

BRIGHTWELL, FOXHALL & PURDIS FARM GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes

Of the Parish Council (Zoom) Meeting held at 7.30 pm on Wednesday, 10th February 2021

Present

Cllr E Warham - Chair

Cllr E Lawrence

Cllr G Watts

Cllr K Rout

Cllr B Newell

Cllr B Short

Cllr S Short

Cllr A Day

Cllr Chris Blundell – East Suffolk Council

Mrs Angie Buggs – Clerk

18.21 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Patricia O’Brien – Suffolk County Council

19.21 To receive Members’ declaration of interest

None

20.21 Minutes

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 13th January 2021 were approved as being a true record.

21.21 Matters arising from the minutes

All items from the last meeting were on the agenda.

22.21 The meeting was adjourned to receive reports and questions

- a. Cllr Ed Thompson East Suffolk District Councillor - no report.
- b. Cllr Chris Blundell – East Suffolk District Councillor – report.

The Pandemic

It is great to be able to report that this most upsetting event is nearing the point where we can all begin to believe that an end is in sight. However, I still feel for those who have suffered and continue I pray that this deadly virus will soon be a thing of the past.

Almost every week I receive reports and statistics on the progress that is being made in both combatting the illness and support that is being given to businesses and individuals.

Grants, Funding and Business Matters

ESC has now completed the issuing of the £9.3m one-off Closed Business Lockdown payments of up to £9k for businesses in the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure sectors. In total since the launch of a plethora of new business grants in November 2020, ESC has allocated almost £20m to businesses struggling due to enforced closure or severe restrictions on trading. Since the beginning of the Pandemic over 8,700 payments have been made totalling £86m in grants.

There is an enormous amount of voluntary work that is helping many persons and families to whom I wish to add mine and ESC's grateful thanks.

Communities and Supporting Residents

There were 13 referrals through 'Home but Not Alone' in the last seven days to 27th January 2021. The focus of the Communities Team has been on packing our EAST (Everyone Active, Supported, Together) bags. These are aimed at older people who live alone and are potentially isolated and lonely. The Bags include resistance bands and exercise cards, a water bottle, a reusable hand warmer, a specially compiled puzzle book, recipe card and ingredients, freezer boxes, face mask, face wash, wellbeing CD, seeds and food and drink treats kindly provided by Adnams.

Recovery

A report setting out ESC's response to ensuring a strong economic recovery will be considered at an extraordinary Scrutiny Committee on 18th February. The report analyses the impact of the pandemic on the local economy, our initial response and long-term recovery that is focussed on the strategic economic growth programs ESC established pre-pandemic. Some adaptations of these programs have taken place as a result of the severe trading restrictions; however, the fundamentals remain that in order to drive a strong recovery we need a robust and ambitious economic growth program that covers the whole district, all our key and emerging sectors that will benefit all sections of our communities.

Highways

Suffolk County Council in conjunction with the HMG Highways have now launched a consultation on modifications to the roundabouts on the A12 between the Seven Hills roundabout and the Woods Lane roundabout at Melton.

Also, it is proposed to dual the remaining section of single carriageway highway between the Seckford roundabout and the Grundisburgh Road roundabout adjacent to Dobbies Garden Centre. The purpose of the modifications is to help reduced congestion that may be exacerbated because of future developments. Of the eight roundabouts that exist along this stretch of highway it is also proposed to introduce a number of crossing points for both cyclists and walkers particularly in the Martlesham area. However, of great concern to me and some other District Councillors is the additional proposal to introduce traffic signal controls at the roundabouts. What has not been included in the consultation is the proposed traffic light controlled 'T' junction that will form the main access point to the Brightwell Lakes development.

It is also proposed to widen the foot bridge that crosses the A12 from Eagle Way to the Leisure Centre on the retail park. Concern has also been expressed by the various authorities with respect to accessibility in the future between Brightwell Lakes, Martlesham, Kesgrave and Ipswich particularly for cyclists and walkers. To make this link it is proposed to either create an underpass or bridge that will pass from the Brightwell Lakes side of the A12 across to either Eagle Way or create a pathway

through Longstrops, i.e., the field between the southern end of Martlesham Heath and the woodland. It is worth noting that there is still extant a bridleway through Longstrops.

The consultation on these proposals will run from 9th February to 19th March 2021.

To participate in the consultation, go to: www.suffolk.gov.uk/A12improvements.

Community Partnership

Finally, I would like to remind all our readers that the CP is still active and is still focussed on the environment and rural transport issues. I am pleased to report that funding has been secured for a minibus to operate between Campse Ashe Rail Station and the local towns; Saxmundham, Wickham Market, Framlingham and stops in between. The company doing this known as 'Katch'.

c. Cllr Patricia O'Brien - Suffolk County Councillor – report.

I am pleased to be able to give you some information from SCC. As you will be aware I have not been to any meetings, except those on zoom, and thus not too much to report. Most of what follows is from SCC.

On the 13 January A new **Covid-19 rapid testing centre** has opened at University of Suffolk for people without symptoms in Suffolk.

The centre, based at the former Profiles gym at the University of Suffolk in Ipswich, provides lateral flow testing, with results delivered in under an hour.

The tests (LFTs) are most useful at identifying people who are infectious on the day of the test but not showing symptoms.

The centre has been opened by Suffolk County Council (SCC) in partnership with the University of Suffolk. Testing is for anyone working in the town who cannot work from home.

Also targeted are employers and organisations in Ipswich whose staff cannot work from home. They are being urged to block-book their workforce in for tests.

On the January 19, A **new digital resource** was launched to help parents and carers build exercise into the daily routines of children being home schooled during lockdown.

Providing information about popular resources and everything parents could need to bring exercise into the home in a fun and engaging way.

On January 21, it was announced the council had received 50 expressions of interest from local communities across the county which want to host new **electric vehicle charging points**.

This follows the launch of the Suffolk 2020 funded project in September.

Suffolk has long held ambitions to Create the Greenest County and as part of the Suffolk 2020 fund, which is all about investing in community projects to support the council's climate emergency declaration and improve Suffolk for all residents in years to come, this year **£300,000** has been invested into creating 100 fast charging points in rural areas of the county. Reaching 50 expressions of interest so quickly demonstrates great progress for the project and suggests that many communities can see the real benefits in being part of the Plug In Suffolk scheme.

At present, the majority of EV charging points are concentrated in our larger towns such as Bury St Edmunds, Ipswich and Lowestoft, but given the new expressions of interest, it is hoped that new fast charging points can begin to be installed across a range of more rural locations including Beccles, Wilby, Horringer, Orford, Long Melford and Tuddenham St Martin.

On the 25th January, a new **awareness campaign** was launched in Suffolk regarding **recycling**.

Each year more than 10,000 tonnes (about 20%) of recycling from Suffolk homes is rejected due to the wrong items being placed in Suffolk's recycling bins. This is the same as 1 in 5 lorries full of recycling going to waste. The cost of sorting and disposing this spoiled recycling is more than £1million.

You can recycle the following items in your recycling bin at home: plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays, metal cans, aerosols and foil and paper, card and books. The worst offending items incorrectly found in recycling bins include glass, black sacks, food waste, cartons and nappies.

To assist with the above planning permission has been granted to enable a re-development of Foxhall Recycling Centre. This will begin late '21 and finish late '22. Whilst construction is underway it is intended to keep as much of the site open as possible.

SCC, together with other organisations, is arranging for 'old' **laptop and mobile phone donations**. The laptops, phones will be wiped clear and assessed before being distributed by the Creative Computer Club.

To reconvene the meeting

23.21 Planning

DC/21/0116/FUL Sheep Drift Cottage Waldringfield Road Brightwell – Erection of new boundary wall to front garden as replacement for existing hedge.

Cllr Graeme Watts reported that several councillors had objected to this application. Following discussion councillors agreed to object to this application as, in the opinion of the Group Parish Council the replacement of a hedge with a solid 8 ft high brick wall in this location is a significant detrimental change to the street scene in what is a rural location. **Action: Cllr Graeme Watts**

DC/21/0305/PN3 Straight Road Works Straight Road Foxhall – Alterations and associated drainage work to form dwelling (pursuant to Prior Approval for the change of use as a dwelling house DC/18/2606/PN3

Cllr Graeme Watts gave his report on the Planning Application. He said that the applicants had already received permission to change the property from light industrial use to a dwelling without changing anything major externally. Following discussion, it was agreed that the Parish Council should comment on the application stating that it is not against a dwelling in this location. However, it is unclear whether the previously agreed Prior Approval for conversion to a dwelling remains extant. The Parish Council are also concerned that should this application be allowed under the Prior Approval consent further development / alterations could be made to the property which would bypass the existing policy regarding building in the countryside. **Action: Cllr Graeme Watts**

24.21 To approve the updated Grants Policy

The Parish Council debated the question of the wording of the Grants Policy which had previously been circulated and it was agreed that the Clerk should contact SALC to ask for advice regarding the wording. **Action: Clerk**

25.21 To discuss Freeport East

Cllr Graeme Watts stated that the Government are setting up ten free ports and companies can bid for them. A bid has been submitted from the Port of Felixstowe and Harwich together with a large site at Stowmarket and are seeking approval from Government. This means that manufacturing can take place there with goods being imported, manufactured, and exported without tariffs being applied and it is a way of encouraging growth. As part of the bid process companies are required to involve local councils. If they get the go ahead, they will apply for planning permission as normal for a massive redevelopment of Felixstowe Port however the area identified is within the current port area.

26.21 Straight Road Improvements

Cllr Adrian Day reported that the Clerk had received an email from David Chenery Suffolk County Council Highways Manager which had been circulated to all councillors. Originally the estimate for the Straight Road Survey was £3,600 with an 18% overhead making a total of £4,300 to have the survey completed. Cllr Patricia O'Brien had offered to put a £1,000 towards the work. We have now been notified that to get a proper survey completed Straight Road will now cost £9,794.32 which is including the 18% overhead. Councillors discussed whether they should go ahead with the project due to the costs involved. It was felt that the Parish Council could not justify spending money on a survey. Cllr Bernard Short suggested that the Parish Council reply to Suffolk County Council Highways that we do not have the budget to pay for the survey due to the increase in costs but point out that as Highways are aware signage/passing places do not comply with current standards and that vehicles do have to pass, what action do you intend to take with a copy sent to the local MP Therese Coffey and the Portfolio Holder for Suffolk County Council Highways. **Action: Clerk/Cllr Adrian Day**

27.21 To discuss the Group parish Council providing a Community Hall in Purdis Farm

Cllr Bernard Short said that when the Parish Plan was produced a few years ago a Community Hall was one of the things highlighted that residents would like to see in their area. Cllr Liz Warham said that on the website 'Sports England' there are some designs for halls which gave useful options. Cllr Liz Warham stated that she had investigated the proximity of buildings to petrol stations and it appears that if a building is more than 100 metres away it should be safe to build. Cllr Eddie Lawrence suggested that the Parish Council ask Andy Jolliffe to attend a meeting to discuss the project. The Clerk reported that she had approached BT, Anglian Water, UK Power Networks but have not received any feedback. Cllr Eddie Lawrence said that the information that the Parish Council are asking for is sensitive information, so it is unlikely to gather that information as a Parish Council and that it needs to be a building consultant who makes the approach. Cllr Adrian Day stated the Parish Council needs to conduct a feasibility study completed to consider whether it is a viable proposition. **Action: Clerk**

28.21 Repairs to Murrills Road Bus Shelter

The Clerk stated she had received a quotation from Norse of £213.00 plus VAT. Cllr Bernard Short proposed, seconded Cllr Liz Warham that the quotation be accepted – all in favour. **Action: Clerk**

29.21 Clerk's Report February 2021

Resignation

Following the resignation of Polly Edmunds, a vacancy notice has been placed on the ESC website and also the Foxhall Notice Board advertising a Casual Vacancy. If 10 people do not request an election the Parish Council can co-opt following the advertising period has been completed. (21st February 2021)

Precept 2021/2022

The precept request of £7,533.06 has been sent to East Suffolk Council.

Letter from Bucklesham Parish Council

A letter from Bucklesham Parish Council was received concerning traffic in the village. The letter has been sent to all councillors for information. No further correspondence concerning this problem has been received.

Repairs to Murrills Road Bus Shelter

An estimate has been received from Norse to replace one pane of glass (915-950mm) to the bus shelter in Murrills Road adjacent to Sainsbury's Garage of £213.00 plus VAT for materials and labour.

Abandoned Caravan on Felixstowe Road

Following telephone conversations by Cllr A Day the apparently abandoned caravan has now been removed.

Information from NALC - PC Meetings May 2021 – Preparation for the return of face-to-face meetings (**please read – this is important information**)

Councillors discussed the issue of whether councils would need to return to face-to-face meetings on the 7th May 2021 unless the Government extend the period for holding Zoom meetings. It was agreed to defer this item until the March 2021 meeting when more information from Government may well be available.

The regulations that allow local authorities to hold meetings remotely apply to local authority meetings that are required to be held, or held, before 7 May 2021. This means that, without any further action from the government, all local authorities including local councils must return to face-to-face meetings from 7 May. NALC is working with a number of national bodies to press the government to extend these regulations beyond this date and will continue to stress the urgency and importance of this issue. However, at this time government has no plans to extend these regulations and so councils should start preparing for the real possibility of face-to-face meetings from May.

NALC's position remains that all local councils should continue to meet remotely while the regulations are in force. The guidance below has been written to help local councils prepare for the scenario that remote council meetings cannot lawfully take place from 7 May 2021. There is still much uncertainty around how legislation or COVID-19 risks may change over the coming weeks and months. NALC will update this guidance as the situation evolves. Each council will have to decide which course of action will best fit their needs and manage risks.

To help local councils prepare for this possibility some advice and suggestions are below:

- Consider what council business can be conducted before May so that the council can dedicate time to those issues in remote meetings. The more discussion and decisions you can conduct in remote meetings means the council can aim to hold fewer and shorter face to face meetings after May.
- This may require more meeting time than is currently planned, so the council should look at the meeting schedule in the run-up to May and see if more time or more meetings are required. Where possible, consider holding the annual council meeting and the parish meeting while the current Regulations permit for them to be held remotely (see also NALC's Legal Briefing L01-20).
- Consider when the council does need to meet face to face, and whether meetings can be delayed to later in the year when the potential COVID-19 risk may be further reduced.
- The council might consider holding a remote meeting as late as possible in April so that councillors who are unable to attend face-to-face meetings will have as much time as possible before disqualification by virtue of s.85 of the Local Government Act 1972 becomes an issue.
- It may help the council's business continuity to implement (or review) a scheme of delegation. This would allow the clerk to make certain decisions for the council, which would be especially important if the council were unable to hold meetings due to COVID-19 risks. In reviewing/adopting a scheme of delegation the council should ensure there is clarity around which decisions are delegated and which are not, for how long the scheme of delegation is in place, and when the scheme of the delegation will end or be reviewed.

Some tips that may help manage well-attended remote meetings are:

- keeping the meeting short with limited business/votes
- using electronic voting tools (many platforms have built-in tools for voting)
- if you plan to vote by a show of hands or calling a register then budget significant extra time for this
- building in public engagement through online tools, that you could use to ask the public to feedback or express views that you would usually discuss in a meeting You could do also do this before or after the meeting as a way of ensuring ongoing public engagement (there are a number of free tools available online)
- build in time to practice and prepare with the Clerk and Chairman in advance of the meeting
- Further guidance on holding effective remote meetings available from NALC

From May 2021, as face-to-face council meetings resume there will still be the risk to attendees of COVID-19 exposure. Councils should conduct a risk assessment in advance of a face to face meeting which should give consideration to what the council can do to reduce risk to councillors, staff and public including:

- Providing hand sanitiser to those entering the meeting room and making sure hand sanitiser is readily available in the room itself
- Staggering arrival and exit times for staff, councillors, and members of the public
- Placing seating at least 2-metres apart
- Ensuring everyone wears face masks
- Holding paperless meetings
- If papers are provided, people should be discouraged from sharing with others and asked to take the papers with them at the end of the meeting to minimise how many people handle the papers
- Arranging seating so people are not facing each other directly

- Choosing a venue with good ventilation, including opening windows and doors where possible
- Choosing a large enough venue to allow distancing – this may mean choosing a different venue to what the council used before.
- The council (or venue owner/operator) will need to identify the venue’s maximum capacity in their risk assessment, taking into account the need for social distancing. Consider how the council will ensure this capacity is not exceeded and how it will manage the situation if more people wish to attend than capacity allows. For example, could meetings be live-streamed, or could members of the public submit questions via email?
- If the venue has an NHS QR code to support test and trace then all attendees should register using that app, for those without access to the app they should register attendance in line with the venue’s test and trace procedure. NB all venues in hospitality, the tourism and leisure industry, close contact services, community centres and village halls must have a test and trace procedure
- Venues must conform with the government guidance for multi-purpose community facilities and for council buildings. If the venue is run by the council then the council must take responsibility for this, otherwise, the council can ask the venue to provide confirmation that they do conform to this guidance
- The council must understand and ensure it is acting in compliance with the latest government safer workplaces guidance

Managing staff:

- It would be advisable to inform the clerk and any other staff whose role involves supporting or attending council meetings, as soon as possible that the council will need to prepare to return to face to face meetings from May onwards. This will allow them to make the necessary preparations as described above, and also to allow time to engage with staff to alleviate any concerns they may have related to attending physical meetings again.
- Councils should consult with staff (ask for and consider their views to try and reach an agreement) about returning to work as part of their preparations for face-to-face meetings.
- The council must make the workplace (including council meetings) as safe as possible for staff, this includes undertaking a risk assessment, taking reasonable steps to reduce risks identified in the risk assessment, and ensure it is acting in compliance with the latest Government safer workplaces guidance
- ACAS have produced useful guidance for employers and employees related to COVID-19, including advice on how to support staff to return to the workplace and how to manage situations where staff may be worried or not wish to return.

30.21 Report on the VAS Sign

Cllr Eddie Lawrence reported that the VAS sign has been repaired and it is now working. He stated he had contacted David Penn but it will be some time before any results are available due to lockdown as currently there are fewer cars on the roads. Cllr Eddie Lawrence asked where the other posts on which to erect the sign were situated. The Clerk said that they were marked on map, but the posts have not been erected. Cllr Eddie Lawrence to investigate and, if necessary, contact Suffolk County Council Highways. **Action: Cllr Eddie Lawrence**

31.21 Finance

Income

None

Expenditure

A J Buggs Salary and Expenses January 2021	£268.70
Westotec VAS Sign Repairs	£938.40

Cllr Liz Warham, proposed, seconded Cllr Bernard Short that the above expenditure is approved – all in favour. **Action: Clerk**

Appointment of Internal Auditor

Cllr Graeme Watts proposed, seconded Cllr Eddie Lawrence that Mr Trevor Brown be appointed as auditor for 2020/2021.

32.21 Meetings attended by councillors/clerk

- a. Cllr B Short and Cllr S Short attended the final session of their SALC courses on the 13th February 2021. He said they had received a lot of information which was very well presented and both himself and Sheila feel anybody will benefit from these sessions.

33.21 Members questions to the Chairman

- a. Cllr Adrian Day said that at the last Parish Council Meeting I asked Cllr Patricia O’Brien about money available for tree planting and she was going to investigate. The Clerk said that she had written to Patricia but she didn’t come back with any information. Clerk to send an email reminding her. **Action: Clerk**
- b. Cllr Brenda Newell stated that the Foxhall Charity had finally managed to secure Norse to fit the Charity bench at the Foxhall crossroads, but a decision needs to be made as how to connect it to the ground.

34.21 Date of next meeting

Parish Council Meeting Wednesday, 10th March 2021 at 7.30 pm (Zoom Meeting)

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.40 pm

Signed..... Date

Angie Buggs
Clerk to Brightwell, Foxhall & Purdis Farm Group Parish Council