multiplay is rotting and needs monitoring. The basketball net is torn and needs to be removed. Adrian Lee confirmed that he is monitoring the timber rot and that he has removed the damaged net.

b) E-mail from Greene King in response to the Council's request for a longer lease on the playing field in St Margaret's Place

The Parish Council has received an e-mail from Katie Taylor, who is Unlicensed Estate Assistant at Greene King. Greene King is unable to grant a 21+ year lease, but would consider possible disposal if Stradishall Parish Council were to make an offer to purchase the land. Councillors confirmed that Greene King only owns part of the playing field. The rest belongs to Clopton Hall Farms. It was resolved that £1,500 would be offered which is the equivalent of 10 years rent. If the offer is accepted, the Council will look at ways to raise the funds, including requests for donations from village charities and investigating whether any grants are available for purchasing playing fields.

11. To review the Council's grass cutting contract

It was resolved that the Council would review the current contract after three years in 2018.

12. Dates of parish council meetings

It was resolved that the following dates would be approved.

- Monday 9th May 2016 (as 2nd is Bank Holiday) Annual Parish Meeting and Annual Meeting of the Parish Council
- Monday 4th July 2016
- Monday 5th September 2016
- Monday 7th November 2016
- Monday 9th January 2017
- Monday 6th March 2017

13. To discuss the progress of the draft village questionnaire

A draft questionnaire has been produced and will be e-mailed to councillors for them to comment on and add suggestions.

14. To discuss possible ways to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday on 11th and 12th June

It was resolved that Ady Swift would organise a village picnic/social event with food and games and that Debbie Gates and Robert Deeks would help.

15. Correspondence

a) Letter from the Police about match funded PCSOs

The Council received an e-mail from Suffolk Constabulary on 18th December notify them that due to budget cuts 68 PCSO posts will be removed in 2016/17 and offering parish councils an opportunity to fund (or part-fund) 6 match funded PCSO's.

It was resolved that no funds would be made available as the budget for 2016/17 has already been set and resources are already limited due to cuts in grants from St Edmundsbury Borough Council. Concern was also expressed at the fact that the letter was received just before the Christmas Break along with an invitation to attend a meeting on 6th January. Such a short time scale did not allow for the proposals to be discussed at a full council meeting as the January agenda had already been circulated.

b) Letter from Chief Fire Officer re fire service consultation

The Parish Council has received a letter from Chief Fire Officer, Mark Hardingham, about proposed changes to the fire service. Although Wickhambrook Fire Station will not be affected, changes are proposed in Bury St Edmunds. There are three fire engines there at present, one crewed by full-time fire fighters and two crewed by on-call fire fighters. The proposal is to remove one on-call crewed fire engine resulting in a saving of £72,000 per annum. It was resolved that the Council would respond to the consultation and oppose the changes in Bury St Edmunds as the cost saving is negligible compared to the risk to life if there are simultaneous incidents in and around Bury St Edmunds.

c) Letter from West Suffolk re consultation on West Suffolk Operational Hub for managing waste

It was resolved that the clerk would update the Council once further information is made available on 8th January.

16. Any other business for noting or including on the next agenda

The Parish Council has received a letter from a resident suggesting possible uses for phone box. This item will be discussed at the next meeting.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.43p.m.

Signed..... Dated.....