

NOWTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 2nd December 2020
At 7.30 p.m. via Zoom/Conference Call

Present: Councillor - Mrs Carol Perry (Chairman)
Councillor - Mr David Flatt
Councillor - Mr Jon Green
Councillor - Mr Mike May
Parish Clerk - Mrs Pauline Stoddart

Prior to the meeting commencing, 10 Minute Public Forum – one member of the public and Cllr. Karen Soons was present.

1. Apologies for Absence – none, all present.

2. Declarations of Interest – none.

The meeting was adjourned for Cllr. Soons's report. The November and December newsletters had been previously circulated to Councillors. Cllr. Soons highlighted several points within the newsletters, where further detail could be found, including:

- A synopsis about going into Tier 2, from a Suffolk perspective.
- Construction of Lowestoft's Gull Wing Bridge has received final approval of the scheme by the Government.
- An initial report was published by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) on the support for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Call for contributions to new *Pride in Suffolk's Past* exhibition; the next stage in the project was a new exhibition setting out to discover and share the hidden stories of the LGBT people in Suffolk's past, while also collecting stories from the community today.
- Suffolk's Public Sector Leaders (SPSL) continued to pay close attention to progress as Brexit approaches. SPSL have agreed to invest £490,000 over the next three years to support the continued strategic growth of Suffolk's economy and business community, and to support future local and regional business interests.
- Cllr. Soons highlighted the STARS accreditation that is awarded to business, education or community settings that actively brings about a positive change in travel behaviour. She highlighted the involvement of local schools and encouraged more participation.

Cllr. May raised the issue of the stolen post box at High Green and the lack of help locally from Royal Mail. Cllr. Soons requested that the correspondence received by Cllr. May be sent to her and she would share this with Jo Churchill MP in an effort to assist. **Action: Cllr. May**

The Chairman commented on the community efforts, such as Home but not Alone, and all the other ways that people had come together to help each other during the pandemic and praised West Suffolk Council for its work; she was confident that this spirit of support would continue going forward.

Cllr. Soons reported that the Council was trying to put together a group of volunteers to assist people who may be unfamiliar with accessing services online. Volunteers would be able to work from home and the help offered might involve, for instance, helping someone access Zoom, in order to stay in contact with others. Cllr. Soons asked if anyone was interested in this to contact her and she would pass full details on. The parishioner present kindly offered the potential loan of tablets, to villagers who had broadband but were without IT equipment, in

order to help keep people connected in these difficult times. The Chairman and Cllr. Soons thanked the parishioner for his generous offer which was noted.

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Soons for her attendance after which she left the meeting.

3. Approval of the draft Minutes from the Parish Council meeting held on 21st October 2020 – approved as a true and accurate record. Proposed by Cllr. Green, seconded by Cllr. May. The minutes would be signed by the Chairman when the Parish Council next physically met.

4. Matters arising from the Minutes of 21st October meeting –

4.1 Speeding – the Chairman advised that, as per an email from Suffolk Police of the 4th November, the requested traffic data survey would be conducted in approximately eight weeks. A Speed Data Radar would be deployed for seven days to record traffic and once the data had been collected it would be analysed and, if it met the criteria, the Police would look to establish an enforcement site for a mobile camera. In the meantime, a PCSO had looked at the location and believes it might be suitable for hand held speed monitoring devices.

4.2 Bins, litter/dog waste - the Chairman had contacted the Head Ranger of Nowton Park and he was sympathetic with the request for additional general and dog waste bins at the Oakes end of Nowton Park, the lack of which he thought may be due to the difficulty of vehicular access. He would give his support and make the request to WSC.

5. Co-option of Parish Councillor – The Chairman advised that two expressions of interest had been received, resulting in one application, from Mr Henry Hopking. Councillors had already been given the opportunity to study the application and when the vote was taken it was unanimous in favour of co-opting Mr Hopking as a Parish Councillor.

The Chairman explained that signing of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office by Mr Hopking required witnessing and she would liaise with him in this regard. The Clerk would email Mr Hopking the required Declaration of Acceptance of Office, the Register of Members' Interests, plus a copy of the current Code of Conduct. **Action: Clerk/Chairman**

6. Annual Risk Assessment of Financial Management - with the amendment to record Legal Powers to a Medium risk factor the paper was proposed by Cllr. Green, seconded by Cllr. May and duly approved.

7. Annual Review of the effectiveness and systems of Internal Audit – proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr. May and duly approved.

8. Annual Review of Internal Audit – proposed by Cllr. Green, seconded by the Chairman and duly approved.

9. Statement of intent on internal control – proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr. Green and duly approved.

10. Annual Review of the Assets Register – with the amendment to record that the depreciation of the Council owned laptop be made at the date of the Annual Review, the paper was proposed by Cllr. Green, seconded by Cllr. May and duly approved.

11. Annual Appraisal of Clerk and Salary, review of Contract of Employment - it was noted that the Clerk's annual salary had been increased to £1,300 from the 1st April 2020.

No issues were raised as to the Clerk's performance of her duties and the Chairman thanked the Clerk for her work during the past year.

12. Finance – Account balances: Community £751.62; Business Premium £5,699.86.
Total: £6,451.48.

Five cheques were approved:

100365 One Suffolk, website hosting (reimbursement to Clerk) £60.00
100366 Clerk, quarterly salary Oct/Nov/Dec. £260.00
100367 HMRC, Tax re Clerk's salary £65.00
100368 Ink, stationery, postage stamps (reimbursement to Clerk) £45.17
100369 Nowton Village Hall, recycling payment from WSC £377.04

12.1 Annual reappointment of Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) – the Clerk was the present RFO and was agreeable to continue in that role. Proposed by Cllr. Green, Seconded by Cllr. May and duly reappointed.

13. Planning - no planning applications had been received.

7.1 West Suffolk Local Plan, consultation 13 October – 22 December 2020. Details of the online consultation system and documents for studying had been previously circulated to Councillors. The Chairman outlined the questions to consider in relation to the response to the consultation from the Parish Council.

The aim of the Local Plan was to build 16,000 houses by 2040; 13,400 plots/spaces had already been allocated, leaving 2,600 to find. The Chairman informed that the requirement was to build 800 per annum; she noted that between 2011 and 2017 St. Edmundsbury and Forest Heath Councils combined had built an average of 575 homes per year.

Councillors discussed the local key issues and considerations. The Clerk was instructed to draft a response for approval, based on the following comments: **Action: Clerk**

- Focus the growth towards towns, which already have the infrastructure in place, with recognition of other areas as well, as people do like to live in the country, but the emphasis must be to get the infrastructure right.
- Priorities need to be better transport links and a wider infrastructure – if the population is being increased there needs to be proper access for that population to community services, health care, etc.
- There needs to be building for purpose, i.e. there must be employment opportunities, within a reasonable commute or with good transport links.
- Public transport – Councillors felt there was a distinct lack of public transport in Suffolk, rather than a 'perceived' lack.

14. Road Safety, Crime/Public Nuisance – Cllr. Flatt reported that two cars had frequently arrived at around 8.45pm and remained parked beside the village hall/recycling bins for a period of time. Cllr. May would alert the Safer Neighbourhood Watch Area B Network Coordinator of this. **Action: Cllr. May**

15. Correspondence – The Clerk advised that a copy of *Clerks & Councillors Direct*, plus a Christmas card, addressed to the Parish Council from the Chair of West Suffolk Council, had been received.

16. Next Meeting Date – Wednesday 13th January 2021, 7.30 p.m. via Zoom or in the Village Hall, dependent upon Covid-19 guidelines. Venue to be confirmed nearer the meeting date.

Future 2021 Meeting dates – 3 March; 7 April; 12 May (APCM & APA); 7 July; 22 September; 20 October; 1 December. All dates subject to change.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting closed at 8.15 p.m.

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Signed

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Date