

BUCKLESHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes

Parish Council Meeting held at Bucklesham Village Hall at 7.00 pm on Thursday, 5th March 2020

Present

Cllr Ruth Johnson (Chair)
Cllr Rhea Gardener
Cllr Evelyn Bloomfield
Cllr David Brinkley
Cllr Heather Owen
Cllr Clive Lenton
Cllr M Allen East Suffolk
Cllr R Kerry
Mrs A Buggs Clerk

15.20 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Georgina Burgess.

16.20 Declaration of interest

None

17.20 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the Thursday, 2nd January 2020 were approved as being a true record and signed by the Chairman.

18.20 Matters arising from the minutes

04.20 Matters arising from the minutes

Plum Hedge

It was reported that the plum hedge had been cut.

Pavement Uplift – Levington Lane Bucklesham

Although Suffolk County Council had acknowledged receipt of the hazard they had not carried out any work. **Action: Clerk**

95.19 Speeding Signs

No feedback from Suffolk County Council Highways. Clerk to follow up. **Action: Clerk**

The meeting was adjourned to receive reports from:

Cllr Patricia O'brien – Suffolk County Council

On 13th February 2020 Suffolk County Council approved its annual budget and in 2020/2021, the budget will rise to £556million which represents an increase of £37m (7.1%) from 2019/2020. It is necessary to note that this year's budget is based on a 12-month financial settlement from government, rather than the three or four year agreement which is usually offered.

Whilst the need to maintain funding for key services is continued, the Council will invest an additional £3.5m into two one-year programmes, the Suffolk 2020 fund (£3m) and a highways investment fund (£500k).

The Suffolk 2020 fund will be used for projects that can deliver a real difference for local communities. The intention is to adopt good ideas covering more than one area of Suffolk, rather than having a number of small-scale projects. To qualify for the fund, projects must link to one of the following themes: carbon reduction; carbon offset, road safety, natural environment; built environment, innovation; and use of technology.

The £500k highways investment fund will focus on improving the safety of pupils and parents travelling to and from school, by refreshing lines and cleaning and repairing signs in and around school zones.

Suffolk County Council is celebrating Apprenticeship Week with the launch of a new website to support apprenticeship growth in the country. The new online hub has been made possible by a successful bid for £500,000 from the European Social Fund. Together with match funding from Suffolk County Council, it will also support building a new team to help small and medium sized businesses to navigate how apprenticeship work.

Apprenticeships Suffolk aims to promote the growth of apprenticeships by providing links to impartial advice, information and guidance. The website will also provide regular news updates and details of the latest apprenticeship opportunities.

New street lighting is proposed in order to reduce the county's carbon footprint. The Council owns and maintains over 60,000 streetlights. In 2010 the Council took numerous steps to help reduce both the energy costs and carbon footprint of its lighting stock. This included the introduction of part night lighting arrangements and conversion to LED for those lighting units that were consuming the highest level of energy. The project will be completed in the Autumn of 2022.

In an effort to reduce the amount of plastic used in Suffolk, The Suffolk Waste Partnership has launched a handy online directory which lists the shops, businesses or charities that host refill points for items such as cleaning products and toiletries plus dried foods, such as rice or oats and loose-leaf tea and chocolate. At present there are 22 organisations that stock refills, however businesses are being urged to consider introducing similar schemes.

In commemoration of the 75th anniversary of VE and VJ days Suffolk Highways has confirmed it will waive road closure application fees and help support communities with event traffic management.

Cllr Richard Kerry – District Councillor / Cllr Mellisa Allen – District Councillor

In October 2018 the figures for the number of empty properties in the old Waveney area was 1094 and for the Suffolk Coastal area it was 1184. The figures for East Suffolk for October 2019 show a small reduction from 2018. Irrespective of this, the number of empty properties in the District remains a concern for the team.

There are many reasons that properties are empty: some are being renovated; some are for sale or for let; some are the subject of planning applications (or appeals) and some are in the hands of executors following the death of the owner. It is noted that the overall housing stock in the District rose by a significant amount in 2018 and with not all new properties selling immediately, this will have an impact on the numbers of empty properties.

Every year a letter is sent to the owner of every property that has been empty for 6 months or more. This provides an opportunity for owners to update the council on whether it is still empty and if so, what the intentions are for it and also for the Council to let owners know how the Council can help them to return the property to use. A review of the information provided in 2011 found that just over a quarter of the properties were being renovated, a fifth were for sale or had just been sold and nearly a third were occupied either as a permanent residence or a holiday home.

There are however many properties where the owner has no firm proposals for their future use, and it is these where the team concentrate their efforts. There are a number of ways the Council can help an owner return a property to use: house renovation grants are available for essential works; private sector leasing is available for owners who want to let but do not want to deal with the day to day management and we can help owners to sell or to let if this is their preference. The team has had great success with two very long-term properties in Felixstowe (and one further north in the District) which were sold at auction last year and are now being renovated ready for re-occupation. A further property is going to auction imminently as a result of action by the Council Tax and legal teams; this property would undoubtedly have remained empty for the foreseeable future were it not for their intervention. Reduced auction fees are available to our empty homeowners and the team will help with every stage of the process if needed, including arranging for the garden and house to be cleared if necessary.

Financial disincentives are in place for the owners of properties that have been empty longer than 2 years, with the Council Tax payable on these being 200% rising to 300% if they are still empty after 5 years. The Council can also look at other enforcement options such as compulsory purchase though this would only be looked at as a last resort.

Both Cllr M Allen and Cllr R Kerry both reported that they had funds available from their respective Enabling Budgets. Councillors asked whether money could be made available for CCTV Signs. It was agreed that the Clerk would complete the form and send to Cllr M Allen. **Action: Clerk**

The meeting was reconvened

19.20 Co-option of Parish Councillor

The Clerk reported that she had received an application from Clive Lenton to join the Parish Council as a councillor for Bucklesham Parish. Cllr Johnson proposed, seconded Cllr Bloomfield that Clive Lenton be appointed as a councillor for Bucklesham – all in favour. **Action: Clerk**

20.19 Planning

None

21.20 Report by the Community Council

Cllr Johnson reported that the Community Council had supported the Knit & Natter Group by paying for the cost of the Village Hall for a year (£600.00). The Community Council have applied for a grant

from the Food and Drink Awards which is to sponsorship the Village Produce Show and the Village Lunch Club. Cllr Owen has completed the accounts and these have been sent to the Charity Commission.

22.20 Clerk's Report

The purpose of this report is to update members on outstanding issues, items received after the deadline for agenda items, correspondence and action taken by the Clerk.

Electronic Planning Applications

From 1st April 2020 East Suffolk Council will be consulting on planning applications electronically only.

Parish Councils are required to register for a public access account using a Parish generic email address only. I will set up a generic email account for Bucklesham and all planning applications will be sent to that account.

Unless absolutely crucial I will only print hard copies if the Parish Council agrees due to the cost implications and the printing of maps.

Information from SALC:

EU citizens – eligibility to stand and vote in local elections?

A few of you have asked us about the ability of EU citizens to stand as councillors and vote in local government elections post the UK leaving the EU on 31 January. Essentially Brexit does not change anything. EU citizens remain "citizens of the Union" who are qualified to be elected and serve as local councillors (s.79 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972) and they also remain entitled to vote in local government elections (s,2 (1) of the Representation of the People Act 1983).

23.20 To discuss the playing field

a. To consider the purchase of CCTV Signs and Equipment

Cllr Johnson reported incidents of vandalism had occurred on the playing field; an unknown person had put human excreta on the children's slide and the lock on the container had been smashed and unknown people had entered the container and damaged the football nets.

Following discussion Cllr Brinkley proposed, seconded Cllr Owen that the Parish Council should purchase CCTV Signs – all in favour. **Action: Clerk**

b. To consider/agree the new rates for grass cutting

The Clerk reported that she had been notified of an increase in the cost of grass cutting from Suffolk Norse from £882.00 to £908.45 plus VAT. It was agreed that the new rates should be approved. **Action: Clerk**

24.20 To discuss erecting no littering signs in Nacton Lane

Following discussions during the Question Time during the January Parish Council Meeting we discussed littering and fly tipping on Nacton Road. It was agreed that the Parish Council would purchase CCTV signs. **Action: Clerk**

25.20 To approve the Parish Council's Standing Orders and Procedures

It was proposed by Cllr Bloomfield seconded Cllr Gardener that the following Standing Orders should be accepted – agreed. **Action: Clerk**

Code of Conduct
Freedom of Information
Asset Register
Grant Policy
Complaints Procedure
Financial Regulations
Internal Audit Procedure
Standing Orders
Information available from Bucklesham Parish Council under the Model Publication Scheme
Risk Assessment

25.20 Finance

Receipts

None

Payments (to be approved this meeting)

Clerk's Salary & Expenses January 2020	£200
Clerk's Salary & Expenses February 2020	£226.16
Norse – Grass Cutting	£88.80
ICO – Data Protection Fee	£40.00
Foxhall & Bucklesham Village Hall – Hire of Hall	£75.00

Bank Balances

Current Account	£15,174.61
Deposit Account	£4,513.37

Cllr Johnson proposed, seconded Cllr Bloomfield seconded that the above expenditure is approved – all in favour. **Action: Clerk**

Appointment of Internal Audit for 2019/2020

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council should minute the appointment of the Internal Auditor each year. It was proposed by Cllr Bloomfield seconded Cllr Owen that Mr Trevor Brown should be appointed – agreed. **Action: Clerk**

26.20 General Matters

- a. Cllr Gardener reported that she had attended the course on the use of CIL receipts. Cllr Gardener gave examples of what the CIL receipts could be used for, solar panels on the village hall roof, dementia garden, electric charging points for electric cars at the Village Hall.
- b. It was reported that the Annual Litter Pick would take place on the 4th April 2020. Cllr Johnson said she would put a note in the Bugle to see if anybody would like to take part.
Action: Cllr Johnson

- c. Cllr Bloomfield stated that the footpath at the entrance to Levington Lane has still not been repaired. **Action: Clerk**
- d. Cllr Lenton reported that the hedges adjacent to properties in St Mary's Park needed to be trimmed. It was agreed that the Clerk should write to residents involved. **Action: Clerk**

27.20 Date of next meeting

Thursday, 30th April 2020

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.25 pm.

QUESTION TIME

Signed..... Date

Angie Buggs
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