

# BRANDESTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held at the Village Hall on Tuesday 26 March 2013

## Present

Councillors D Risk (Chairman), S Thurlow, K Churchill and H Saxton  
Cty Cllr P Bellfield  
Parish Clerk and RFO, A M Hounsell (AMH)  
Parishioner Mr N Hayward

## 1-1213/8 – Open Discussion with Members of the Public

There was no discussion under this heading.

## 2-1213/8 – Reports from Cty Cllr P Bellfield, Dist Cllr B Snell and PCSO C Hassler

Cty Cllr Bellfield reported as follows :-

There will be no increase in SCC's share of the council tax for 2013-14 and during debate at the council, the leader had confirmed that if the ruling majority were re-elected in the May elections, there would be no increase in the following four years.

Cty Cllr Bellfield stated that there had been much publicity on education in the county but that Stowupland would be the last area to change to a 2-tier system. He advised that 97.5% of secondary school pupils in Suffolk got their first choice of school compared to the average nationally of 84%.

SCC and the police have bought 10 portable speed indicator signs, some are to be permanently fixed, and some are to be semi-permanent. Cllr Bellfield advised that BPC can contact SCC Highways at Saxmundham to request a semi permanent sign be erected in Brandeston. (D Chenery)

Cllr Bellfield confirmed that the possible merger of Suffolk Fire Service with Cambridge would not go ahead because the level of fire precept costs would have meant that Suffolk would be subsidising Cambridge.

With regard to the Sizewell consultation, it was confirmed that no works goods traffic will use roads to the west of A12. Cars will be able to use parking and park and ride but will have to have a permit which can be removed if abused.

Dist Cllr Snell had advised his apologies but reported as follows :-

### 1. *Council tax 2013/14*

Apart from a very small increase in some Parish precepts, Council Tax is frozen for a third successive year with £5.4 million of efficiencies having been achieved in the three years since the Comprehensive Spending Review of 2010. This will generate £6.9 million towards our budget of £12.7 million. We had to bridge a budget gap of £1 million this year, on top of the £2.1 million we saved in 2012/13, whilst key priority services have been protected. We will have to find a further £4.3 million savings by March 2017. To help encourage more empty homes back into use, new rates will apply to unoccupied dwellings from 1 April 2013:

- Properties that are unoccupied and unfurnished (old Class C) will receive a discount of 25% for up to three months and then will be charged 100%.
- Properties that are unoccupied, unfurnished and undergoing major repairs (old Class A) will receive a discount of 25% for up to 12 months.
- Second homes that currently receive 10% discount will pay 100% from 1 April 2013.
- Properties that are left unoccupied and unfurnished for two years or over will be charged 150% (known as an empty homes premium).

### 2. *Benefit changes from April 2013*

- Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme – the current Council Tax Benefit scheme is being changed to a local scheme run by the Council
- Housing Benefit changes for council and housing association tenants to the way Housing Benefit is calculated for working age people living in social rented property are being introduced.
- Local Housing Allowance annual uprating – will see the end of Local Housing Allowance anniversary dates and will mean the Local Housing Allowance rate will increase each year alongside the annual uprating of other welfare benefits.
- The Benefit Cap – introduction of the Government's maximum benefits cap for working age people.
- Personal Independence Payment – replaces Disability Living Allowance in stages from April 2013.
- From April 2014 in SCDC – Universal Credit, a new single payment for people who are looking for work or on a low income

### 3. *Local Development Framework*

As forecast in my last report, at the request of the examining inspector, the Council is consulting on proposed Modifications to the Core Strategy and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal until 5 April 2013. Full details of the LDF, the inspector's examination and the latest consultation are available on the Council's website.

### 4. *Planning applications*

After site visits to all three locations and to a working solar park in Cambridgeshire, the remaining two applications mentioned in my last report were considered at recent Development Control Committee meetings as follows:

- Parham Airfield, Great Glemham 15MW – deferred to 27 March DC meeting for more information on land classification; recommended by officers for approval
- Croft Lane, Stratton Hall, Nacton 12MW – approved

#### 5. *Sizewell C consultation*

The joint District and County Councils' response to the first Consultation on EDF's plan was delivered to EDF on 6 February and is available on the Council's web site.

#### 6. *Number of SCDC Councillors*

At its meeting on 28 February full Council recommended to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to trim the number of councillors from 55 to 43. A Review is being conducted by the Commission, whose aim will be to achieve electoral equality across the district, so that each councillor is representing roughly the same number of electors.

#### 7. *Quality of Place Awards*

SCDC is now accepting entries for the 2013 Quality of Place Awards for structures in the district – application form available on the web site for four categories, Building Conservation, Design, Nature & Landscape and Community Project, to be judged on the criteria of quality of design and detailing, quality of workmanship, materials and sustainability.

PCSO Hassler had advised his apologies but confirmed to the meeting that there had been no reported crimes in Brandeston since his last report on 22 January 2013

### **3-1213/8 - 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 councillors J Fielder and W Elson and from Dist Cllr B Snell, PCSO Hassler and Parish Historical Recorder Mrs W Woodland.

### **4-1213/8 - To Receive Councillors' Declaration of Interest in Agenda Items**

ST declared interest in agenda items 10 (i) and (ii)

### **5-1213/8 - Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting of 22 January 2013 were signed as a true record.

### **6-1213/8 - Matters arising from previous minutes**

(i) Misrepresentations of the Brandeston Parish Plan (previous minute 6-1213/7 (ii))

The clerk confirmed that the suggested meeting with ACRE and a planner had been held with the clerk and Mr N Hayward in attendance together with Gillian Benjamin from ACRE and Hilary Hanslip, Principal Planning Officer, SCDC.

**The chairman invited Mr Hayward to comment on the discussions and adjourned the meeting. Mr Hayward's comments are appended to these minutes.**

**The chairman reconvened the meeting and the council recorded their strong thanks to Mr Hayward for his continuing efforts of support to the council and the community.**

The council agreed to place consideration of the Parish Plan on the agenda for the forthcoming Annual Parish Meeting.

(ii) Cutting of Grass around village sign (previous minute 6-1213/7 (v))

The clerk confirmed that SCDC had quoted a charge of £25 + VAT for each cutting of the grass in March, May, July, September and October. The chairman advised that he had spoken to Mr Martin who was prepared to undertake the work on a more regular basis to ensure the grass was always neat. The council agreed to request that this be done at the maximum cost of £200 (no VAT).

(iii) Repositioning of bin to bus shelter (previous minute 12-1213/7 (i))

The chairman confirmed that he had carried out the repositioning and Mrs Mitchell was emptying the bin

### **7-1213/8 - Planning**

The clerk advised that application C12/1979 (Reserved matters - 6 houses, Mutton Lane) had been approved with the "normal" conditions.

There were no other planning matters to consider.

### **8-1213/8 – Consideration of the latest documentation issued by SCDC for the Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework**

This document has been considered by the council and it was agreed that there was no change from previous drafts in the effect on Brandeston

### **9-1213/8 – Report from Responsible Finance Officer (The Clerk)**

The RFO presented the current financial position with the main account holding £5,096.38 and the 100+ account £2,716.44 (both after accruals for approved expenditure).

The RFO also advised that he had received the audit papers for the financial year 2012-2013 and these would require the accounts of the council to be available for public inspection between 07 May and 04 June 2013.

### **10-1213/8 - Financial Matters**

The council agreed payments as follows :-

- (i) £15 to Brandeston VH&RG for room hire for the next council meeting and the annual parish meeting on 21 May 2013.
- (ii) to the clerk for distribution as prizes for the 100+ club for 2013-2014 as follows : £140 (payable 01 April 2013) and further payments of £140 (payable 01 August 2013), £185 (payable 01 November 2013) and £105 (payable 01 January 2014) (All from 100+ account – total £570)

### **11-1213/8 - 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

### **12-1213/8 – Correspondence**

There was no correspondence requiring consideration.

### **13-1213/8 - Any other business as may be raised and accepted as appropriate by the Chairman under Standing Order 16**

(i) The clerk was instructed to write to the Environment Agency regarding discharge of raw sewage from manholes in the field behind 18/20 The Street and outside Westerling, Low Street

(ii) ST described in detail the plans prepared by the village hall committee for improved and additional facilities at the village hall playing field. She explained that, in particular, the committee were planning the construction of a tennis court and that the committee believed that it would be possible to receive a grant from Sport England to cover a substantial part of the cost.

After considerable discussion the council expressed their strong support for the proposals and their agreement to fully support the project by completing all relevant applications and managing the finances if necessary.

(iii) The council agreed payment for the new petanque pitch at the playing field of up to £3000 + VAT (from 100+ account)

(iv) ST agreed to prepare details of serious potholes around the village to advise to SCC, Highways.

### **14-1213/8 – Date of Next Meeting**

Date for the next council meeting was confirmed as 21 May 2013 being the annual meeting of the council at 7.00 pm and the annual parish meeting at 8.00 pm.

The meeting closed at 10.00pm.

### **NOTES OF MR HAYWARD'S COMMENTS ON DISCUSSIONS WITH SCDC AND ACRE**

Mr Hayward (NH) stated that after he had explained the misrepresentations in recent planning applications, Mrs Benjamin (GB) had said that the Brandeston Parish Plan should be written more strongly but NH pointed out that she did not have the full details (not having the detailed analysis). GB also suggested that the parish council should have taken it this subject up with the planning applicant. Mrs Hanslip (HH) confirmed that the parish council's notes would be fully taken into account when the plans are considered and it might be more helpful to the parish council's position to meet the officers prior to consideration of applications by the committee. Both the clerk and NH had emphasised that Brandeston should not be considered as totally opposed to ANY development.

It was generally agreed by HH and GB in discussion that SCDC is in an impossible position because until the local plan is in place it is "open house" on planning applications. HH stated that she would very much like Brandeston to be involved in development in the site specific plans of the local plan. It was confirmed that Neighbourhood Plans are pro development.

HH confirmed that Conservation Area consultation is a material consideration for planning applications but the clerk and NH suggested that this appears to be ignored.

NH supported the chairman's proposal that revalidation of the Brandeston Parish Plan was an important issue for the forthcoming Annual Parish Meeting and Mr Hayward agreed to make a presentation on this to that meeting.