

Brightwell, Foxhall & Purdis Farm Group Parish Council
Wednesday, 13th November 2013

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.

Parish Council Meeting Dates for 2014

All meetings commence at 7.30 pm on the second Wednesday of each month except August.

8th January 2014
12th February 2014
12th March 2014
9th April 2014
14th May 2014 – Annual Parish Meeting / Annual Parish Council Meeting
11th June 2014
9th July 2014
10th September 2014
8th October 2014
12th November 2014
10th December 2014

Standing Orders

Revised and updated Model Standing Orders have been received from Suffolk Association of Local Councils. The document will be circulated which shows the changes/updates recommended. Remember these are 'model' Standing Orders and do not have to be adopted in their entirety. We will be discussing the changes at the December Parish Council Meeting.

SALC LAIS1358

Scrap Metal Dealers

Local councils have long been concerned about theft of metal from village and town buildings and important infrastructure. Government has legislated in an attempt to ensure that scrap metal dealer activities do not facilitate illegitimate trade in metal, including through licensing arrangements and measures designed to prevent cash purchase of metal. Whilst this is being welcomed by some, reservations have also been expressed that metal theft will become harder to police as it will be driven underground. Local councils will be mindful of the cuts in public service funding which might impact on any potential for enforcement work relating to this Act.

On 2 October 2013, Government published "Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013: Supplementary guidance". This is an important document explaining the application of an Act, the majority of the provisions of which commenced on 1 October 2013 including the requirement in

section 1(1) to be authorised by a licence in order to carry on business as a scrap metal dealer.

SALC LAIS1359

Sustainable Communities Act

Town and parish councils (local councils) now benefit from a mechanism which enables proposals from local councils to improve the sustainability of their communities to be considered by Government.

The original idea of the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 was to provide an opportunity for people at grassroots level to help reverse community decline. It was introduced against a background of a national decline in small shops, banks branches, Post Offices, health facilities and other key facilities for communities. It was the result of a five-year campaign of over 100 national organisations, thousands of local organisations and tens of thousands of individuals. Local Works was the body that brought together and coordinated the drive to create and implement the Act and remains an active promoter of use of the Act.

‘We want to make localism real’ claimed Government when encouraging use of the Sustainable Communities Act. However, this was a difficult claim to sustain when local councils were not originally able to directly submit proposals under the Act. Government recognised the increasing role of town and parish councils in improving the conditions for local action. A consultation considered extending to local councils the right under the Act to submit proposals to the Secretary of State with a connected appeal to the ‘Selector’ (effectively an appeal mechanism against Government non-implementation of proposals under the Act). This right had hitherto been restricted to principal local authorities which meant that local councils could only raise their proposals with Government a) if a principal local authority had adopted the Act and b) if that principal local authority chose to adopt the proposal to take it forward. Government agreed to extend the power to local councils.

The Sustainable Communities Regulations 2012 give the Selector greater flexibility in the way proposals are considered. The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) has been given the new role of ‘Parish Selector’ (the Local Government Association applies for principal local authorities). Local Works have an observer role on the NALC Advisory Panel which will consider whether to re-submit any rejected proposals back to Government.

The Sustainable Communities (Parish Councils) Order 2013 came into force on 14 October 2013 with the effect that from thereon local councils are entitled to make proposals under the Act. With the wealth of challenges facing communities, not least in the context of the economy and changes to the planning system, it is foreseeable that local councils will wish to make considerable use of the opportunities presented under the Act.

Although the process for submitting proposals should be relatively simple, local councils will have to put forward compelling cases and consult comprehensively on proposals and will be hoping for clear guidance on the process. Once the case for a proposal has been established, a formal resolution of the council should agree the proposal. It can then be submitted via the Barrier Busting Form at <http://barrierbusting.communities.gov.uk/>. It is important to note that the 2013 Order does not simply extend the barrier busting process

(which is open to any individuals) to local councils. What it does that is special is to force Government to try to reach agreement on the local council proposals through the Selector process in the event that Government initially reject the idea.

The Selector process is outlined at:

http://www.nalc.gov.uk/About_NALC/SustainableCommunitiesAct2007.aspx.

However, local councils will note that, owing to NALC's official Selector role, they will need to look to their own local Association rather than NALC when putting together proposals and will be mindful of the need for some coordination to avoid duplication and help coherent proposals with an optimum chance of success emerge.

Budget Review Meeting 18th November 2013 6.30 pm Council Chamber, Suffolk Coastal District Council

Cllr Ray Herring, Leader of Suffolk Coastal District Council has invited Suffolk Town and Parish Councils to a liaison meeting as part of their commitment to keep local councils informed and consult about the Council's Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan. With continuing financial pressures they are meeting with Town and Parish Councils in order to highlight and discuss key issues/challenges.

The format for the evening will be as follows:

- Introduction by Ray Herring
- Presentation by Homira Javadi SCDC
- Presentation by Geoff Dobson SCDC
- Presentation by Supt Phil Aves, Suffolk Police
- Summary by Ray Herring
- Questions

I will be attending to gather information particularly relating to the SCDC's financial proposals for the year 2014/2015.

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