

GREAT ASHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting held on Thursday, 21st January at 7.30pm

Virtual Meeting – Held via Zoom

Mr. R. Barker – Chairman*

Mr. I. Sadler*

Mrs. N. Calderbank*

Mrs D. Stick*

Mr. B. Fitch*

Mr A. Peake*

Present: All marked*

Mrs C. White took the minutes.

1. Record Councillors' apologies for absence

None received.

2. Declarations of interest

None declared.

3. Suffolk County Councillor

Cllr Storey was not in attendance. A written report for January had been circulated prior to the meeting outlining concern at the rising Covid 19 infection rates in Suffolk and urging everyone to follow the rules and take care. It was noted that the Primary School Application deadline was 15th January 2021, and that Council Budget proposals were indicative of a 4% increase in bills for 2021/22.

District Councillor

Cllr Meyer was not in attendance. A written report had been received and circulated prior to the meeting and included an update on Covid 19 in Suffolk; details of support payments for those told to self-isolate on low incomes; information relating to local restrictions and support grants for businesses and Tier 4 business grants; the draft budget for 2021/22 proposal of an increase in council tax of 1.66%; BMSDC proposals to cut their fleet carbon emissions and details of the policing precept.

Public Forum

No members of the public attended.

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

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 10th December 2020, had been previously circulated and were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

5. Quiet Lanes Initiative

Cllr Peake had circulated update notes prior to the meeting. It was confirmed that the 4 lanes submitted, Wheelers Lane / Lea Lane and School Road / Daisy Green, were set to proceed and that funding in the sum of £720 for signage had been received from Cllr Meyer's Locality Budget. The possibility of funding in the sum of £920 from Cllr Storey's Highways Budget for the posts was still outstanding, Cllr Peake and Cllr Barker to contact Cllr Storey in this connection. The next step in the

process is a letter drop to all Great Ashfield residents asking for their support, Cllr Peake had circulated a draft letter and requested that any comments be emailed to him as soon as possible.

6. Community Speedwatch Update

Cllr Stick reported that regular updates and instructions had been received from Sergeant Wright at Stowmarket as follows.

- 21 Apr 2020: No CSW roadside checks, training or meetings can take place at the current time.
- 13 May 2020: The legislation remains in place prohibiting lots of activities and requiring people to stay at home unless you're out doing one of the "permitted" activities. This was confirmed by Superintendent Paul Sharp, Strategic Lead, there can still be NO CSW activities at this time.
- 3 Jul 2020: Safe to restart sessions but restrictions in place: 3 people the required number to operate a roadside check, face masks must be worn, hand sanitisers and anti-bacterial wipes for the equipment required – we have money put aside for those - washing of jackets after wearing, or leave clothing for 72 hours between use before it is handed to someone else if you're not able to wash it, stand in a triangle to achieve the 2m distancing between us.
- Oct 2020: locality grant money received.
- 3 Nov 2020: lockdown, activities to be suspended (we hadn't managed to restart).
- 24 Dec 2020: Moving into Tier 4 from Boxing Day, confirmed that all CSW activities must stop from Boxing Day.
- 9 Jan 2021: SID data from outside Tudor Lodge submitted to Steve Wright. Up to 83% traffic passing at between 40 and 65mph. Action will be taken by the Police.
- 11 Jan 2021: confirmation that the site is still classed as red and that the camera van is still visiting regularly.

In addition, Cllr Peake has been in communication with a resident who lives on Elmswell Road near the start of the 30mph zone expressing concern and offering assistance to the CSW team.

Cllr Peake had contacted Steve Wright to ask if it is possible to mount a TVAS by a 30mph zone, and if possible whether the Parish Council would consider purchasing another one for this location. No response had yet been received from Steve Wright.

The Badwell Ash SID has been out of use for some time as they have nobody to look after it. As a result Long Thurlow Road has not been monitored for a long time.

7. Portable Space

Concerns in this connection are ongoing and Cllrs feel that the way forward is a public meeting, unfortunately due to the current pandemic this is not possible. However, the situation will continue to be monitored and kept under review and as soon as practical it was agreed that a public meeting would be convened.

8. **Planning**

- i) DC/21/00048 Application for Planning Permission – Householder Planning Application – Erection of Single Storey Rear Extension at The Old Forge, Daisy Green, Great Ashfield, IP31 3HX.

No objections were raised in connection with this planning application. It was generally agreed that the proposed extension would enhance the property and that some sympathetic modernisation was inevitable to bring it up to current standards.

Cllrs unanimously supported this application.

- ii) DC/21/00049 List Building Consent – Erection of Single Storey Rear Extension and internal alterations as detailed in the Design & Access Statement Schedule of Works at The Old Forge, Daisy Green, Great Ashfield, IP31 3HX.

No objections were raised in respect of this application. It was generally felt that the proposed works would not be detrimental to the building, and Cllrs were reassured that the proposed work and materials used would be in keeping with the character and nature of the original dwelling.

Cllrs unanimously supported this application.

- ii) Planning applications decided since the last meeting as follows:
DC/20/04747 and DC/20/04755 Householder Planning Application for the Erection of a rear two storey extension and Listed Building Consent in respect of two storey extension at Nebbits Farmhouse have both been withdrawn.
DC/20/05061 – Planning Application for the conversion & external alterations to detached garage to form holiday let at Snowdrop Cottage, Norton Road, IP31 3HU – application has been granted. It was noted that the Parish Council's comments in this connection had been acted upon.

9. **Correspondence received:**

- i) SALC email dated 22nd December 2020 “Help Shape Guidance for New Housing Developments in Suffolk” consultation ends 10th February 2021.
It was felt that any development (whatever its size) should be sympathetic to and in keeping with its environment, however, it was agreed that due to time constraints this should be considered further at the forthcoming Parish Council meeting on 28th January 2021, prior to submission of any comments.
- ii) Email regarding fund raising for Norton Pre-School – Although the Parish Council did not feel able to make any monetary contribution to this, it was agreed that an item in the Village Newsletter informing residents of this effort would be in order.
- iii) Email from SARS regarding fund raising. Council again agreed that an item in the forthcoming Village Newsletter would be appropriate to publicise this and that as and when fund raising events are allowed, SARS would be considered an appropriate cause to support.

- iv) Proposed increase in policing element of the council tax precept for the next financial year. Cllrs were generally in agreement that an increase was both necessary and probably unavoidable, particularly if it resulted in a genuine increase in police numbers.

10. Bank Account

Cllr Peake briefly updated the meeting on attempts to move the Parish Council bank accounts online. The Clerk advised that the change of business address was still the main sticking point and Cllr Peake confirmed that he would telephone the TSB Business Banking Line and would hopefully be in a position to report back at the next meeting.

11. Budget Review – to consider Parish Council Budget for 2021/22

A draft budget and budget overview had been circulated prior to the meeting, together with updated details of the change in the tax base calculator received from MSDC. In the current circumstances it was considered that a small increase in the Precept was necessary, therefore it was decided that a Precept of £2,450 be requested, as proposed by Cllr Sadler and seconded by Cllr Calderbank, all Cllrs were in agreement.

Due to Zoom restrictions there was a meeting break at 8.10pm.

The meeting resumed at 8.15pm, however, technical issues prevented Cllr Calderbank and Cllr Fitch from rejoining the meeting and they sent their apologies.

Cllr Barker, Cllr Peake, Cllr Stick & Cllr Sadler were able to rejoin and agreed that the meeting should continue and were in attendance for the remainder of the meeting.

12. To consider payment of invoices received

- i) An invoice had been received from the ICO for renewal of the Data Protection Fee in the sum of £40. The Clerk advised that there was a £5pa saving if a Direct Debit was set up. Cllrs agreed that this was a sensible option and instructed the Clerk to complete the necessary form for signature.

13. 2021 Census – 21st March 2021

The Clerk advised that communication requests had been received asking Parish Councils and Local Authorities to publicise the forthcoming Government Census. Cllr Stick advised that everyone is required by law to complete this and it was agreed that a small article should be inserted in the Village Newsletter encouraging residents to comply with this.

14. COVID-19 Reports, Updates & Vaccination Rollout

The Clerk advised that numerous communications were being received concerning the current pandemic from various official sources and asked whether Cllrs wished to receive all these reports, some of which are repetitive. The Clerk agreed to continue to monitor these, but to only forward those that notified significant changes.

Cllr Sadler advised the meeting about recent discussions with Elmswell Pharmacy concerning the possibility of using the Airfield as a vaccination centre. It was generally felt that this was unlikely to happen and that current understanding is that vaccinations would be being carried

out at Woolpit Surgery.

Cllrs expressed their concern that the nearest mass vaccination centre was likely to be Ipswich and believed that a centre closer to or in Bury St Edmunds was very necessary. The Clerk was asked to email Cllr Storey to express the Council's concern and to ask for more information about what is proposed for the mass vaccination rollout in this area. It was noted that news reports indicate that Suffolk is currently lagging somewhat behind in its vaccination programme.

15. Councillors Reports, Matters Arising and Any New Issues

- i) Due to recent heavy rains drainage problems around the village continue. However, it was noted and welcomed that the landowner had worked hard to clear the ditch along Elmswell Road from The Glen, although the drain across the road from the cul de sac remained blocked. The Clerk advised this had been reported to Highways, however, the response was that it was not currently considered serious enough to warrant action. The Clerk was asked to report the matter again.
- ii) Cllr Peake informed the meeting that a drain under the road at Daisy Green was blocked and needed rodding. Attempts had been made by residents to clear this. Further action is probably needed.
- iii) It was noted that the landowner responsible for the footpaths where spraying and narrowing had been reported at a previous meeting had made direct contact with the resident concerned and has confirmed that appropriate action will be taken to restore the footpaths as and when the weather, harvesting, and hedge cutting restrictions permit.
- iv) Cllr Stick raised the issue of the WWII book which had not yet been launched. It is very much hoped that the current ban on public gatherings would be lifted sometime this year and that it would be possible to combine the publication of the book with some sort of village celebration. It was noted that funding would be required to finance a print run, but it was hoped that, as with the previous publication, villagers would support this venture and it would make a profit.
- v) Broadband – Cllr Sadler reported that a company called 'County Broadband' were moving into the Suffolk area to provide an alternative to BT as a broadband provider. It is their intention to provide fibre connection direct to individual properties, not just to the box and therefore offering much faster download speeds. Cllr Sadler has registered an interest in this and was waiting for further information. In general, the company require a larger take up than Great Ashfield on its own would offer and this would therefore need to be carried out in-conjunction with other nearby villages, such as Badwell Ash and Wyverstone and there would probably need to be a 30% commitment to the new facility. Cllr Sadler to report back when more information is available.

15. Time and Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Thursday, 28th January 2021, at 7.30pm via Zoom, invitations to join the meeting to be sent out in due course.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.38pm.