

RATTLESDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the full Council held on 12 January 2016 at 7.30pm in Rattlesden Village Hall

Present: Cllr Pauline Baker (Chairman), Cllr Kerry Burn,
Cllr Bridget Goodchild, Cllr Dan Jewers, Cllr Esther Jewson
and Cllr Julie Rayner.

In Attendance: County and District Cllr Penny Otton;
Four members of the public; and
Parish Clerk: Doug Reed.

2015/112 Apologies for Absence

Accepted from Cllr Russell Morley who was absent due to family commitments.

2015/113 Declarations of Interest

None.

2015/114 Minutes of the Last Parish Council Meeting

It was proposed by Cllr Jewers, seconded by Cllr Goodchild, that the minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council, held on 10 December, be signed as a true record. The proposal was carried.

2015/115 The meeting was adjourned for reports from external bodies and for public comment and questions:

115.1 District and County Councillor: Cllr Otton presented her report and highlighted concerns over the problems that had occurred with the housing development at Rising Sun Hill. Completion was now not expected until June.

115.2 Public Discussion: It was reported that the River Working Group needed two pairs of waders at a cost of around £80.00. It was proposed by Cllr Baker, seconded by Cllr Jewers, that these be funded by the Council. The proposal was carried. Regarding the railings which ran through the village on Lower Road, the River Working Group offered to undertake their painting in the spring. The offer was gratefully accepted. The Council had previously discussed work to these and had permission to carry out the painting plus advice from the County Council about the type of paint to be used. The latter would be obtained locally and paid for by the Council. Finally, it was noted that action was being taken to secure a defibrillator for the village. As this was not a Council initiative, it was hoped that further information might be available by the next meeting.

Meeting resumed:

2015/116 Parish Clerk's Report

The Clerk's report was noted. While several items were covered elsewhere on the agenda, it was confirmed that the excellent work being undertaken by the Footpath Officer was paying dividends in the responses to problems being received from the County Council. It was also reported that good

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progress was being made with both the planning application for the Cemetery extension and the land transfer which was the basis of that extension. Lastly, the impending lack of bank signatories was raised further to which it was resolved that Cllr Goodchild and Cllr Rayner be added.

2015/117 Planning

117.1 Applications: There were no new planning applications for the Council to consider.

117.2 Applications - Responses: Given deadlines in advance of the meeting, councillors had necessarily considered applications: 3905/15 concerning New Thatch Cottage, Lower Road. The Council had no objections; and 4266/15 and 4267/15 concerning Quince Cottage, Church Path. The Council had no objections.

117.3 Decisions: It was noted that applications 3373/15 concerning 1 Stowmarket Road, 3905/15 concerning New Thatch Cottage, Lower Road and 2936/15 concerning Lydgate Cottage, Birds Green had been granted. Likewise, that applications 3436/15, 3452/15 and 3453/15 all concerning Francis Farm, Woolpit Hill had been granted. Further, that 2960/15 concerning Four Gates, Lower Road had been refused.

2015/118 Finance

118.1 Financial Report: The report to 31 December was received. It was proposed by Cllr Baker, seconded by Cllr Burn, that the reconciliation be approved and duly signed. The proposal was carried.

118.2 Payments and Income: It was proposed by Cllr Jewson, seconded by Cllr Burn, that the schedule of payments be approved. The proposal was carried. The schedule comprised the following:

- ◆ Litter-picker salary (January) - £129.51;
- ◆ Clerk salary (January) - £267.49;
- ◆ PAYE (January) - £66.80;
- ◆ The Felsham Gardeners - cemetery grass-cutting - £190.00;
- ◆ The Felsham Gardeners - cemetery hedge cutting and clearing - £350.00;
- ◆ Anglian Water - cemetery water - £15.38;
- ◆ Rattlesden and District Community Shop - competition prize - £25.00;
- ◆ Mid Suffolk District Council - grass-cutting and grounds service - £169.00 + £33.80 VAT;
- ◆ Geosphere Environmental Ltd - cemetery land Tier 1 environmental risk assessment - £655.00 + £131.00 VAT;
- ◆ Mr Roger Heard - 447th Bomber Group Memorial grass-cutting - £33.75;
- ◆ Mr Richard Mahony - village Christmas tree - £50.00;
- ◆ Rattlesden Village Hall Committee - village hall hire - £22.50;
- ◆ Clerk - administrative expenses - £37.16;
- ◆ Mid Suffolk District Council - cemetery planning application - £192.50;
- and

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- ◆ Rudlings Wakelam Solicitors - cemetery extension conveyancing (remaining payment) - £427.00 + £150.00 VAT (payable on the combined conveyancing charge of £900.00).

Income received was duly noted as follows:

- ◆ Business account interest (November) - £0.83;
- ◆ Business account interest (December) - £0.81;
- ◆ Residents - burial reservations - £150.00; and
- ◆ Allotment Association - annual rent 2015-2016 - £68.04.

118.3 Budget 2016-2017 and Precept 2016-2017: Councillors debated the proposed budget for the forthcoming year given several known areas where costs were due to rise and being mindful of the fact that the council tax support grant from Mid Suffolk District Council was being reduced. Of the anticipated expenditure, it was agreed that the c£4,500.00 allocated for the land drain at the Cemetery should be funded from the earmarked reserves. It was also agreed that no further funding should be added to those reserves set aside for tree work which already stood at £1,500.00, thereby reducing the budget requirement by a further £500.00. With those substantial adjustments, the potential expenditure was estimated at c£12,464.00. Given expected income, this allowed the Council to establish a precept requirement of £9,632.00 which would provide for the Band D council tax to remain at the 2015-2016 level. It was proposed by Cllr Goodchild, seconded by Cllr Rayner, that the precept request be set at £9,632.00 and that the resultant budget be approved. The proposal was carried.

118.4 Grants: Councillors agreed that those bodies which delivered much-needed services to residents on an on-going basis should benefit from the limited money the Council had available to offer. It was, therefore, proposed by Cllr Jewers, seconded by Cllr Goodchild, that the Council award grants of £50.00 each to Age UK Suffolk and Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice Bureau. The proposal was carried.

118.5 External Audit 2017-2018: Based upon advice from the Suffolk Association of Local Councils, this matter was deferred until further information became available.

118.6 Grass-Cutting: It was proposed by Cllr Burn, seconded by Cllr Baker, that the service offered by Mid Suffolk District Council to undertake the cutting of grass in three village sites at a cost of £172.00 plus VAT be accepted for 2016. The proposal was carried.

118.7 Internal Audit 2014-2015: It was reported that the Chairman and Finance Councillor had met with Mr Graham Reid, as internal auditor, to review the outcomes from his last report, and then met with the Clerk to do likewise. As a result various actions had been taken to further ensure that the Council had robust financial procedures in place. It was acknowledged that Council engagement with the internal auditor needed to be more proactive and that this would be followed through in the context of the process relating to the 2015-2016 financial year.

2015/119

Council Governance

119.1 New Legislation, Codes or Regulatory Issues: None.

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119.2 Risk Register, Policies and Internal Controls: It was resolved that the risk register be duly updated to reflect those issues which emerged from the recent revisiting of the 2014-2015 internal audit outcomes.

2015/120 Correspondence

Two issues arose. Regarding potential street signs to denote Church Path, further communication with Mid Suffolk District Council had failed to result in any progress regarding the type of signs recommended by that Council. Councillors agreed, before bringing this matter to a close, to undertake a further site visit to potentially satisfy themselves that the signs suggested were inappropriate and unworkable for the location. The second issue centred on concerns from a resident about the Council handling of its actions and decision relating to planning application 2960/15 affecting Four Gates, Lower Road. Individual councillors having already been in receipt of the specific matters raised, the Council as a whole reviewed the concerns. It was very much regretted that dissatisfaction had been expressed, but councillors felt that the application had been dealt with properly despite some procedural difficulties that it had suffered at the hands of Mid Suffolk District Council. In accepting that the resident was perfectly entitled to express disappointment and unhappiness at both the application outcome and the view on the application taken by Council, councillors agreed that there was no further action that could be taken other than to formally acknowledge the letter and to confirm that the Parish Council acted properly as a statutory consultee in the planning process. Ultimately, the actual decision rested with Mid Suffolk District Council, as the planning authority, and only through that Council could any possible further actions be pursued.

2015/121 Queen's 90th Birthday

While the Parish Council was willing to organise a celebration it was pointed out that previous activities associated with royal events had been managed by the Community Council. Accordingly, it was agreed that that organisation be approached, in the first instance, to see if any plans were in place or being considered.

2015/122 Asset Management

The programme of asset inspections was agreed. The inspections would be carried out at the earliest but, in any event, in time to enable a discussion on any remedial or other actions required to be considered at the March meeting of the Council.

2015/123 Common Land

Further to the advice provided previously to the Council by Prettys Solicitors, via the Suffolk Association of Local Councils, it had been agreed that the company be approached for a cost towards securing confirmed ownership of common land in the village where no current ownership was known to exist. The estimate provided was £500.00 plus disbursements plus VAT. On that basis, it was proposed by Cllr Baker, seconded by Cllr Burn, that Prettys Solicitors be engaged to undertake the work. The proposal was carried.

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2015/124 Campsite - Felsham Road

Although the site had been approved by The Camping and Caravanning Club, the Council, the District Councillor and local residents had concerns about particular aspects of this new development. To seek to alleviate those concerns, it was resolved that the owner be approached and invited to meet with councillors to discuss how such concerns were to be addressed.

2015/125 Birds Green

Faced with issues regarding the on-going deterioration and erosion of the grass 'triangle' at this location, it was suggested that some work might be undertaken to remedy matters and to help prevent future problems. However, prior to agreeing any action, councillors determined that they would, initially, revisit the site to achieve a full understanding of all the problems and to try to determine the best way forward.

2015/126 World War I Commemorations

With a number of commemorations due in 2016 it was felt that a joint service for those who lost their lives in The Battle of the Somme might be particularly meaningful. Cllr Goodchild kindly offered to check further on the backgrounds of those who died and to liaise with the Local History Group and others about the most appropriate approach to take. Once confirmed, relevant details would be made available through "Revelations".

2015/127 Council Vacancy

It was noted, with regret, that Cllr Baker was to resign from the Parish Council, effective from the end of the meeting. This was for personal reasons and nothing to do with Council activities or matters bearing upon the Council. In acknowledging her resignation, fellow councillors expressed their sincere thanks to Cllr Baker for her service on the Council and for all that she had done for the village during her term of office. It was noted that, in due course, the vacancy would be advertised.

2015/128 Matters to be Brought to the Attention of the Council

Given continued parking problems by the Community Shop, Cllr Otton offered to review the situation with officers at Mid Suffolk District Council. Parking difficulties were also reported by the housing development on Rising Sun Hill and on Lower Road at peak School times. The former would be addressed with Hastoe Housing Association and advice would be sought on the latter from Suffolk Constabulary.

2015/129 Next Meeting

It was noted that the next Ordinary Meeting of the Council would be held on Tuesday 23 February at 7.30pm in Rattlesden Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.