

STOWLANGTOFT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

**MONDAY 15 MAY 2017 AT 7.00 PM
THE MEETING ROOM, ST GEORGE'S ROAD**

Present: Cllrs D D'Lima (Chair), J Catchpole, H Godfrey, J Godfrey, N Kaines and J Orlopp, District Councillor R Barker and County Councillor Mrs J Storey. Mrs A Bryant (clerk) was also in attendance. Members of the public also attended.

- 1 **Apologies for absence:** No apologies of absence were received.
- 2 **Minutes of the last meeting:** held on 16 May 2016. Cllr D'Lima proposed their adoption and this was seconded by Cllr Orlopp. It was unanimously agreed that they should be signed as a true record.
- 3 **County Councillors Report:** Cllr D'Lima congratulated County Councillor Mrs Storey on her re-election. County Councillor Mrs Storey presented the following report and invited questions: -

2017 saw the base council tax frozen. The Conservative administration committed to running a low-tax County Council and maintain services by being more effective and efficient with our resources. Reserves are sometimes mentioned – these are generally amounts put aside for specific purposes such as school projects, highways schemes etc.

In 2016 the SCC renewed more than 300 miles of roads after an investment of an additional £10 million. An online reporting system for potholes was introduced which saw over 70% of customers move online where they can receive updates on works. <http://highwaysreporting.suffolk.gov.uk/> On the site you can check whether a report has already been made and make a new report.

Caring for Suffolk's elderly and vulnerable residents remained one of the highest priorities. The administration took all opportunities presented to invest in front line services. An adult social care precept at 2% and 3% respectively was introduced with money ring-fenced for front line services. In 2017/2018, the SCC will invest £12.3m in full to front line services and to those hardworking people who care for our elderly population. SCC will target this money into the care sector to provide a sustainability and safe, high quality care.

Since 2013 Suffolk Schools have gone from 60% 'Good' or 'Outstanding' rating by OFSTED to an amazing 90% which means 9/10 children in Suffolk now have access to the highest standards of education. SCC have established sporting events across the county, which have inspired thousands of people, including "Park Runs", almost 150 walks, the Woman's Tour of Britain and the inaugural Great East Run. We continue to work closely with the NHS Mental Health Trust and other services and charities to help support the most fragile.

Our continued investment in community transport through our Connecting Communities scheme has extended services in rural areas, allowing everyone to access public transport no matter how remote their location.

Broadband continues to roll-out across the county. Since 2010 £26m has been added to government funding (BDUK) to enable broadband to be rolled out to areas that BT

Openreach assessed as 'not commercially viable'. Many of those areas are in the Mid Suffolk area and it is the commitment of SCC to get 100% to all premises in Suffolk. We are 7 years into a 10-year program and 90% of premises have access to superfast broadband.

The county's energy from waste plant enabled saving on landfill tax, generated electricity and earned income. The plant was built to budget and on time, taking all of Suffolk's domestic waste for incineration and powers 30,000 homes. As a result, waste going into landfill in Suffolk has been cut from 44% to just 1%!

Locality budgets have reduced but continue to provide funds to projects in the Thedwastre North division. The Parish Council received information regarding recipients of Locality budget funding.

County Councillor Mrs Storey advised that her vote had increased. She hoped to be appointed as Deputy Leader of SCC and the Cabinet Member responsible for connectivity (broadband and telecoms). The Annual General Meeting was scheduled for 25 May 2017.

4 **District Councillors Report:** District Councillor Barker presented the following report and invited questions: -

Mid Suffolk District Council (MSDC) continue to work well in some very difficult and challenging financial times.

- Green Energy income is up. £460k of income generated in 2016/2017 from solar panels installed on Council owned properties.
- 20 tonnes of glass being collected per month on top of the bring sites 2000 tonnes plus, by our business waste team.
- New Council Houses - 65 new council houses are being built across the district. 14 are already occupied.
- Devolution has come and gone with no positive support from other councils outside of Suffolk.
- Moving the headquarters for the Council to Endeavour House, Ipswich and call-in centres for face to face contact has been agreed.
- The Council provided over £725k in grants to community groups for improvements to village halls etc.
- Number of empty homes has gone down. 97 have been brought back into use generating extra £130k income.
- The Planning Department have been inundated with many large applications specially in the villages along the A14 - Woolpit, Elmswell and Thurston in particular.
- Funding for community led housing up £430k having secured DCLG grants for affordable homes.
- New Chief Executive has been appointed.
- Still collecting over 100 tonnes of litter off the A14.

District Councillor Barker added that the Boundary Commission were reviewing boundaries and that episodes of fly tipping of cannabis had occurred regularly in the Palgrave area. He concluded that he would be stepping down in 2019.

5 **Police Report:** None.

6 **Annual Report from Village Groups:**

Social Committee

Cllr Orlopp stated that the name had been changed to Community Fund. Cllr Orlopp and Cllr H Godfrey had been investing in stocks and shares throughout the year. Less had been made than hoped.

Parochial Church Council

No report had been received. Cllr D'Lima stated that a meeting had been held w/c 8 May 2017 where the feasibility of raising funds for the church, following the announcement that there would be no fireworks, had been discussed. Cllr Orlopp stated that meetings had been, or were scheduled with neighbouring Parishes to discuss possibilities of joint fundraising.

Cllr D'Lima advised that an email had been received from the PCC Treasurer which stated that: -

Stowlangtoft Church had been incorporated into the Benefice of Pakenham, Norton and Tostock, together with churches at Hunston and Great Ashfield. Each church has the responsibility of covering their expenses, which include an annual share of the payment due to the Diocese for administration and stipendiary costs. To ensure the profit/loss account balances basic annual costs need to be covered from income and donations. The main costs are £2,500 for the Parish share, £1,200 for Churchyard maintenance and £2,000 for insurance and security.

In past years, net profits from the Fireworks and Bonfire fundraising event have raised £4,500, together with other receipts and donations. These have covered past obligations but may not be available in the future.

The Meeting noted that an agenda item had been placed on the AGM Agenda where St George's Church could be discussed in more detail.

7 **Chairman's Report:** Cllr D'Lima presented the following report and invited questions: -

2016 – 2017 has been a relatively busy year. We have introduced our new Parish Clerk, Councillors have commented on 10 planning applications, voted for a substantial increase of the Parish precept and hopefully made significant progress towards a long held desire to acquire Vehicle Activated Signage (VAS) in an attempt to curb speeding motorists.

Firstly, I would like to address the issue of the precept increase. It was recognised that Stowlangtoft had not been subjected to a significant rise for many years and was below par compared to comparable local villages. It was felt that the increased funding would give the Parish Council the leeway to fund some desirable projects. Whilst I accept that no increase would be welcomed, I hope that the increase in real terms for most households of less than £20 per year, would be seen as a small price to pay for what we hope will be better village amenities and living conditions for all.

Planning applications have been busier than usual, and whilst the Parish Council have no real power to approve or block applications, I believe that we are a significant factor in influencing the decisions made at District and County Council level. I believe commenting on planning applications is one of the Parish Councillors most important roles and I urge fellow Councillors to always spend time reviewing the material available before passing

comment. On that note, I would like to record my gratitude as Chairman, to my fellow Councillors who despite receiving no salary or stipend are willing to turn out on dark winter nights to address Parish matters and pass comment that leads to decisions. I know too that many of you contribute to village life in other ways, big and small, so thank you.

Thank you also to those members of the public who regularly attend our meetings. Whilst always encouraging you to address your comments through the Chair, I do welcome the insight you can give and it reminds us all that we are all answerable to the Village as a whole.

I would also like to thank our District and County councillors, Roy Barker and Jane Storey. Roy, it is always good to have you attend our meetings, and I value the ability to e-mail you when I do not know who else to contact on tricky matters from planning to parking and recycling to fly-tipping! Jane, I would like to congratulate you on re-election, and, we look forward to receiving some locality funding to tackle village speeding.

My final thank you goes to our Clerk, Amy, who has been with us for less than a year, but has assimilated the Clerk's role most efficiently. Amy came to us with no prior experience as a Parish Clerk, but has proven very willing to learn and has actively sought out opportunities to better the service that she is providing. I know that I speak for all my fellow Councillors when I say that we know how lucky we are in having you as our Clerk. We do rely heavily on you to keep us within the rules and regulations by which we are bound and we have not been disappointed.

8 **Date of next meeting:** Monday 21 May 2018 at 7.00 pm in the Meeting Room, St George's Road.

The meeting concluded at 7.30 pm.

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Chairman

Date: