

STOKE BY NAYLAND PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 NOVEMBER 2017 AT 7.50PM

- Present:** Isabelle Reece, Chairman (IR)
Jeremy Bloomfield, Vice Chairman (JB)
Adam Sedgwick (AS)
Vivienne Klimowicz (VK)
Martin Nielsen (MN)
Andrew Collins (AC)
Stevie Bezencenet (SB)
- Apologies:** Nicki Bray (NB), SCC councillor James Finch (JF), BDC councillor
Melanie Barrett (MB)
- In attendance:** James Dark, Parish Clerk (JD)
- Public present:** Sean Fry (member of public until co-opted as a councillor at 8pm)
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17.11.1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

See above.

17.11.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ANY AGENDA ITEM

None declared.

17.11.3 PUBLIC FORUM

No members of the public wished to speak.

17.11.4 MINUTES

17.11.4.1 The minutes of the meeting held 5 September 2017 were approved and signed.

17.11.4.2 The clerk and members reported progress on actions agreed in the 5 September minutes. VK expressed concern that an item on 'engagement with the police' had been postponed to a future meeting given the apparent lack of action on low level crime in the parish.

Action: Clerk to contact the police Safer Neighbourhoods Team to ask representatives to attend a Parish Council meeting as soon as possible.

17.11.5 CO-OPTION OF NEW COUNCILLOR

After answering questions from members, Sean Fry was co-opted as a councillor, signed the declaration of acceptance of office form and joined the meeting.

17.11.6 REPORTS OF COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

17.11.6.1 District councillor's report

Members noted the update on Babergh and MidSuffolk District Councils' plans to merge. Several members expressed concern over the lack of democratic accountability in the proposals and BDC's Cabinet system. The clerk was asked to include the issue on a future agenda.

17.11.6.2 County councillor's report

No report was received due to JF's absence from work. Members expressed concern over lack of representation in JF's absence.

Action: Clerk to contact JF's office to establish when he will be back at work.

17.11.7 FINANCIAL MATTERS

17.11.7.1 RFO's report

Members received the RFO's report and were satisfied it was a correct record of the PC's financial position.

17.11.7.2 Orders requested for approval

Orders totalling £2248.48 were approved, including a cheque for £15.40 to IR for phone expenses. Members were satisfied that in NB's absence IR should be one of the two signatories on the cheque.

17.11.7.3 2016-17 Annual Return

The Annual Return including external auditor's certificate was approved.

17.11.7.4 External auditor's issues arising report

Members were satisfied that two issues in the report relating to the internal auditors' recommendations had previously been reviewed. The third issue raised in the report highlighted the requirement for the asset register to recognise expenditure in the appropriate financial year. The clerk explained that the Proper Practice is understood.

17.11.7.5 Internal auditor appointment

The clerk was asked to report to the next meeting on the new statutory audit arrangements for the current and forthcoming financial years so that the council could make a fully informed decision on the appointment of an internal auditor. In preparation for that meeting, members were asked to consider whether they could recommend a local accountant who would be willing to act as internal auditor on a pro bono basis.

17.11.7.6 Transparency fund application

The draft application was approved.

17.11.7.7 Draft budget

AS reported progress on the draft 2017-18 budget, noting that more information is needed on costings for a small number of business as usual activities and potential projects including:

- Streetlight operating and maintenance costs following completion of the streetlighting project
- The cost of a Neighbourhood Plan should the PC agree to proceed with this project.

The completion of this costing exercise would determine whether the PC needs to take out the PWLB loan it has received approval for.

Actions

- JB to provide AS and the clerk with details of future streetlight running costs
- AS to clarify cost of projects
- Clerk to advise BDC of the Parish Council's draft proposal for the 2017-18 precept.

17.11.8 POTENTIAL NEED FOR A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The potential benefits of a Neighbourhood Plan were discussed in the broad context of consulting on a vision for the future of the parish. All members felt new development in the parish would be beneficial and that the vision should capitalise on the characteristics which distinguish the parish from other areas. Demographic and community issues that affect many rural areas were noted including declining numbers of school pupils, sports club members and volunteers.

Members considered that there could be benefits in taking forward a Neighbourhood Plan as part of a package including the previously agreed Housing Needs Survey and a Business Consultation.

Action: It was agreed that IR, JB, AS and SB should form a working party for preliminary consideration of how the Parish Council could proceed in taking forward a Neighbourhood Plan and related projects.

17.11.9 RESPONSE TO BABERGH MIDSUFFOLK'S DRAFT LOCAL PLAN

This item was deferred to the full council from the preceding planning committee meeting.

Members discussed a potential response drawn up by AS and circulated before the meeting. It

proposed that new development in villages within AONBs should only take place on an exception site basis and be undertaken on behalf of community organisations under structures which restrict open market sale and eligibility for occupancy. The purpose of these controls would be to provide sufficient, suitable housing for local people on local incomes and current residents wishing to downsize, as well as a more balanced housing stock.

Alternative views were discussed including the possibility of controlling development through a Neighbourhood Plan. AS argued that this would be unlikely to provide sufficient control to achieve the objectives outlined in his proposal.

It was agreed that AS's proposal would be adopted as the Parish Council's response to the Draft Local Plan but strengthened by highlighting a fuller range of community-led structures under which development could take place.

Action: Clerk to submit the Parish Council's response to the Draft Local Plan ensuring it includes the changes agreed to AS's proposal.

17.11.10 PLANNING TOGETHER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This item was deferred to the full council from the preceding planning committee meeting. SB reported on her attendance at BAPTC meetings as an observer. Members noted BAPTC's response to the Draft Local Plan. SB confirmed members' view that BAPTC's current focus is key issues for parish and town councils related to the draft plan and that it appears a more energetic campaigning organisation than SALC. Members were asked to study BAPTC's constitution with a view to the next Parish Council meeting considering whether to join BAPTC.

17.11.11 COMMUNITY ASSETS

JB raised the possibility of the Parish Council designating land appropriate for development as an asset of community value. This would give community organisations some time to raise funds to bid for the land should it be put up for sale. As a first step, it was agreed that the PC should understand the extent of the land in the parish owned by public bodies and utility companies.

Action: Clerk to ask BDC, SCC and utility companies for details of sites they own in the parish.

17.11.12 BOUNDARY COMMISSION REVIEW

Members noted proposals in the review which would lead to a reduction in wards and hence district councillors.

17.11.13 COUNCILLORS' AND CLERK'S REPORTS

17.11.13.1 Matters discussed at planning committee

JB reported on the decision to object to planning applications relating to 2 The Blundens, Black Fen Cottage, Beacham's Farm and Scotland Hall Cottage.

These matters are fully recorded in the November 7 planning committee minutes.

17.11.13.2 Traffic

Members noted VK's report which had been circulated before the meeting, and agreed actions to address issues. VK informed members that SCC had not attended to highway and signage maintenance requirements raised with JF at the previous meeting or acted on JF's assurance that an officer would contact her to discuss these issues and provide ongoing support.

Actions:

- Clerk to send list of highways issues that need addressing to James Finch's office and to SCC requesting action be taken and a nominated contact be provided to liaise with VK on progress
- Clerk to contact James Finch's office to ask when work will start on the 20mph limit and whether any objections were received
- Clerk to request up to date plan and schedule on sand placement from SCC

- Clerk to ask Woodland Group to remove broken hitch rail and post on Clipt Bush Corner
- JB to place reflectors on all posts on Clipt Bush Corner.

17.11.13.3 Replacement handrail on The Downs

The clerk reported that one contractor who had quoted is not available to do the job. DPB Decorators had agreed to the council's terms of payment but would not be able to carry out the work until the spring. In line with the council's decision at the September meeting, it was confirmed that DPB decorators would be appointed to carry out the work.

Action: Clerk to write letter of appointment to DPB Decorators.

17.11.13.4 Asset review

AC reported that he had reviewed the condition of all assets. He considered the majority to be in satisfactory condition. His report noted the broken hitch rail on Clipt Bush Corner (agreed for removal as a result of the traffic report), the need for repairs to Well Housing, and the need to repair some grit bins. It also recommended that minor restoration to benches should be considered at an appropriate point.

AS asked about the doubling of insurance costs following the inclusion of additional assets on the insurance policy. AC recommended that the Parish Council should review the level of excess required, with a review to reducing costs.

Actions:

- AC to liaise with clerk on information required from CAS so that he can present a proposal to the council for level of excess on the insurance policy
- AC to arrange quotes for Well Housing repairs
- AC to investigate costings for replacement of poor condition wood panels on grit boxes with plastic equivalents.

17.11.13.5 School Street noticeboard

IR reported that a parishioner had agreed to carry out repairs to the School Street noticeboard, as agreed by AC and the school, free of charge. The Parish Council would cover the cost of the materials. If the parishioner confirms he can do the work, IR will refer him to VK.

Action: IR to confirm to VK whether Nigel Warren Thomas will carry out the work.

17.11.13.6 Bottlebank

The clerk reported that BDC had stated that the bottlebank could be returned to the village if the council recommended a suitable site with no overhead wires and ideally with a hard surface. Members were asked to bring potential sites for consideration to the January meeting.

17.11.13.7 No Parking sign on Village Green

SB reported that she expected to be able to bring final designs and costings to the January meeting.

17.11.13.8 Welcome pack

It was noted that the welcome pack needs updating.

Action: IR to update welcome pack. VK to send IR latest version of the pack.

17.11.13.9 Clerk's review

Members noted that IR and JB would be arranging the clerk's review shortly.

17.11.13.10 Reports from other parish organisations

IR reported that an extension to the Village Hall had been proposed in a joint venture between the Village Hall and the History Society. It would enable the society to install equipment in the hall.

Based on a report from NB, IR informed the meeting that the recreation ground had made a profit of £207.31 from the village fireworks, meaning a display could be funded again next year.

17.11.14 CLERK AND CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE

IR reported concerns raised by a resident about a vehicle for sale permanently parked near the Village Green.

Action: SB agreed to raise the matter with the vehicle owner.

James Cartlidge had written to the Chairman requesting PC backing for a petition supporting the Sudbury bypass. It was considered that this is not a matter for the PC to involve itself in.

17.11.15 ITEMS FOR REPORT IN COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

- Draft Local Plan and Parish Council response
- Parish Council emerging views on the need for a Neighbourhood Plan
- Raise awareness of the forthcoming Housing Needs Survey in line with Community Action Suffolk recommendations.

17.11.16 OUTSTANDING ISSUES/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Sean Fry agreed to co-ordinate and organise community speedwatch activity.

Action: IR to brief Sean Fry.

NB had reported to the clerk that she had met the District Council's emergency planning officer with a view to drawing up a Community Emergency Plan for the parish.

Future agenda items

- Merger of Babergh and MidSuffolk District Councils
- Report on future audit arrangements
- Consideration of becoming a member of BAPTC
- Attendance by representatives of the Safer Neighbourhood Team
- Site for bottlebank
- No Parking sign for the Village Green
- SCC action to address issues in the traffic report
- Community Emergency Plan

17.11.17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday January 9 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 10.05 pm.