

STOWLANGTOFT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

**MONDAY 19 JULY 2021 AT 7.30 PM
ST GEORGE'S CHURCH, THE STREET**

Present: Cllrs I Cassidy (Vice Chair), D D'Lima (Chair), J Catchpole, J Orlopp, Mrs Suggett and County Cllr Mellen. Mrs A Bryant (clerk) was also in attendance. No members of the public were in attendance.

33 **Apologies for absence:** Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Godfrey, Mrs Godfrey and District Cllrs Richardson and Mrs Turner.

34 **Declarations of Interest:** No declarations of interest were declared.

35 **Minutes of the meetings held on 17 May and 21 June 2021**

17 May 2021 - The Chair summarised the minutes. Cllr Orlopp proposed that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2021 be approved. Cllr Cassidy seconded the motion, and it was carried unanimously.

21 June 2021 – The Chair summarised the minutes. Cllr Mrs Suggett proposed that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2021 be approved. Cllr Catchpole seconded the motion, and it was carried unanimously.

36 **Matters arising from the last meeting**

Minute 19: St George's Church Clock Repair – The Chair advised that Mr Dixon had provided an update after the meeting on 17 May 2021, which the Clerk had included in the minutes. No work has been undertaken yet as the restoration repair man had other personal commitments. **The Chair would contact Mr Dixon to chase.**

Minute 20: Speed Reactive Signs – The Clerk reported that she had contacted the District and County Cllrs regarding financial support but at the time they had not received their locality budgets. **The Clerk would contact them again.**

Minute 21: Finance – The Clerk advised that the signatories on the bank account had been amended so Cllr Cassidy could now sign cheques, along with Cllrs D'Lima and Orlopp. The Chair stated that the Church News had been circulated to all residents of Stowlangtoft for 2 months but was unsure if this would continue. Feedback had been received that some residents did not wish to receive a copy. The distribution and funding of the Church News would be reviewed.

Minute 23: Highway matters: A1088 speed signs – The Clerk had contact County Cllr Mellen regarding the flashing speed signs. County Cllr Mellen had advised that the SCC did not have the necessary funding to remove the signs. **The Parish Council would progress the matter when County Cllr Mellen attended a meeting.**

Minute 26: Public Forum: wildflower areas – The Chair reported that Cllr Mrs Godfrey and Mr Hainsworth had met to discuss a way forward. Mr Hainsworth had advised that he would purchase some plants at the end of season sale.

37 **County Councillor's report:**

In County Cllr Mellen's absence, the Chair presented the Cllr's report, previously circulated. The Parish Council noted the contents. No questions were asked. A copy is attached to the minutes for information.

The Chair added that the overgrown footpaths which had been highlighted by parishioners had been cut back.

38 **District Councillor's report(s)**

In District Cllr Mrs Turner's absence, the Chair presented the Cllr's report, previously circulated. The Parish Council noted the contents. No questions were asked. A copy is attached to the minutes for information.

In County Cllr Richardson's absence, the Chair presented the Cllr's report, previously circulated. The Parish Council noted the contents. No questions were asked. A copy is attached to the minutes for information.

39 **Police report**

The Parish Council noted the Police report. The Parish Council noted that copies of previous newsletters were available at <https://www.suffolk.police.uk/your-area/snt-newsletters>.

40 **Clerk's report**

The Clerk had no issues to report.

41 **St George's Church**

The CCT had held an open event on 10 July 2021 which had been well attended by Parishioners. The Parish Council noted that any parishioners could use the Church for events. The Chair added that the Parish Council would not be responsible for keeping St George's Church open, however they would be prepared to assist with obtaining grants and moving proposals forward.

The Parish Council noted that the CCT had stated that if £2,000 could be raised annually that would assist the CCT immensely in retaining St George's Church as a village asset.

42 **Speed Reactive Signs**

The Chair stated that the Parish Council still wished to installed VAS onto the A1088 but need posts installed first.

43 **Finance**

Cllrs agreed the financial report and the cheques were signed.

(County Cllr Mellen arrived at 7.49 pm)

The Chair invited County Cllr Mellen to add to his previously circulated report, a considered under minute 37 above.

County Cllr Mellen reported that he had investigated the possible removal of the flashing speed signs on the A1088 as they were defunct. The SCC had acknowledged that there had been some accidents in the area, however there was insufficient funding for the SCC to remove the signs. The Chair reported that the Parish Council should not be responsible for paying to remove the signs as they had been installed by the SCC. He added that there was an electrical feed to them. County Cllr Mellen agreed to look further into the cost of removal, however the Chair added that the Parish Council would prefer to progress the VAS post installation on the A1088 at present.

County Cllr Mellen agreed to offer Stowlangtoft Parish Council £750.0 out of his locality budget towards the installation of posts on the A1088 to support vehicle activated signs.
The Clerk agreed to email County Cllr Mellen with a formal request for funding.

(County Cllr Mellen left the meeting at 7.55 pm)

44 **Planning matters**

DC/21/02553 (Listed Building Consent) 3 Almshouses, The Street, Stowlangtoft, IP31 3JN – The Parish Council noted that the application had been refused.

DC/21/03602 (Listed Building Consent) replacement of 1 no dormer window to front elevation, replacement 6 no windows and 1 no door to rear elevation at 3 Almshouses, The Street, Stowlangtoft, IP31 3JN – The Parish Council noted that they had previously considered an application for replacement windows at this property, which they had objected to, and which had subsequently been refused. The application before the Parish Council was a new application, however the applicant had not gone down the route of proposing secondary glazing.

The Chair reported that the only change he could see to the new application was that the proposed replacement windows were wooden and not plastic. It was disappointing that secondary glazing had not been considered, although he acknowledged that the new residents would want efficient windows.

Following a detailed discussion, the Parish Council felt that the Listed Building restrictions should be adhered to and that the details in the current application did not enhance the listed building. The Parish Council felt that the proposed replacement windows and door to the rear would be acceptable if the front replacement dormer window proceeded as secondary glazing to keep the current appearance and character of the Listed Building.

The Parish Council therefore concluded that the Clerk should report that: -

Stowlangtoft Parish Council object to application DC/21/03602 on the basis that the proposed replacement windows were out of character for the listed building. However, the Parish Council would support secondary glazing to the front dormer window and the proposed wooden windows and door to the rear.

DC/21/02555 7 St George's Road, Stowlangtoft, IP31 3JN – The Parish Council noted that the application had been granted.

45 **Highways matters**

The Chair advised that the A1088 had been covered elsewhere on the agenda.

Cllr Catchpole stated that the road edges adjacent to the Spinney wood were breaking away. Cllr Cassidy advised that he had reported this issue to the Highways Department when they had attended site and repaired a pothole on the Spinney. Cllr Cassidy had not received an update.

The Clerk reported that Anglian Water would be closing Kiln Lane again from 26 July through to 1 August 2021.

46 **Correspondence**

None.

47 **Councillors' Forum**

Vehicle Speed on the Street: Cllr Mrs Suggett advised that residents on The Street from approximately the Kiln Lane junction through to Tofts Barn, heading towards Hunston, had highlighted concern regarding vehicle speed. Cllr Mrs Suggett suggested that the Police Speed Check attend the site. The Chair suggested that Cllr Mrs Suggett contact the Safer Neighbourhood Team initially. All present were supportive of a speed watch campaign. Cllr Mrs Suggett stated it would need to be undertaken at the correct time of day. **The Chair agreed to obtain data from the VAS and email it through to Cllr Mrs Suggett.**

Chalk Pit Footpath – The Chair explained that a resident had contacted him one weekend to raise concern that the footpath which runs from Kiln Lane through to the chalk pit on the A143 had been diverted slightly and that a gate had been installed. The resident had stated that it was an offence to install a gate across an authorised footpath. The Chair added that he had contact Cllr Mrs Godfrey as the Parish Council’s footpath representative who had taken photographs and sent them through to the County Council for further investigation. The landowner had also been advised.

Water Tower and nesting birds – The Chair advised that in mid-June, the Clerk had received an email from the Suffolk Bird Recorders regarding nesting house martins at the water tower which were being disturbed by bird scarers on adjacent fields. The Chair had contacted Cllr Catchpole as the landowner who had made arrangements for the scarer to be relocated. The Suffolk Bird Recorders had contacted the Clerk again recently to thank all involved for their efforts and confirmed that the water tower was the most important house martin nesting site in Suffolk. They estimate at least 84 active nests, which equates to 168 adult birds.

Queens Platinum Jubilee 2022 – The Chair stated that the Queens Platinum Jubilee would be celebrated in 2022. He queried whether the Parish Council would like to plant a tree with a plaque as a memorial. All present were in support of the proposal. The Chair added that perhaps a local landowner could suggest a suitable location? The proposal would be discussed as part of the 2022 – 2023 budget discussions.

Replacement Clerk – The Chair reported that there had been no interest as the replacement Clerk despite an advert being on the noticeboard and SALC’s website and newsletter. He reminded Cllrs that the current Clerk would finish at the September meeting. Cllr Mrs Godfrey had suggested involving an external recruitment consultant.

48 **Public Forum**

None.

49 **Date of next meeting:** Monday 20 September 2021 at 7.30 pm in St George’s Church.

The Parish Council noted that a Planning meeting would be held on Monday 16 August 2021 at 7.30 pm in St George's Church, if any planning applications were received.

The meeting concluded at 8.18 pm.

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Chair

Parish Report – July 2021

Councillor Andy Mellen

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Review of SEND provision

Suffolk County Council has commissioned an immediate independent review into Special Educational Needs and Disability provision. There has been a lot of concern expressed by parents and carers about this area of service, with high levels of dissatisfaction being publicised, particularly through the group Campaign for Change (SEND Suffolk). A multi-agency team from Lincolnshire will carry out an independent review into the way parents and carers are communicated with and kept informed of their child's SEND provision in Suffolk.

The review will focus on the processes, communication protocols and family-facing elements of SEND services within Suffolk County Council. It will not look at specific cases or the provision given to specific children. The review started in June and will be completed within six weeks. The report, with any recommendations, will be published on Suffolk County Council's website, shared with those who contributed to it and also scrutinised, in public, by the council's Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

Highways: Overgrown paths and footways, potholes

After extra rainfall, the last month or so has seen exuberant growth of foliage alongside roads and paths. Staff and contractors are out and about cutting footpaths and verges but are playing catch-up. If there are particular problems these can be reported through the online highways reporting tool: <https://highwaysreporting.suffolk.gov.uk/> or contact me direct.

A number of significant road repairs have been done recently but potholes continue to be reported. This is an area where SCC has significant budget constraints and often does not have the funds to do the repairs that residents would like to see. The Council is seeking a better highways funding settlement from central government, as well as reviewing its contract with Kier which expires September 2023.

Boundary Commission Review: Suffolk parliamentary constituencies

This review seeks to regularise the size of constituencies across the country, the proposals are for a significant re-shaping of the current Suffolk constituencies. The boundary commission are consulting on their initial proposals for an eight-week period, from 8 June 2021 to 2 August 2021. They encourage everyone to use this opportunity to help shape the new constituencies – the more responses received, the more informed their decisions will be when considering whether to revise our proposals. The consultation portal at www.bcereviews.org.uk has more information about their proposals and how to give your views on them.

Bus Back Better

This initiative by central government is essentially a reaction to Covid 19, but on closer inspection it may lead to re-regulation of bus services - which could be a positive move for rural Suffolk.

The de-regulated services we have at present have led to the decimation of rural services, as this policy makes it unlawful to cross subsidise routes, i.e., if an operator makes profit on a busy route, they cannot use that money to subsidise a loss-making route elsewhere. This policy was originally aimed at cities and towns where multiple operators were competing, this was never a problem in rural areas. Re-regulation will mean that an operator can cross-subsidise once again, this should allow for greater choice and service to our rural community.

The offer from government asks for a plan from participating authorities, to bid into a central pot, to help fund not only this renewal of services, but also government are offering 4000 zero emission electric buses that can also be bid for.

We have asked the conservative administration how many of these zero emission buses will we secure for Suffolk, I am disappointed they would not commit to any number, as the small print in the government offer asks for up to 30% of the cost of each Bus bid for. With this being the case, it is highly likely that the most of these buses will end up in a large town or city. On a population split, Suffolk ought to be able to secure 40 of these Buses, if they were focussed in say Ipswich or Lowestoft, we could radically reduce emissions as well as encourage much needed “modal shift” in transport.

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District Councillor Report: Woolpit Parish Council

July 2021

Member Locality grants 21-22	MSDC has launched this year's locality grant scheme. Each district councillor has over £7k to award to community groups within their area. Although the deadline is not until 25 th February 2022, it is helpful if any group wishing to apply for funding gets in touch with their district councillor as soon as possible. The minimum application is for £250, and all applicants should meet at least one of Mid Suffolk's priorities for Grant Funding. See the website for more details: https://www.babergh.gov.uk/communities/grants-and-funding/locality-awards-2021-22/
Sports and Leisure Strategy Refresh	Following a review of the sports and leisure provision across the district a refreshed Sports and Leisure Strategy is to be approved by Cabinet. The next step in the process is for the officers to develop a detailed action plan for the next 3 years.
Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre extension.	In June Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre opened the doors to its new £2.2m upgrade and extension. The work, funded by Mid Suffolk District Council included a range of state-of-the-art fitness equipment as well further improvements made throughout the leisure centre. The number of stations in the gym has been increased from 50 to 100.
CIFCO	CIFCO's annual business report was on the agenda for last month's Overview and Scrutiny committee. The portfolio now consists of 21 acquisitions and does bring in funds. Last year CIFCO brought in just over £2m to be ploughed back into providing services across both districts. However, the CIFCO accounts for the last year, 2021 show a paper loss of £4.4m made up of expected one-off acquisition costs of around £2m (including stamp duty and fees) as well as a re-adjustment on the value of the portfolio as whole. The rental income the properties deliver is not affected by these fluctuations in their value. The business plan will be discussed at the next full council meeting at the end of July.
Virtual High Street, Stowmarket	During the pandemic we have had to change the way we shop. Following on from the successful Virtual High Street in Sudbury, it has now come to both Stowmarket and Hadleigh. The aim of the Virtual High Street is to bring the local high street and market. Over 60 shops and businesses have signed up to the platform in Stowmarket. BMSDC have invested in the system and appointed a Town Centre Business Liaison Officer for the project which is due to be extended to Eye and Needham Market in due course. There is also a free digital skills programme offered to all businesses so they can make the most of the technology.
Joint Local Plan Examination	The hearing for the Joint Local Plan examination began last month, but after one day was deferred. A new date for the hearing has yet to be determined but is likely to be in September. The Stage 2 examination is still expected to take place in the autumn as previously expected.
Needham Lake Visitor Centre	Work has now begun on the construction of a new visitor centre and café at Needham Lake.
Biodiversity	Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils are to fund biodiversity projects costing over £90k. These include mapping wildlife corridors, council owned public space as well as county wildlife sites and local nature reserves. There will also be a tree canopy survey. These projects are based on the proposals from the Biodiversity Working group.

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District Councillor's Report: Harry Richardson

Mid Suffolk District Council

As Mid Suffolk District Council did not meet in June I have included below a summary of the major updates across the district:

An update on Covid-19 in Suffolk

Regular bulletins continue to be produced to give a snapshot of the current Covid-19 situation in Suffolk - along with updates on the work being carried out as part of Suffolk's Local Outbreak Control Plan. You can find the bulletins through existing fortnightly updates for councillors, or via the Suffolk County Council website.

An update on the vaccine rollout can be found on the SNEE NHS COVID-19 Vaccination Service website.

We continue to play our part in response to the pandemic, alongside public sector colleagues within the Suffolk Resilience Forum, supporting in the event of local outbreaks as well as continuing to offer support to our communities and businesses. Please see the council website for more information.

Councils' Joint Local Plan examination to reconvene in September

Hearing sessions for the examination of our councils' Joint Local Plan are expected to resume again in September following a change of date – enabling them to be fully inclusive, whilst also ensuring public safety during the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is anticipated that the Stage 1 sessions, originally scheduled for June and July, will now take place over a concentrated period from September, with Stage 2 hearing sessions in mid-Autumn as originally planned.

Next steps for councils' biodiversity and climate change plans agreed

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have given the go ahead for £97k for projects aimed at boosting biodiversity and tackling climate change across their districts.

New 'virtual' high street supports market town's recovery

Shopping in Stowmarket is now just a click away thanks to the launch of new Virtual High Street sites. Over 100 new businesses have signed up to new sites in Hadleigh and Stowmarket, joining over 130 already signed up to the platform in Sudbury.

Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee approves CIFCO plans for 2021/22

Councillors on the cross-party Overview & Scrutiny Committee have approved CIFCO's annual business plan ahead of its review by Full Council, with the property investment company having now brought in more than £5.4m to help fund services and projects for residents in Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

£2.2m refurbishment means healthy future for Mid Suffolk

Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre opened its doors last month on its new £2.2m upgrade and extension, supporting residents' health and wellbeing with upgraded gym, poolside features and changing rooms.

Work underway on visitor centre and café for Needham Lake

Work has now started on the new café and visitor centre at Needham Lake – improving facilities at the popular tourist attraction, as well as boosting visitor numbers and spend in the local high street.

Plans to support new businesses in Eye

Councillors on Mid Suffolk District Council cabinet have agreed to progress plans to breathe new life into a derelict building in Eye town centre – with the aim of transforming it into a supportive space for fledgling businesses.

Changes agreed to social housing allocation system to ensure fairness and consistency

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council cabinets both recently agreed amendments to Gateway to Homechoice - the lettings system used to allocate social housing across the local authority areas of Babergh, Braintree, Colchester, East Suffolk, Ipswich, Maldon and Mid Suffolk.

The changes have been made in response to national legislative and policy changes, including a new Code of Guidance issued by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government in December 2020, and will ensure that key decisions can be made fairly and consistently by all Gateway local authorities.

I hope that this report has been useful but if a member of the Parish Council wishes to discuss any of the above further then please do not hesitate to contact me via the email address below.

With kind regards
Cllr Harry Richardson JP
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