

BRANDESTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held at the Village Hall on Tuesday, 24 March 2015

Present

Councillors D Risk (Chairman), J Fielder (JF), P Summers (PS), S Thurlow (ST) and H Saxton (HS)
PCSOs C Hassler and K Mann
Parish Clerk and RFO, A M Hounsell (AMH)
Parishioners Mr and Mrs P Kirton and Mrs M Mitson Woods

1-1415/7 – Open Discussion with Members of the Public

The council expressed their disappointment at the poor standard of the road repairs in Ipswich Lane.

2-1415/7 – Reports from Cty Cllr P Bellfield, Dist Cllr B Snell and PCSO C Hassler

Dist Cllr Snell reported as follows :-

1. SCDC accommodation review - update

The new location of SCDC's HQ is part of the former Girdlestons site in Melton (opposite the station), where purpose-built offices of the 21st century should be ready for occupation late in 2016. The land has been purchased by the council from Riduna Holdings in a deal that will save £200K running costs per year, rising to £500K a year in the longer term. The existing site in Woodbridge has been put on the market.

2. Council Tax 2015/16

SCDC's share of Council Tax is to be frozen for the fifth consecutive year, as your district council continues to drive down costs without any cut in front-line services and without borrowing any money (even for its impending office move). The year's cost budget at £12m has been further reduced by 1.3%, despite a drop in government grant of more than £3m since 2010. We have achieved this by cutting costs by more than £10m since 2010, without increasing Council tax, through such programmes as our joint services programme with Waveney (reducing our combined manpower by 40% since 2008) and £1.7m savings from our contract with Norse SCS Services. Your district council retains the strongest Local Authority economy in the county, with unemployment having reduced over the past three years from 2.1% to 0.7%, although this belies an underlying problem of a shortage of technically skilled workers which companies like BT are trying to alleviate by taking on and training 1,000 new technical staff at Martlesham.

There remains a budget gap of £2.71 over the next four years, which we expect to fill by even more operating efficiencies, £500,000 a year from a new contract for our Leisure Services partner and £8 million savings over 20 years from the office relocation, including a reduction in the number of councillors from 54 to 44..

Notwithstanding the need for such economies, the council agreed last week to adopt from 1 April 2015 the living wage for its direct employees, in recognition of their hard work and dedication. Although only expected to cost about £10K a year, it could have a big impact on the lives of some of our lower paid employees.

3. Recycling.

SCDC continues to meet its recycling target, with 58% of household recycled, leaving only 274kg residual water per household – the best performance of any local authority in Suffolk and in the top 20 nationally.

4. Planning Matters

(a) Site specific allocations consultation update. The Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies eleven weeks' consultation and drop in sessions ended recently. Officers are now busy examining the responses for a report in June/July 2016 on those preferred sites that will be subject to further public consultation at the end of this year. There will follow an examination by a planning inspector, with the target of putting the final recommended version to full council in July 2016.

(b) Neighbourhood Plans. Having been approved by a Planning Inspector, the Rendlesham Plan was endorsed by 97% of a turnout of 47% of the electorate and "made" by the full District Council on 19 March. It will now be used to help decide planning applications in its area. Six other areas are in various stages of developing their own plans – Framlingham, Great Bealings, Leiston, Melton, Martlesham & Woodbridge, and Wenhaston with Mells.

(c) C.I.L. Our plans form the new levy, which will replace negotiated sums of money embraced in Section 106 agreements, were presented to a Planning Inspector on 5 December, who appointed an Examiner whose one day public hearing took place on Thursday 19 March (outcome awaited). Details on web site.

(d) Affordable homes. We expect to deliver 256 over three years:

Delivered Oct-Dec 2014	13
To be delivered Jan-Mar 2015	26

5. NANT legal action

On 17 February 2015 The Court of Appeal finally dismissed the latest appeal by NANT, which was holding up progress on our Local Plan, and awarded costs to SCDC (though, unfortunately, they are capped by European legislation to £10,000 in cases of challenge on environmental grounds). NANT has now appealed to the Supreme Court, which will impose yet another delay in the Local Plan process.

6. Yet more benefit fraud

In our continuing "zero tolerance" drive against benefit fraud, a man from Leiston pleaded guilty on 17 Feb to claiming housing benefit, council tax benefit and council tax reduction to which he was not entitled amounting to £18,000. Apart from having to repay it, he earned a 12-months suspended sentence and a criminal record.

7. Spa Theatre

A deal is finally expected to be in place on 15 May for the re-opening of the theatre and restaurant, following completion of the regeneration of the sea front gardens in Felixstowe.

8. Car parking grace period

SCDC already grants a 10-minute grace period in its council operated car parks, which it has just been announced will become a legal norm nationwide. (This only applies to simple time related offences.)

9. New ward boundaries.

These will be in place for the elections on 7 May 2015.

JF commented on the anomaly of the planning application of Hopkins Homes for Framlingham being amended to remove the affordable homes and yet two other very large applications in Framlingham stated that there was a strong need for affordables and these were included in their plans.

PCSO Hassler reported that there has been two reported crimes in Brandeston for the period 01 January 2015 to 28 February 2015. These were 1 x Burglary - other building occurred on/between 5-6/01//2015 and 1 x Theft – from a Motor Vehicle occurred on/between 5-6/01//2015

Police Connect

For those of you that haven't signed up for the New Police Connect yet, please don't forget about it!

This is replacing Police Direct.

The service is free, easy to use and is proving to be a very valuable policing tool.

The service doesn't just assist us it also benefits you. You will receive regular updates either via text, email or landline letting you know what is happening in your area.

Leaflets are available at all police stations or visit our website suffolk.police.uk/policeconnect

CONTACTING THE POLICE

YOUR LOCAL OFFICERS ARE:

PC 1410 BURT

PCSO 3034 HASSLER

PCSO 3051 MANN

PCSO 3195 HINTON

In an emergency always dial 999

To report a crime, speak to your local officers or leave a message, please dial **101**

Any member of the team can be contacted at FRAMLINGHAM.SNT@SUFFOLK.PNN.POLICE.UK

Our office phone number is 01986 835497 (answer phone).

Check the website www.suffolk.police.uk for our engagements.

Our website as detailed below also has an email link to contact us.

Please also have a look at the Suffolk Constabulary Website, which can offer further help and advice.

To find the Framlingham and Saxmundham safer neighbourhood team website please see www.safersuffolk.org.uk

3-1415/7 - Chairman's Welcome, Formal Meeting Opening and Acceptance of Apologies for Absence

The Chairman formally opened the meeting and welcomed Councillors and others. He advised of apologies from Cllr Bellfield, Dist Cllr Snell and Cllr W Elson

4-1414/7 - To Receive Councillors' Declaration of Interest in Agenda Items

ST declared interest in agenda item 10 (i) and 10 (iii)

5-1415/7 - Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 27 January 2015 were signed as a true record

6-1415/7 - Matters arising from previous minutes

(i) Update on Anglian Water Sewage Works Enhancement (previous minute 6-1415/6 (i))

The clerk advised of the update received from Anglian Water on 16 March 2015 as follows :-

“The Drilling machine broke down middle of last week, the parts of the engine was ordered from America and fixed last Friday pm. All the sewers in Phase 2 complete, reinstating the Road tomorrow. Unfortunately we did send letters out middle of last week, with the update that the Phase 3 closure will commence today, but unfortunately because of the machine break down, It will commence this Wednesday morning, from Framlingham Road Kettleburgh to Kettleburgh Road Framlingham. During this period a traffic diversion route will be in place following Victoria Mill Road to Easton Road in Framlingham, and Framlingham Road in Easton to Easton Road in Kettleburgh.

(ii) Local Plan Consultations (previous minute 6-1415/6 (ii))

The clerk confirmed that he had advised the views of the council as recorded in the minutes of the meeting of 27 January 2015

(iii) Environment Agency proposal to remove weir boards on the River Deben (previous minute 6-1415/6 (iv))

JF reported that Lord Cunliffe had received a request for temporary storage on his land of 500 tonnes of gravel to be used in the intended works. This is subject to negotiation. This gravel is an essential part of the scheme.

(iv) Broadband Speed in Brandeston (previous minute 6-1415/6 (v))

JF advised that all the input received from parishioners had been collated and parishioner Mr Terry Robinson had prepared a draft email to Suffolk Better Broadband as follows :-

“Since receiving your email in November we have surveyed broadband speeds in the Village under the auspices of the Parish Council. While the majority of residents seem to be getting download speeds of just over 2 Mbps (at least for most of the time) perhaps 20% of households are below this with some getting much less than 1 Mbps. A major additional problem is that a number of residents run small businesses from their homes and are severely hampered by upload speeds which are at best about 350 Kbps. You will appreciate that this means it takes them a very long time to send out largish files containing photographic material etc.

From your email it seems that we may have a choice: either, to put up with the present slow speeds for a year or so but get superfast fibre optic broadband early in the second contract period starting late 2015; or, to get a partial improvement well before the end of this year using satellite technology but then have to wait longer for superfast broadband later in the second contract period.

In order for us to decide on our preferences, and whether or not to pursue matters through the political channels, I should be grateful for as precise an indication as possible of timescale under the two alternatives. That is, if we opt to wait until superfast broadband when will we get it – last quarter of 2015? first quarter of 2016? Or, if we opt for the satellite solution, when in 2015 will we get that and how long then will we have to wait for superfast broadband? It would also be useful to know what sort of download and upload speeds we might get with the satellite technology.

I look forward to your reply”

The council agreed that the preferred option would be to wait for superfast broadband but requested that the draft email be sent and the reply to be awaited.

(v) Performance of the Planning Dept at SCDC (previous minute 7-1415/6 (iii))

The clerk advised that Dist Cllr Snell had not commented on their request that he convey their strong dissatisfaction at the operation of the planning and enforcement actions of SCDC to the Officers of the District Council

The council requested that the clerk suggest to Dist Cllr Snell that there appeared to be no mention of this request in his report to this meeting.

7-1415/7 – Condition of Verge and Sign at Grass Triangle in Low Street

The clerk advised that he had received an email from Parishioner Mrs Jane Mitchell as follows :-

“You may have noticed that the tenants who have just moved out of September or October or Vicarage Cottage (I get them muddled up!) regularly parked a van on the triangle opposite, where the small oak tree and dodgy signpost reside. This has resulted in significant damage to verge on the westerly side of the triangle which I feel warrants an approach to the landlord [Gerald] Mike Ford - you may well know him, think he lives in Cretingham, not sure, but he has some connection to golf club.

While we are on subject, that decrepit signpost is dreadful and does nothing for the look of the village in my opinion. There are nicer designs available now, such as the one on Earl Soham green which could be considered?

Might the Parish Council pick these issues up please?”

The council considered it inappropriate to approach the landlord of the former tenant on this issue but noted there were a number of other verges, roadworks and signs that required attention and the clerk was instructed to advise these to SCC, Highways Dept. and request their attention :-

Friday Street verges after recent traffic diversion

Verges at the triangle (junction Old Maids Lane and Low Street)

Between Potash Bridge and Bridge Farm (Cretingham Road, Brandeston)

Signposts – the following require repair/replacement – Triangle (junction Old Maids Lane and Low Street), Triangle (Bridge Farm, Friday Street), Off Friday Street at Ipswich Lane and against the hedge east of the church (cycle route sign)

In addition to the above, the extended single white lines opposite the Village Hall, which have been requested a number of times are still not provided.

8-1415/7 –To receive advice from the Clerk of current planning matters

The clerk confirmed that he had advised their responses to SCDC on planning applications DC/15/0609 (Replace windows at 37-38 The Street), DC/15/0577 (Tree Order 45 The Street) and DC/15/0216 (Extension at Inchmahome, Riggle Street). The latter application has been approved although there are no details of any conditions which may have been imposed on the CDC website.

There were no other planning matters to consider.

9-1415/7 - Report from Responsible Finance Officer (The Clerk)

The RFO presented the current financial position with the main account holding £3,301.01 and the 100+ account £943.11 (both after accruals for future income and approved expenditure). The 100+ account includes all the new subscriptions paid by cheque and cash for new subscriptions. Subscriptions paid by standing order will be additional and are expected to amount to approximately £660.

The clerk also advised that the account papers for the annual review of accounts for the year ending 31 March 2015 had been received from the external auditors. These require a return date for the annual return to the auditors of 09 June 2015

10-1415/7 - Financial Matters

The council agreed payments as follows :-

- (i) £15.00 to Brandeston VH&RG for room hire for the next council meetings on dates to be agreed (see agenda item 14).
- (ii) £200 (maximum) for grass cutting at the village triangle
- (iii) to the clerk for distribution as prizes for the 100+ club for 2015-2016 as follows : £140 (payable 01 April 2015) and further payments of £140 (payable 01 August 2015), £185 (payable 01 November 2015) and £105 (payable 01 January 2016) (All from 100+ account – total £570)

11-1415/7 - Review of the Council's Financial Risk Assessment in Respect of the Current Financial Position of the Council

The council agreed that the current financial position was satisfactory

12-1415/7 - To review any matters arising from currently circulated correspondence

There was no discussion under this heading

13-1415/7 - To consider whether to vary the business of the meeting under Standing Order 16 of the Council

The Chairman agreed discussion of the following items :-

- (i) A parishioner had reported littering in Mutton Lane to the chairman. He had inspected this and discovered there was only a small amount and he had cleared this himself.
- (ii) The chairman advised of an offer from parishioner Mr Les Cullen to treat the bus shelter. The council agreed to accept this very welcome offer and to agree a suitable cost for materials at the next council meeting
- (iii) The chairman also raised the matter of deterioration in the condition of the gates at the village hall. He anticipated meeting a suitable repair/refurbishment specialist in the near future and agreed to report back to the council at the next meeting
- (iv) ST and HS commented that they wished to not stand for re-election to the council and stressed the need to publicise vacancies thereby arising.

14-1415/7 – Date of Next Meeting

Date for the next council meetings was agreed as 12 May 2015 (committee room) for the Annual Parish Council Meeting at 8.00 pm and the Annual Parish Meeting (main hall – subject to availability) on date to be agreed. (Date to be arranged by Mrs M Mitson Woods as the new parish clerk)

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm