

LAYHAM PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the meeting of the Council
held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 24 February 2021 via ZOOM

Present: Charlotte Britton - Chairman (CB)
Graham Coleman (GC)
Jane Cryer - Clerk (JC)
John Curran (JDC)
Bill Paton (BP)
David Pratt (DP)
Sheila Roberts (SR)
Michael Woods - Vice Chairman (MW)

In attendance: Gordon Jones - Suffolk CC (GJ)
John Ward - Babergh DC (JW)

Apologies: None

21.2.1 APOLOGIES

See above.

21.2.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

As Chairmen of the Village Hall Committee and Playing Field Committee respectively, DP and MW declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 21.2.8.3. However, JC had confirmed with SALC that they could both participate in any discussions, and were eligible to vote.

21.2.3 PUBLIC FORUM

There were no members of the public present.

21.2.4 ADJOURNMENT TO RECEIVE WRITTEN REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

21.2.4.1 District Council report

A written report had been circulated prior to the meeting, a copy of which is filed with these minutes. The amended proposals concerning car parking in Hadleigh and Sudbury had been approved by Cabinet - ie one hour's free parking; a charge of £1 for 2-3 hours; £4 for up to a day. The new arrangements would not be implemented until October 2021 at the earliest. The draft budget had been approved on 23 February. Garden waste bin collections would resume week commencing 8 March.

21.2.4.2 Suffolk CC

A written report had been circulated prior to the meeting, a copy of which is filed with these minutes. GJ said that, following a slow start, the vaccination programme was now going well; he was grateful to all the volunteers. The draft budget had been approved. With regard to the National Grid proposals, GJ confirmed that the proposals included an additional electricity pylon route (ATNC) - see minute 21.2.5.1, below.

21.2.5 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS

21.2.5.1 National Grid proposals

JDC's report was noted. The National Grid's Network Options Assessment was recommending two projects within the southern area of East Anglia:

- A new 400kV double circuit between Bramford and Twinstead
- A new 400kV double circuit in south East Anglia (ATNC)

Both projects were designated 'critical' - ie deemed to be essential. The projects were destined for completion in 2028 and 2030 respectively. Several years ago the PC had been part of the consultation process looking at the Bramford to Twinstead proposal, which did not go ahead; however, this project had now been resurrected, together with the new ATNC proposal. It was proposed by JDC, seconded by DP and agreed unanimously that a working party should be formed comprising JDC and CB and possibly some non-council members. JC had received an email from National Grid offering to meet the Parish Council to explain more about the proposals and the consultation process; JC would liaise with them to confirm a date and time for a Zoom meeting. It was agreed that this should be open to all PC members, not just the working party.

21.2.5.2 Quiet Lanes Suffolk

The report from the working party, including a summary of responses to the consultation letter, was noted; 18 households had responded out of 255 in Layham. Several of those responses had suggested including Stoke Road; SR said this particular road had been discussed before, with regard to speeding issues. GC said a circular walk would seem to be a good idea. However, he was concerned that more people would visit the village, causing problems with parking; MW felt that designating roads as Quiet Lanes would not be a sufficient attraction for people to bring cars. BP said he was in favour of keeping to the proposal agreed at the last meeting. He said the responses received were not overwhelmingly enthusiastic, and there had been some objections. He also felt that a plethora of increased signage was a concern. CB commented that some people might not have strong feelings either way, and so had not responded. JC would send out a community email informing parishioners that they could still respond to the letter up until Saturday 6 March; the public consultation (via Zoom) would take place from 6pm - 7pm on Thursday 18 March. Councillors would make a final decision on the way forward at the PC meeting on 24 March.

21.2.6 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was agreed that minute 21.1.7.1 (Quiet Lanes Suffolk) should be amended as the reference to Overbury Hall Road being ineligible was incorrect. With this amendment, it was proposed by DP, seconded by MW and agreed unanimously that the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 27 January 2021 should be accepted as an accurate record, and signed accordingly.

21.2.7 ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Most of the actions were either ongoing or were on the agenda. There were updates on the following:

21.2.7.1 Village sign

BP said this had been put on hold during lockdown, but it was hoped to re-start the project once restrictions eased.

21.2.7.2 ANPR trial

As agreed at the last meeting, JC had confirmed that Layham wished to participate in the trial and had forwarded suggested locations for the cameras to SCC. However, JDC had now been advised by SCC that these locations were not suitable; they had proposed alternatives. JDC and BP would liaise with SCC.

21.2.7.3 Emergency Plan

The comms tree had been updated and JDC had briefed the new ELVs.

21.2.7.4 Flooding

JC confirmed that she was in touch with the new Hadleigh Town Council Clerk. She also confirmed she had written to the Environment Agency and was awaiting a response.

21.2.7.5 Gardener's Close

JC had chased Flagship yet again, and had received a response to say her request for someone to make a site visit had been forwarded to the Grounds Maintenance department.

21.2.8 FINANCIAL MATTERS

21.2.8.1 RFO's report

It was proposed by MW, seconded by JDC and agreed unanimously that the finance report for 24 February 2021 should be approved and payments of £615.43 were authorised.

21.2.8.2 Internal audit report recommendations

JC's update was noted. Councillors confirmed that they were happy with the level of financial information provided each month.

21.2.8.3 Budget / allowances to outside bodies

As noted in minute 21.2.2, MW and DP had declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item. Allowances to outside bodies (ie the Village Hall, Playing Field and PCC) were considered every year when the draft budget was set, but CB said the issue raised at the November 2020 meeting had been more about whether those organisations actually needed an allowance from the PC. With regard to the Playing Field, MW said there was no opportunity to generate income by renting it out. In order to purchase the field, a low interest loan had been taken out in 1982; this had taken ten years to pay back by raising the annual repayment through local Council Tax. The Parish Council at that time had voted to continue to raise that money after the debt was repaid and to make an annual allocation to the Playing Field Committee; the PC had decided that the same arrangement should apply to the Village Hall and the PCC - the village's three main assets. The amount was increased some five years ago from £600 to £1000. MW felt strongly that, given the pandemic and the current economic climate, this was not the right time to be questioning the allowances; the church had had no income for twelve months. In addition, a recruitment process was under way for a new Village Hall Committee and it would not be appropriate to be seeking a new management committee at the same time as cutting part of their income. Some of the children's play apparatus on the playing field would soon need to be replaced at an estimated cost of £10,000 per item, and the safety surfaces around the equipment maintained to meet Health & Safety requirements. The mower was twelve years old and, should it need to be replaced, would cost around £4000-£5000. JDC said he felt it was important to continue to support the village's key assets. As the budget for 2021-22 had already been approved, it was agreed to have a further discussion later in the year about the financial year 2022-23, and that representatives from the PCC, Playing Field Committee and Village Hall Committee should be involved in that discussion. It was suggested that they might wish to report at the APM on how their allowance had been used during the past year.

21.2.9 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

21.2.9.1 DC/21/00760 - Agricultural land north of Partridge Cottage, Stoke Road

There were no objections to the erection of an agricultural building for feed storage, bedding and machinery.

21.2.10 REVIEW OF POLICIES

21.2.10.1 Internal Controls

It was proposed by CB, seconded by JDC and agreed unanimously to approve the Internal Controls Statement.

21.2.10.2 Asset Register

It was proposed by DP, seconded by GC and agreed unanimously to approve the Asset Register.

21.2.10.3 Risk Assessments

It was proposed by JDC, seconded by GC and agreed unanimously to approve the Management/Financial and General Risk Assessments. It was noted that hand brooms should be provided in each grit bin to ensure that the area around each bin could be kept clear.

21.2.11 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

This would take place on Wednesday 28 April at 7.30pm, via Zoom. The draft agenda was approved and JC would contact the various outside organisations to invite them to speak, including the Events Committee; it was agreed that all speakers should be given a time limit. JC would also check the Roles & Responsibilities document and confirm the areas to be covered by each councillor.

21.2.12 CLERK'S CORRESPONDENCE

JC had received a letter from a parishioner concerning the QLS initiative and the processes involved. She had responded to this and had clarified the timeline for Layham's participation in Wave 2 (see also minute 21.2.5.2, above).

21.2.13 CLERK'S REPORT ON URGENT DECISIONS SINCE THE LAST MEETING

None.

21.2.14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7.30pm on Wednesday 24 March 2021, via Zoom.

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