

STOWLANGTOFT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

**MONDAY 15 JANUARY 2018 AT 7.15 PM
THE MEETING ROOM, ST GEORGE'S ROAD**

Present: Cllrs D D'Lima (Chair), I Cassidy, H Godfrey, Mrs J Godfrey, N Kaines and J Orlopp. Mrs A Bryant (clerk) was also in attendance. Members of the public also attended.

81 **Apologies for absence:** No apologies for absence were received.

82 **Co-option of New Parish Councillor:** Following the publication of a vacancy on Stowlangtoft Parish Council, and no other nominations having been received, Mr Ian Cassidy was co-opted into the vacancy. Cllr H Godfrey moved the motion, seconded by Cllr Orlopp and unanimously carried.

Cllr I Cassidy signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office and completed a Register of Interest form.

83 **Declaration of interest:** No declarations of interests were received.

84 **Minutes of the last meeting:** The Chairman summarised the minutes for the benefit of members of the public who had not read them. Cllr Godfrey proposed that the minutes of the meeting dated 21 November 2017 be approved. Cllr J Godfrey seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

85 **Matters arising from the last meeting:**

Village Sign: Cllr Kaines stated there was no update regarding the village sign. He advised that he would obtain another quotation to clean and repaint the sign and report back to the meeting on 19 March 2018.

Galvanised handrail: Cllr Kaines informed that Mid Suffolk District Council had installed the handrail and permission should be sought from them to make any changes. **The meeting agreed that the Clerk would contact MSDC regarding any changes to the handrail and report back to the meeting on 19 March 2018.**

Open Space Survey: The Clerk reported that MSDC had not received a completed Open Space Survey from Stowlangtoft Parish Council. The Clerk had requested advise on how to register areas of land but had received no response. **The meeting agreed that Cllr J Godfrey and the Clerk would contact MSDC again to complete another copy of the survey.**

All other matters arising would be covered under specific agenda items.

86 **County Councillor's Report:** County Cllr Storey was not present at the meeting. A report had been received which Cllr D'Lima presented. Namely: -

The Suffolk County Council (SCC) have launched the school transport consultation which calls for unity in efforts to find long term solutions in providing affordable home to school transport. All consultation responses will be listened to carefully and have the opportunity to influence the final outcome. The consultation period runs for two and half months, commencing on 12 December 2017. SCC listened to head teachers and included additional options in the consultation document.

In Suffolk, £21 million is spent per year getting children to and from school. SCC introduced a number of efficiency changes to the service saving around £2.6 million. However, the authority needs to consider making more significant changes. The school and post-16 travel policies need to be affordable, sustainable, and capable of meeting growing demand in the future. The current policies go above legal requirements. The proposed consultation sought views on changing these policies and had included three options: -

- 1.** In September 2019, change the school travel policy so that it is in line with the legal requirements. This would mean implementing all the changes in one go, including ceasing free travel to the transport priority area schools where it is not the pupils' nearest.
- 2.** From September 2019, introduce the changes year by year as a child joins or moves school so that it is in line with legal requirements. This means that we would introduce all the changes on a phased basis. This option would cost SCC an estimated £8.8 million to implement.
- 3.** Make no changes to the school travel policy but make savings from other services provided by SCC.

SCC are also requesting feedback on several other matters, including using Rights of Way as part of the way distance to a school is measured and a range of local solutions, such as local collection hubs and opt-in to travel, which we have developed with a range of schools. Further details can be found at www.suffolk.gov.uk/schooltravel. The consultation will run until 28 February 2018. Various consultation workshops will be held at various locations.

Suffolk have been chosen as a pilot area to retain 100% of business rates. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government announced the amount of money allocated to each Local Authority in England for the next financial year. As part of the announcement, SCC were named as one of the pilot areas for a new Government scheme to retain 100% of business rates from Council Tax in 2018/2019. In future, business rates will be an even greater income stream for all local authorities and this is an opportunity for Suffolk to influence how it will operate in a two-tier system.

Suffolk's local authorities are now able to provide fully funded central heating systems to 514 fuel poor households across Suffolk over the next three years. Around 4 million UK households are in fuel poverty, unable to affordably heat their home to the temperature needed to stay warm and healthy. As well as being on low incomes many of these households are also faced with the additional burden of relying on heating systems that are inefficient and expensive to run. The local authorities are working with the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership and have successfully secured funding worth £4.3 million.

The project will be managed by SCC, administered by Suffolk Warm Homes Healthy People. Alongside the first-time heating system, households could also benefit from new insulation measures to make the homes more energy efficient. The new £150m fund was established by the National Grid using part of the proceeds from the sale of the company's majority stake in its gas distribution business.

Parents and carers have until midnight on Monday 15 January 2018 to make an application to secure their child's place at a Suffolk Primary, Infant, Junior or Middle school for September 2018. Any child born between 1 September 2013 and 31 August 2014 is due to start primary school from September 2018. An application for a full-time school place must be made, even if a child is already attending a nursery class in an infant or primary school, a pre-school or a children's centre next to a school site.

A completed application must be submitted for every child wanting a place from September 2018. If families are planning to move house or think their circumstances may change before then it is still important to make an application on time. Additional advice is available at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions

SCC's Cabinet meet on 23 January 2018 to discuss the SCC Budget for 2018/2019. It is proposed that, in addition to the National Adult Social Care precept of 3%, a council tax increase of 1.99% for Suffolk County Council will be applied. Papers that show the budget proposals were put to a Scrutiny meeting on 19 October 2017.

- 87 **District Councillor's report:** District Cllr Barker was not present at the meeting and no report had been received.

In the absence of District Cllr Barker, Cllr D'Lima reported that John Buckingham, Operations Officer for MSDC, had informed the District Cllr that the bungalows in St Georges Road had become general needs tenants and had their gardens fenced. He confirmed that the area to the front of the site was open space so, in theory, anyone could walk on it.

He also clarified that the unofficial right of way through the hedge had been gapped up by MSDC as the land owners who had a duty of care to keep hedges and ditches maintained. He stated that during the 25 years working for MSDC the hedge has always been maintained by the grounds team and periodic gapping up had occurred.

John Buckingham noted that the majority of houses in St Georges Road had access to the rear into Stockings Lane, however, if the Parish and local residents wished an access through the hedge then a period of consultation would be required.

Cllr D'Lima proposed that, in Cllr Catchpole's absence, he would update him regarding the hole in the hedge and then contact District Cllr Barker to propose a way forward. An update would be provided at the next meeting on 19 March 2018.

- 88 **Police Report:** The report available on the website covers 22 wards in the Stowmarket area is dated December 2017.

You said:

1. There were a number of concerns regarding both adults and youths becoming involved in the supply and use of illegal substances in Stowmarket; and
2. The Stowmarket Police Cadets had been visible in the community, conducting surveys on the Recreation Ground and marching the local streets. The Cadets were described as a credit to themselves and the Constabulary.

We did:

1. During week commencing 6 November 2017, Stowmarket Response Officers and Stowmarket SNT conducted a drugs operation. 5 youths were found in possession of Class B drugs and 2 adults found in possession of Class A and B drugs. 1 adult would be investigated for possession with intent to supply and given a Police caution for allowing their property to be used for illegal substances; and
2. On 4 December 2017, Stowmarket SNT held an Awards Evening to celebrate the Police Cadets achievements.

Responding to issues in your community:

Between 1 November and 1 December 2017, 32 investigations into theft from motor vehicles were undertaken in the Stowmarket locality. Thieves have been targeting tools and equipment and valuables. PCSOs have been liaising with victims, Parish and Town Councils, the media and the community to encourage residents to "see it, hear it, report it".

Point of contact for your Safer Neighbourhood Team: Sergeant 1692 Martin
Telephone: 101 / 01473 613888 ext 3398
Email: stowmarket.snt@suffolk.pnn.police.uk
Twitter: @PoliceSTOW

The meeting noted that the Police report was not particularly relevant to the village and again stressed the importance of keeping an eye out in your local area.

- 89 **Speed Reactive Sign Procurement:** Cllr H Godfrey reported that the procurement had not progressed. He had submitted an application form; however, the response had suggested that permanent locations were better than moveable signs. Cllr Godfrey had then been asked to resubmit an application regarding locations on the A1088. He added that County Cllr Storey had not contacted him at all since the last Parish Council meeting.

Cllr Godfrey explained that, following discussions with SCC, he expected a site visit regarding the location of posts. This has never happened. **The meeting concluded that Cllr H Godfrey and Cllr D'Lima would pin point locations on the A1088 on a map and submit them and feed back to the meeting on 19 March 2018.**

Cllr J Godfrey stated that the whole process has been unprofessional. The Parish Council never get the responses they are promised and in her opinion the SCC should be reported to the Council Ombudsman.

- 90 **Clerk's report:** The Clerk reported that following her application to SALC under the Transparency Grant, the Parish Council had been successful and would be awarded £920.00. The Clerk advised that a laptop, printer/scanner and software would be purchased once the money had been received. This award would assist with the GDPR requirements.

The Clerk updated that SALC were working with the DPO Centre regarding the GDPR requirements coming into force on 25 May 2018. The DPO Centre had offered to act as the Data Protection Officer for Parish Council's and had proposed a category based pricing scheme. The Clerk suggested that Stowlangtoft would come under category 1 even though the precept meant it would fall into category 2. The Parish Council noted that the financial implications were £150 for year 1 and £50 for subsequent years.

The Parish Council agreed to subscribe to the Data Protection Officer proposal as outlined by the DPO Centre and agreed to subscribe under Category 1. The Clerk agreed to contact SALC to register the Parish Council's interest.

The question of how the laptop would be insured was raised. **It was agreed that the Clerk would raise a query with the insurance company as to whether it would be covered or not and, if it needed to be listed as an item, whether there would be additional costs involved.**

- 91 **St George's Church:** Cllr Kaines stated that discussions were ongoing with a local landowner regarding the fundraising fireworks. He had visited the proposed site and would feed back to the Fireworks Committee.

Cllr J Godfrey stated that the recent Burns Night, held to raise funds for the church, had been a great success and had raised in excess of £1,700.

- 92 **Speed Gates, Kiln Lane:** Cllr D'Lima stated that the speed gates project had not progressed.

93 **Finance Report:** Councillors agreed the financial report and the cheques were signed.

Precept 2018 – 2019: Cllr D’Lima stated that in 2016-2017 the precept had been increased to cover additional clerking hours, installation of Vehicle Activated Signs and additional projects within the village. The increase had resulted in 60p extra a week for Band D taxpayers. Cllr D’Lima therefore suggested that £3,300.00 be requested again for 2018 – 2019.

The Parish Council unanimously agreed to request a precept of £3300.00 per year for Stowlangtoft Parish Council for 2018 - 2019.

2017 – 2018 budget discussion:

Cllr D’Lima suggested figures for the 2018-2019 based on the current position regarding the 2017 – 2018 budget. The Parish Council acknowledged the requirements for a Data Protection Officer as updated by the Clerk so incorporated £150.00 into subscriptions. It was also acknowledged that the village sign and handrail had been raised as projects in the past. Following discussion, it was agreed that £300.00 would be allocated for works to the village sign and further investigation into works to the handrail would be undertaken. It was concluded that the handrail could be included in the 2019 – 2020 budget.

As part of the budget discussion, the meeting requested that the Clerk contact MSDC to clarify whether the grant allocated for street cleaning could be increased as no one present was aware of how the grant figure had been reached.

The Parish Council noted that the majority of figures remained the same, however Cllr D’Lima suggested the following changes to headings: -

Subscriptions – increase to £285.00;
Maintenance and repair – increase to £500.00;
Village improvements – reduce to £100.00; and
activated signs – increase to £1,000.00.

The Parish Council concluded that the above headings would be amended and included in the draft budget, which would be considered at the meeting on 19 March 2018. The Parish Council also requested that the Clerk contact MSDC regarding the current street cleansing grant and report back to the meeting on 19 March 2018.

The Parish Council noted that the new Treasurer for the PCC was Ann Maddison.

94 **Planning matters:**

DC/17/05826 – Elkanah, Ixworth Road – Cllr D’Lima informed the meeting that Councillors had responded to MSDC and had not raised any objections to the application.

DC/18/00055 – 1 Primrose Cottage, Kiln Lane – The Parish Council noted the application to undertake works to trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) and raised no objections.

Cllr J Godfrey queried whether the tree clearance works already taking place on land adjacent to The Street near Kiln Lane breached any TPO. The meeting noted that some village trees were protected and some were not. It was not known if any trees subject to a TPO had been affected, however no planning application regarding works to protected tree had been received by the Parish Council. It was concluded that additional information regarding which trees were protected in Stowlangtoft would be investigated by on line research. Cllr Kaines suggested that a meeting be arranged with the MSDC Tree Officer if more information was required.

DC/17/05327 – Kiln Farm House, Kiln Lane – The Parish Council noted that the planning application had been granted. The Parish Council had submitted comments.

95 **Highway matters:**
Cllr D'Lima stated that the pot hole at the junction of Church View had been reported again (reference 00191651). He reiterated that anyone reporting a pot hole use the online reporting tool.

96 **Correspondence:** None

97 **Councillors' Forum:**
Common Room: Cllr H Godfrey updated that Stephanie Osborne had recently advised that MSDC had decided to evaluate and make a decision on all common rooms and therefore did not wish to make a decision on an individual basis.

Litter Pick: Cllr Kaines suggested a date of 18 March 2018 at 9.30 am for the next litter pick. Cllr Kaines agreed to prepare the necessary leaflets for delivery around the village. Cllrs Cassidy and J Godfrey offered assistance in delivering the leaflets. **Cllr Kaines would contact Cllr Catchpole regarding the litter pick date.**

98 **Public Forum:**
Church bank: A parishioner queried who owned the bank in front of the church and who would be responsible for wild flowers/grass cutting. The meeting noted that the bank was owned by the church and the bank cut by a local business when cutting hedges in the surrounding areas. It was also noted that any cutting was always held off until after the wild flowers had died back.

99 **Date of next meeting:** Monday 19 March 2018 at 7.15 pm in the Meeting Room, St George's Road.

The meeting concluded at 9.03 pm.

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Chairman
Date: