

**Brightwell, Foxhall & Purdis Farm Group Parish Council**  
**Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> June 2012**

**Report of the Parish Clerk**

The purpose of this report is to update members on outstanding issues, items received after the deadline for agenda items, correspondence and action taken by the Clerk.

The following are points of interest from The Local Councillor which will be circulated at the meeting

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Audit

Is your parish council a potential target for scammers?

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A warning to all councils to review their Health & Safety Guidelines and Procedures

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Mapping Your Community

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General power of Competences

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Freedom of Information

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Spotlight on Planning Policy

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Neighbourhood Planning

Code of Conduct

We have received the following email from Suffolk Association of Local Councils which we need to have in place during July 2012.

“As you are aware there are some significant changes to the standards regime that will affect local councils.

It is anticipated that from July 1<sup>st</sup> a new regime will apply. You will be required to adopt a code of conduct which differs from the current model.

We have been liaising with the Suffolk Monitoring Officers with a view to having a common code of conduct for the county. The merits of this are many but among the most compelling are that it will reduce confusion and provide a greater opportunity for a consistent approach and clear advice.

There will also be a new register of interests for councillors which will require the registration of both the interests of the councillor and the partner/spouse they live with. The interest recorded will reflect those of a pecuniary and non- pecuniary nature.

We will be recommending some new standing orders to address the areas which the new regime does not cover. This will include the option of requiring councillors to leave the room after declaring a pecuniary interest and allowing councillors to make a representation during the public session on matters where they have a pecuniary interest. Councillors with a pecuniary interest will be prevented from participation in the council's debate and vote as a matter of law.

The new regime has introduced a criminal offense for non disclosure of a significant pecuniary interest which may attract a fine of up to £10,000. We are expecting secondary legislation that will define 'significant' shortly.

We have attached the Suffolk Model Code developed by district and county councils for your council to consider for adoption. You will also find attached the NALC advice on this subject and a copy of their Code in case you also wish to consider that option. However, you will wish to bear in mind that the new regime is localised with decisions on breaches being made by Suffolk local authorities.

Adoption may take place prior to the coming into force of the legislation as long as it is clearly minuted that it will not apply until after such time as the provisions come into force (currently anticipated as July 1) and that the councillors are still bound to the existing regime until this time.

We will be in further contact once other documents or information are available. We appreciate that the change introduced under the Localism Act is confusing. We are working hard on your behalf behind the scenes to try to ensure earliest advice to you and a consistent and clear local regime."

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