

GREAT ASHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of a meeting held on Thursday, 26th November 2020 at 7.30pm
Virtual Meeting – Held via Zoom**

Mr. R. Barker – Chairman*

Mrs. N. Calderbank*

Mr. B. Fitch*

Mr. I. Sadler*

Mrs D. Stick

Mr A. Peake*

Present: All marked*

Mrs C. White took the minutes.

County Cllr Jane Storey and two members of the public were in attendance.

1. Record Councillors' apologies for absence

Apologies received and accepted from Cllr Stick and District Cllr Meyer

2. Declarations of interest

None.

3. Suffolk County Councillor

Cllr Storey attended and confirmed that as of today Suffolk would be designated as in Tier 2 from the 2nd December in connection with the on-going COVID-19 restrictions. A report for November had previously been received and circulated to Cllrs highlighting the challenges being faced as another lockdown was implemented, and detailing the ways in which SCC was helping during these difficult times, such as the distribution of funding to organisations helping those most in need, and Test & Trace Support Payments for the most vulnerable. Adopt East has been launched to help find families for children looking for their forever homes. Cllr Storey advised that there is still funding available in Locality Budgets and bids are encouraged from Parish Councils seeking support for local initiatives sooner rather than later.

District Councillor

Cllr Meyer was not in attendance. A written report had been received and circulated and included: keeping up to date with COVID-19 across Suffolk and the various agencies working together to keep people safe as well as the production of regular Suffolk Coronawatch Bulletins; the Home-But Not Alone Phone Line has gone live again, anyone needing assistance can phone 0800 876 6926; Cllrs are considering the latest Joint Local Plan at the November Council Meeting which aims to shape Babergh & Mid Suffolk towns & villages until 2037, if agreed this JLP will be submitted for examination by the Planning Inspector; Babergh & Mid Suffolk Councils have recently published their 5 year housing land supply statement; cross-party Cllrs are united in their agreement to the government planning system overhaul in that this should not be to the detriment of local communities and the unique challenges faced by rural areas.

Public Forum

Two members of the public were in attendance.

One member of the public addressed the meeting to highlight the problem of rotting and missing signs relating to footpaths in the areas around Great Ashfield, with particular reference to footpaths to the West of Elmswell Road leading down to Hunston & Badwell Ash and that this was causing some confusion for users. Footpaths are under the jurisdiction of SCC and Cllr Barker undertook to contact the appropriate Footpath Office to find out what can be done to rectify this. Liaison with local landowners is considered necessary to ensure that signs are appropriately positioned and to make sure the signs link the various footpaths together.

4. To Sign the Minutes of the Previous Meeting as a True Record

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 17th September 2020, were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

5. Quiet Lanes Initiative

A register of interest form had been submitted proposing 4 lanes for Quiet Lane status. Cllr Peake confirmed that he has now registered as 'Local Lead Volunteer' for this initiative and had joined the QLS introductory session held via Zoom on the 25th November. He reported that the initiative is proving very popular, but that the 4 lanes submitted by Great Ashfield have been mapped by the QLS team. The next stage is for the lanes to be validated by the QLS team, followed by a period of consultation with local residents and businesses. Cost templates are to be provided shortly to enable Parish Councils to evaluate the level of financial commitment required. Cllr Peake will complete these as soon as they are available and circulate to Cllrs. Cllr Storey advised that there would be financial assistance available in the highways budget to facilitate this, once a more accurate assessment of costs is known. In general, Cllrs agreed that QL designation could be beneficial when considered in conjunction with the local footpath network and was something worth pursuing.

6. Community Speedwatch

In the absence of Cllr Stick, the Clerk confirm that 500 bin stickers had been purchased and received, and the process of distributing these had begun. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances distribution was currently 'on hold', however, anyone wanting bin stickers is advised to email their request to the Parish Clerk.

7. Planning

- i) DC/20/05061 – Full planning application for conversion of & external alterations to detached garage to form holiday let at Snowdrop Cottage, Norton Road, IP31 3HU.

The Parish Council recorded no objections to this application, however, with the proviso that that the relevant formal restrictions on its use as a holiday let should apply:

- a) That there should be at least one months break during any 12 month period.
- b) Written records should be kept of all bookings, including names, addresses & length of stay
- c) The accommodation should not be used as permanent residential accommodation for family.

- ii) DC/20/04747 – Householder Planning Application – Erection of rear two storey extension (following removal of existing single storey extension). Insertion of 2 No. windows in conjunction with loft conversion. Nebbits Farmhouse, Elmswell Road, Great Ashfield, IP31 3HH.

The Parish Council unanimously objected to this application on the following grounds:

- a) The size and scale of the extension, as it would result in almost doubling the size of the property.
- b) The site plans submitted with the application are inaccurate as they do not properly indicate the location of the neighbouring properties in relation to Nebbits Farmhouse and the proposed extension.
- c) There are serious concerns that new windows in the 2nd and 3rd floor extension will overlook neighbouring properties and gardens consequently infringing their privacy.
- d) The size and scope of the extension is also likely to overshadow and dominate neighbouring gardens.

- iii) DC/20/04755 – Listed Building Consent – Erection of rear two storey extension (following removal of existing single storey extension). Insertion of 2 No. roof windows in conjunction with loft conversion, alterations as per schedule of works at Nebbits Farmhouse, Elmswell Road, Great Ashfield, IP31 3HH.

This application should be read in conjunction with the Householder Planning Application, item 7(ii) above.

The Parish Council unanimously objected to this application on the following grounds:

See items 7(ii) points (a) to (d) above, in addition the following comments/observations are applicable:

- a) Nebbits Farmhouse is a Grade II listed building and the design of the proposed extension is considered to be out of keeping with the original building and its environment and its impact would be to the detriment of the appearance and scale of the existing farmhouse.
- b) There is concern that the size and height of the gabled roofs of the extension would inevitably be visible from the front elevation of the original farmhouse.
- c) It is considered likely that the size and scale of the extension is such that it could potentially damage the original fabric and structure of the listed building to which it would be attached.
- d) The internal layout of the attic rooms indicates that a considerable number of roof timbers will need to be removed, some of these are likely to be original, and there is a serious risk of harm to the original and supporting structures of the existing listed building.

In summary, whilst the Parish Council unanimously objects to the applications put forward, they do believe that with further careful consideration and thought a more appropriate and

sympathetic scheme could be developed. The Parish Council suggested that pre-application consultations would have been beneficial in this instance.

- iv) Applications decided by the Planning Authority since the last meeting:
 - a) DC/20/03551 – Change of Use from annexed accommodation to form 1No. residential dwelling at Water Hall, Wheelers Lane, Great Ashfield, IP31 3HP.
FULL PLANNING PERMISSION GRANTED.
 - b) DC/20/04353 - Discharge of Conditions Notice, Condition 3 of planning application DC/19/02750, route of services for extract fan and soil pipe to serve new ensuite facility to master bedroom at Nebbits Farmhouse, Elmswell Road.
APPLICATION GRANTED.

8. Parish Council Bank Account – the Clerk confirmed that change of address forms had now been completed and posted, and it was agreed that registration for online banking and delegated online access should be considered once the address changes had been implemented. Clerk to seek advice from neighbouring Parish Councils.

9. Payment of Invoices – The Clerk confirmed payment/receipt of the following since the last Parish Council meeting:

- i) Receipt of £400 locality award for Community Speedwatch equipment and bin stickers.
- ii) Receipt of £15 sponsorship from Mandie Beckley to cover the additional cost of printing a colour edition of the Newsletter. The Parish Council wish to thank Mandie for her generous contribution.
- iii) Payment to Smartwheelie of £279.50 for bin stickers.
- iv) Payment to CAS One Suffolk of £60.00 for website hosting.
- v) Payment to Profile Business Supplies of £55.00 for the printing of the Autumn & Winter editions of the Newsletter.

10. Councillors' reports and items for future agenda

- i) Cllr Barker reported that since the last meeting the pavements/footpaths along Elmswell Road as far as the village sign had been cleared by SCC Highways, as well as the road repairs and resurfacing works that had been carried out. It had been gratifying to receive various messages from villagers acknowledging the difference that clearing these paths had made, such as young mums being able to wheel their pushchairs/prams safely. The Clerk was asked to write a letter of thanks to SCC Highways for carrying out these works quickly and efficiently with minimum disruption to the village.
- ii) COVID-19 – Cllrs discussed whether it was sensible to have a plan in place should COVID-19 arrive in the village. In general, it was felt that as long as government guidelines were being followed there was little extra the Parish Council could do to mitigate this. However, it was considered that the Village WhatsApp Group potentially had a role to play in this instance and Cllr Peake agreed to consider sending out a reminder about the WhatsApp Group, advising residents on how to ask for help and including a reiteration of the rules on keeping safe and also asking residents to keep an eye on vulnerable, lonely or isolated neighbours.

The future role out of a vaccination programme was discussed and Cllr Storey advised there were no specific details to report as yet, but she was asked to keep the Parish Council informed as to any developments in this regard. Great Ashfield airfield was offered as a possible location for a mobile vaccination centre should the need arise.

- iii) Cllr Peake asked that Quiet Lanes Suffolk be included for further discussion on the next agenda. He also agreed to look into the cost of obtaining a Mapping Tool which would be useful for this purpose and could also be beneficial for other village projects.

21. Date of next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled to be held on Thursday, 10th December 2020 at 7.30pm. This will be a Zoom meeting, invitations to join to be sent out in due course.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.50pm.