**PGREAT ASHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday, 24th March 2022 at 7.30pm**

**In the Lord Thurlow Village Hall, Great Ashfield**

**Mr R. Barker (Chairman)\* Mr I. Sadler**

**Mr A. Peake\* Mrs D. Stick\***

**Mr. B. Fitch Mr. R. Dewhirst**

**Present: All marked\***

District Councillor Rick Meyer

Suffolk County Councillor Andy Mellen

Three members of the public attended the meeting

Mrs C White took the minutes.

Cllr Barker welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**1. Record Councillors’ apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Fitch, Cllr Sadler & Cllr Dewhirst

**2. Declarations of interest**

None.

**3. Reports**

**i) Suffolk County Councillor Andy Mellen**

Cllr Mellen arrived straight from a SCC meeting at which the war in Ukraine had been condemned and confirmed that there would be a welcome in Suffolk for refugees.

A report for March had been circulated, including details of Suffolk County Council’s intention to do more for the county’s natural environment with plans to enhance the biodiversity of at least 30% of its land by 2030; changes to the Highway Code which came into force on 29th January 2022; a Devolution Deal which will potentially give local leaders more power; full Council Budget Meeting; and a new project “Warm Homes Suffolk” offering funding and free advice.

In addition to the above Cllr Mellen raised the issue of Portable Space and the enforcement of operating within restricted hours, as contained in an earlier planning consent. It was noted that this issue affects several local parishes. This was discussed in more detail below.

**ii) District Councillor Rick Meyer**

A report for March had been circulated prior to the meeting and included details of the following: MSDC has frozen its element of the council tax for this year; leaders of BMSDC welcomed the news that Suffolk was one of 9 counties invited to negotiate a new devolution deal; details of a new Digital Skills Programme for businesses; a bigger and better library for Needham Market; additional funding to support rough sleepers; reminder about Empty Homes Renovation Loan; 9 new affordable homes in Botesdale for local residents; school’s out activities for half term; details of council tax energy rebate; reminder that the Boundary Commission Review consultation deadline for comments is 4th April 2022.

Cllr Meyer advised the PC about the new Shepherds Grove development. Details of the recently held meeting had previously been circulated. The meeting was to present the developer’s latest proposals, with an actual planning application to be submitted in late summer. Great Ashfield would not be a consultee, although there would be a public consultation meeting once an application had been submitted and anyone would be permitted to put forward comments. Cllr Meyer also advised that there would be no Section 106 money for local parishes, it is not required as this is a commercial development, although there is expected to be a new roundabout on the A143. The Parish Council asked Cllr Meyer to keep them informed of any developments.

**iii) Public Forum**

Three members of the public were in attendance. Queries and discussions predominantly related to traffic issues, in particular Portable Space and HGVs, speeding on School Road and whether the Quiet Lanes designation would result in a speed limit? These issues were discussed in more detail below.

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

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 20th January 2022, had previously been circulated and were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

The minutes of a Planning Meeting held on Thursday, 3rd March 2022, had previously been circulated and were accepted as true record of the meeting.

**5. Traffic Issues**

**i) Portable Space Update**

 A report had been received from the MD of Portable Space and circulated prior to the meeting. There was no significant progress to report.

 The issue of restricted operating hours and potential enforcement action was considered. A discussion with the Enforcement Officer had raised several issues that were of concern. It was agreed that Cllr Meyer would contact senior planning officials with a view to ensuring that Great Ashfield Parish Council be consulted on any future developments in this connection. In addition, it was reported that the Norfolk/Suffolk Police Dispensation scheme states that HGV’s ‘shall not run half an hour before sunrise and half an hour after dark’ and there is clear evidence that these rules are being broken. This had been reported to the Commercial Vehicle Unit.

 In the meantime, monitoring and recording of HGV vehicle movements would continue.

**ii) Speeding/Traffic Calming/Solar Powered SID**

It was confirmed that the new Solar Powered SID had been delivered on Wednesday, 23rd March 2022, and that the contractors had until 14th April 2022 for the installation of the new pole.

 A Great Ashfield resident had contacted the Parish Council offering to purchase a second solar powered SID device if a suitable location at the other end of the village could be agreed. The Clerk was currently liaising with the resident about making an application for another pole.

 The Clerk was asked to contact the ANPR scheme again to query whether and/or when Great Ashfield might be included in this.

 **Post Meeting Note:**

 In response to queries raised at the previous meeting, an email from the Community Engineer had been circulated clarifying the cost of the traffic survey and advising that solar powered streetlighting was impractical and that it is current Suffolk Highways Policy not to allow new installations of non-illuminated physical traffic calming.

**iii) Community Speedwatch**

 It was reported that during February and March 10 one-hour sessions had been held on Elmswell Road and 109 vehicles had been reported to the police for speeding.

 For the month of January, the police had sent out 106 letters as a direct result of speedwatch sessions, which means that they are following up most reported vehicles. It is of great concern that speeds being recorded are significantly increasing with many vehicles now recording speeds in the late 40s or even 50s in a 30mph zone.

 Grateful thanks go to PC Henriksen who has joined the team on occasions to act as both a deterrent and because he is able to stop and speak to offending drivers, his support has been and continues to be invaluable.

**6. Quiet Lanes – progress**

It was reported that the signs had now been collected for the PC to put up themselves. Unfortunately, some of the signs needed changing, with the next collection day being 31st March 2022. A minimum of 4 volunteers would then be required to put them up, and ideally, they needed to be installed before the end of April.

It was queried whether the QL scheme would result in a speed limit on the designated lanes, although this was not in current plans, it was hoped that this might be the ultimate goal.

**7. Dog Fouling & Dog Bins**

An email request had been received from a resident of another parish requesting the installation of a dog bin at the end of the footpath from Long Thurlow near Braziers Lane. It was agreed that parish boundaries need to be checked to make sure that the bin would be in Great Ashfield and whether it would be possible to re-site one of the bins from Hantons Lane. Further consideration of this to be put on the agenda of the next meeting.

**8. Planning Applications**

i) DC/22/01353 – Full Planning Application: Construction of Vehicular Access to Serve Holiday

 Let at Snowdrop Cottage, Norton Road, Great Ashfield IP31 3HJ.

 Cllrs queried the need for this separate access on the basis that the holiday let is currently linked to the house, that there is ample available space already and that the property is to continue as a holiday let. There was also disappointment that the newly planted hedge was to be removed.

 The Council had no further comments or objections.

ii) No planning applications had been decided since the previous meeting.

**9. Councillor Vacancy**

Notice of the Councillor Vacancy had been posted and as no request for an election had

been received, the Parish Council could now fill the vacancy by co-option. A local resident

had been approached in this regard.

**10. Finance Matters**

i) An update of the Parish Council’s bank balances had been circulated prior to the meeting, as follows:

**Bank balances on 21st March 2022**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Current Account  | Balance at 4th January 2022 | **£9,446.91** |
| Less payments | ICO – Data ProtectionProfile Business Supplies | -£35.00-£35.00 |
| Receipts | Newsletter Sponsorship | £15.00 |
| **Balance at 20th March 2022** |  | **£9,391.91** |
|  |  |  |
| **Deposit Account Balance** |  | **£1,001.18** |
|  |  |  |
| **Total**  |  | **£10,393.09** |
|  |  |  |

ii) Receipts:

Newsletter Sponsorship £15.00

iii) Invoices for Payment:

Parish Clerk Salary of £350.00, all Cllrs agreed this payment could be made online.

 Admin Expenses of £23.85, all Cllrs agreed this payment could be made online.

 ElanCity Invoice of £2,362.82, all Cllrs agreed payment of this invoice could be made online by the due date of 21st April 2022.

iv) Notes:

The current account balance includes the following:

 Locality Grant Awards of £720.00 and £920.00 for the signs and poles in connection with the Quiet Lanes.

 Locality Grant Awards of £750.00 and £1,000.00 towards the cost of the new solar powered SID.

 Locality Grant Award of £332.00 towards the village sign refurbishment cost.

 CIL Grant in the sum of £1,689.65.

**11. Village Sign Repairs/Refurbishment**

The Chairman advised that the village sign had now been cleaned up and reinstated on its plinth in the middle of the village. Grateful thanks were extended to the very generous village residents who donated the wood for the new post and carried out the work. Whilst the work was being carried out another resident offered the services of his sign painter at a much more reasonable price than the quotation recently received. It was agreed that this offer would be reconsidered in the Autumn. It was also noted that some of the bricks in the plinth were damaged and that these would be replaced with flints over the summer. It was also hoped that the trench around the sign would soon be filled in.

**12. Queens Platinum Jubilee & Festival of Suffolk**

The lighting of a beacon and a village event were briefly discussed. It was agreed that this matter should be placed on the agenda for the next meeting. The Clerk to forward some more detailed information about lighting a beacon prior to this.

Tree planting to commemorate the Jubilee was still under consideration if a suitable location could be found. Although there appeared to be some areas around the village that might be appropriate, some locations are not suitable due to drainage / services issues. It was suggested that it may be possible to plant some trees along Elmswell Road or possibly at the bottom of Hollands Hill along Westley Way, although some local landowners were already involved in planting additional trees.

**13. Correspondence received**

i) Email 28/01/22 – Streetlight Failure on School Road – cost of replacement, circulated and contents noted. Subsequently it was noted that whilst there had been a brief failure, this light was now operating again without any action being required.

ii) Email 25/02/22 – Jaynic Proposals for Shepherds Grove Site, Stanton attaching a copy of the presentation to the meeting on 24th February 2022. This had been circulated and noted.

iii) Email 05/03/22 – Streetlighting Costs – this advised streetlighting operating and maintenance costs for the year to 31st March 2022. Invoice to be forwarded shortly. Email had been circulated.

iv) Email 16/03/22 – Queries raised by Rick Meyer regarding Shepherds Grove Development, Stanton – circulated and contents noted.

**14. Councillors Reports, Matters Arising and Any New Issues**

There were no new issues raised. Items for the next Agenda are as noted in the minutes above.

**15. Time and Date of the Next Meeting**

 The next meeting is scheduled to be held on Thursday, 19th May 2022 in the Lord Thurlow Village Hall.

 The Annual Parish Meeting will commence at 7.00pm followed by the Parish Council AGM at 7.30pm.

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 8.30pm.