

STOWLANGTOFT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

**MONDAY 13 MAY 2019 AT 7.00 PM
THE MEETING ROOM, ST GEORGE'S ROAD**

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

1 **Apologies for absence:** Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs H Godfrey, Mrs J Godfrey and County Councillor Mrs J Storey.

2 **Minutes of the last meeting:** held on 21 May 2018. Cllr Cassidy proposed their adoption and this was seconded by Cllr Catchpole. It was unanimously agreed that they should be signed as a true record.

3 **County Councillors Report:** County Councillor Mrs Storey submitted the following annual report which Cllr D'Lima presented.

'The County Council launched an innovative new Light Rescue Pump (LRP) fire engine at Wrentham Fire Station which was developed following feedback from local residents through the Integrated Risk Management Plan 2015-2018 consultation.

In May 2018 the County Council announced the proposal to develop a 4.5 acre site owned as part of its County Farms estate in Cockfield. The plan is for 51 affordable homes.

Matthew Hicks was elected as the new leader of the County Council and promised a new era of working in partnership and listening.

The County Council have approved a plan to invest £6m into upgrading Suffolk's recycling centres. £3m was earmarked for the Foxhall Recycling Centre and £1m for urgent improvements at Haverhill. £1m has been earmarked for a site to replace the Portman's Walk Recycling Centre in Ipswich and a further £1m in Stowmarket.

Suffolk's tourism trade reached £2m for the first time. Interim figures released in August 2018 showed a growth of at least 5% in 2017, more than double the year before. The number of jobs in tourism rose by 6% to 42,428. A report published in December 2018 revealed the importance of the Sport and Physical Activity sector.

In October 2018, Mid Suffolk Home First was rated as outstanding by the Care Quality Commission.

January 2019 saw Suffolk Highways celebrating following a £300,000 investment in Nu-phalt Thermal Patching technology. The £9.67m received from central government aided the county's Highways teams to carry out more effective, longer lasting repairs. In January, 1,700 potholes county-wide were repaired.

January 2019 also saw the Department for Education publish revised GCSE and A level results. 64% of students in Suffolk are now achieving the expected standard in English and Maths.

Suffolk won a grant of £4.4m from the Government for a pioneering project to develop smart street lighting. Street lights will be adapted to include wind vanes and solar panels to generate, rather than consume energy. They can also be adapted to act as wi-fi and 5G transmitters.

February 2019 saw "Plug In Suffolk" launched in conjunction with EO Charging and Bulb which would provide a fully open public fast charging network and plug-in hybrid vehicles. The first location unveiled was at Urban Jungle Plant Nursery in Beccles.

The Parish Council noted the locality awards made by County Cllr Mrs Storey and noted that no funding had been forthcoming to Stowlangtoft despite various requests. Cllr D'Lima commented that he felt aggrieved that the County Council did not support the Parish Council and did not reply to queries raised.

4 **District Councillors Report:** District Councillor Barker had not stood for re-election, however he had circulated an annual report; namely :-

'The election results for MSDC are available on the website, however, due to the uncertainty over Brexit and Westminster, the main parties locally lost seats, leaving MSDC as a tied Council. The Conservatives now have the same number of seats as the Green and Liberal Democrat parties. District Cllr Barker made the decision to stand down 4 years previous, with the Boundary Review reinforcing his decision. He thanked all on the Parish Council for their assistance over the 16 years of service and confirmed that he would be assisting Cllrs Richardson and Mrs Turner following their election.'

The Parish Council welcomed Cllrs Richardson and Mrs Turner who had been elected to the newly formed Thurston Ward.

5 **Police Report:** The report available on the website was dated April 2019.

You said:

Reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB) incidents in Rickinghall and Botesdale, caused by young people.

We did:

Carried out a number of ASB questionnaires in the area of incidents to identify offenders. Local businesses were approached to ensure timely reporting was undertaken. Young people were engaged with in the area about the effects and consequences of ASB.

Responding to issues in your community:

Due to popular demand, several coffee mornings and community meet ups to talk about rogue traders, scams and fraud. Happy to undertake these to get the message out and to meet with the community.

Point of contact for your Safer Neighbourhood Team: Sergeant 1550 Lisa Vaughan

Telephone: 101 / 01473 613888 ext 3398

Email: stowmarket.snt@suffolk.pnn.police.uk

Twitter: @PoliceSTOW

6 **Annual Report from Village Groups:**

Community Fund

Cllr Orlopp reported that as at 12 May 2019, the community fund portfolio stood at £11,674.07 including dividends for the year.

Parochial Church Council

There was no update regarding the PCC.

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

'Firstly, I would like to welcome my fellow councillors into continuing their roles as Councillors for our Parish Council. I am delighted that they have all shown themselves willing to stand for re-election as I value the local knowledge and expertise they bring to our discussions.

Whilst it is inevitable and healthy that we do not always agree over planning issues, I know that all councillors want Stowlangtoft to remain a pleasant place to live, even if we do sometimes disagree on what we consider acceptable development. I have no doubt that we shall continue to see applications for planning within our village in the coming years and we should all examine our stance as to what is, and what is not, desirable. From my own perspective, I would want you all to be open minded about accepting change; it is simply not realistic to expect Stowlangtoft to be preserved as a model village of the 1950s – we must accept that growth and consequently change has to happen, we should though do our best to ensure that such growth in our housing stock attracts good quality parishioners who will love Stowlangtoft as we all do. This has been the busiest year for planning applications I can remember, and I do expect that trend to continue.

Aside from planning, we have got tantalisingly close to seeing the use of Vehicle Activated Speed signs appearing in our village. We are not naive enough to think that this will prevent speeding in our village, but it is hoped that this will be a visual reminder to some motorists to take their foot off the accelerator.

Thanks to the efforts of a parishioner, Stowlangtoft now has the small embryo of a community orchard at the end of St George's Road. The Parish Council supported and helped to finance the purchase of the fruit trees and we applaud the establishment of such projects.

Two other projects, both road safety initiatives, have been frustrated by a lack of support from Suffolk County Council. The proposed speed reduction in Kiln Lane, and a request for centre white lineage in The Street have been inexplicably dropped without reason. I hope that we can pursue both projects in the coming year.

Another project which is ongoing is the lack of parking for some residents in St George's Close. The Parish Council does not possess either the funds or authority to make changes in this respect and we look to Mid Suffolk District Council for support in this area.

We lament the loss of our Polling Station, which was declared 'not required' despite protestations from several Parish Councillors. Sadly, like village shops and schools, it appears the local council policy is to centralise and make bigger.

The Parish Council continues to actively support the upkeep of St George's Church. Even though few of us are practising worshippers, we should all see The Church as a focus of our village and would not wish to see it fall into a state of disrepair or neglect.

Looking to the future. Having said I welcome all the returning Parish Councillors, please do not feel offended when I say that I would like to introduce some new faces onto the Council. Many of you have sat on the Council for many years and it is time that some of us should step down – and I do include myself in that cast. At a conservative estimate, our average age is in the high 60s or early 70s and it is highly likely that our views do not represent the younger people in the Village. I intend that this coming year we should all try to recruit a younger member of the community to join us, so that we can gradually replace those that wish to stand down. I will not hold my breath for volunteers to come forward, I want us ALL to look to younger family, friends and neighbours and to persuade them to join us. If we do not do so, there will soon come a time when we shall not have a Parish Council.

I traditionally thank my Parish Councillors for their hard work over the past year, and now is no exception. None of us probably want to come out on a winter evening to discuss precepts and dog poo bins, but you have all done so. Many of you do additional unpaid tasks to better the Village, such as arranging litter picks, running the Village Investment Fund and even providing a toad crossing service..... I thank you all for your efforts.

I thank our current County and District Councillors for the support you show us, but as I have stressed in my correspondence, we are devoid of funds and authority to make many changes and improvements, so if we are to function at this lowest level of Council, it is essential that we receive back up support at higher echelons. To be ignored as we have been over some issues, is both rude and unacceptable and I will have no hesitation in making those sentiments known at higher level if necessary. If we do not get a better level of service and cooperation in the next 12 months, I shall be seriously questioning whether we should continue to operate as a Parish Council.

I would like to finish by thanking 3 people who have made a significant contribution to our Village. Firstly, to our Parish Clerk, Amy Bryant. Amy has continued to be first class worker and adviser to our Council. Amy keeps us legal with respect to the rules and regulation by which we are bound and she makes sure that I do not forget anything as Chairman. I know that I speak for all Councillors when I say we know we are very lucky to have you as our Clerk, Amy.

Secondly, I would like to that Roy Barker who has been an excellent friend to Stowlangtoft for very many years. In his role as District Councillor, he has been generous with his locality budget to support our projects and he has given us many good pieces of advice to better the lives of our villagers. Roy, we wish you a happy and well-deserved retirement and hope that you might venture out from your home at Gt Ashfield to attend our meetings from time to time.

Lastly, I would like to say a huge thank you to another person who is retiring from public duty in Stowlangtoft. Bobby Pearson has tended our village roads for very many years doing a job that goes largely unnoticed because he has done it so well. However, had he not done so, we most certainly would have found our village to be far less pleasant as we went about our lives. Bobby – thank you. We hope that you have a well-deserved rest from walking our streets! That concludes the Stowlangtoft Parish Council Chairman's report for 2018-2019.

8 **Date of next meeting:** Monday 18 May 2020 at 7.00 pm in the Meeting Room, St George's Road.

The meeting concluded at 7.17 pm.

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Chairman

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