­­WHEPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

**Approved Minutes of the Meeting**

**Of the Parish Council held on**

**Wednesday January 21st at 7pm**

Attendees: Councillors G O’Dell - GO

E Nutt - EN

N Aitkens - NA

A Maddever - AM

S Durrant - SD

R Murray - RM

Clerk D Rix - DR

Borough Councillor A Rushen - AR

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| 1/1  2/2 | **Apologies for Absence** Terry Clements  **Declarations of Interest**  None |
| 4/3  5/4  6/5  7/6  4/7 | **County Councillor’s Report** *(Cllr GO brought forward agenda item 4)*  Report sent in advance of the meeting.  **Community Police Officer’s Report**  There have been no crimes since our last meeting. DR to send link for Police Connect to Cllrs AM and NA.  **Public Forum**  None  **Planning Applications**  Cllr GO said that the Nunwick Farm application was still pending as clarification was being sought regarding contamination risk. Green Farm Barn application was also pending a decision. DR to check WPC submission as Cllr GO could not see it on line.  **Borough Councillor’s Report** *(Report attached)*  In addition to her report, Cllr AR said that a new creative youth club for 14-21 year olds was being set up at the Apex, so that youngsters could get experience of work there and influence the programming. Cheque for £200 from Cllr AR’s Locality Budget for Speedwatch had been received and forwarded to the Parish Council*. (AR left the meeting at 7.20pm)* |
| 8/8  9/9  10/10  11/11  12/12  13/13  14/14  15/15  16/16  17/17  18/18  19/19  20/20  21/21  22/22  23/23 | **Minutes of the Meeting held on December 10th 2014**  Agenda item 10/203 “EN reported difficulties that families in the social housing on Brockley Road were having walking from their homes to the footpath on Fern Hill as a tree protruded into the road outside Sally Tolhurst’s house forcing them on to the road which was dangerous” to be deleted and replaced with “EN reported difficulties that a family in the bungalow next to the social housing on Brockley Road were having walking from their home to the bus stop on Brockley Road as a tree, on land thought to be owned by the Council, protruded into the road which was dangerous” Subject to the amendments being made, it was proposed by Cllr EN and seconded by Cllr NA that they be accepted as a true record.  **Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on December 10th**  Regarding the Open Space Funding, Cllr AM said that he would look into the state of the play equipment in the play area again as he had thought that the money had to be spent on a project that was needed rather than desired. Cllr NA pointed out that it is worthwhile applying for the funding as the play area is used by many people who don’t support the community.  Cllr EN said that money could be used to create a properly prepared footpath with wheelchair access near the river. All agreed that Cllr GO should go ahead and apply for the funding.  Cllr GO reported that the street lamp outside the school had been repaired.  **Clerk’s Report**  Regarding the broken sleepers on FPs 4 and 15. Patrick Scrivens had already dealt with them. FP5 will get a 3 sleeper bridge in due course, FP10 to get a 3 sleeper wired bridge as the contractor will be in the area fixing FP5 and it will need to be replaced within the next few years anyway.  DR had reported to David Stiles that councillors had turned down the offer of white fencing and crocodile teeth. David Stiles said that Rectory Road did not warrant an adult and child sign because there was a footpath. He has requested a scheme cost estimate for the dropped kerb outside the chapel.  Regarding new WPC meeting dates to comply with HMRC late filing penalties, DR said that, subject to Di Howe’s approval, the August 12th meeting would move to August 19th, September 23rd meeting would move to October 7th and January 2016’s meeting would move from January 20th to January 13th. DR to circulate dates after confirmation of meeting room availability from Di Howe.  In February’s newsletter DR had urged people to come to meetings to find out about becoming a councillor and had put a full page flyer in the newsletter about the litter pick.  DR had bought a mono laser Samsung Xpress M2022 printer from John Lewis. It had a two year guarantee and was £59.99 plus VAT, £20 cheaper than before Christmas.  Regarding dog waste bins, Andrew Harvey said that they cost £140 plus installation costs, and said we should be aware that the Borough Council was contemplating charging councils £2.80 per empty (which it currently does once a week) for all litter and dog waste bins. He suggested that we remind people that bagged dog waste can be put in normal litter bins, but that he could look into extra signage if we wanted it. DR to mention waste being put in normal bins in newsletter.  The grass cutting quote from EFMS is £233.33 + VAT more at £1,337 + VAT for next year. And in future we are to be billed quarterly – as opposed to annually – in arrears. Martin Staples is to let us know about the spiking of the cricket square and the machinery used. Cllr RM said that it was important that the cricket club paid for this. Councillors voted to accept the quote but said that in future years DR should add grass cutting to November’s agenda to give us time to shop around for other quotes.  Martin Barnes-Smith, tenant liaison officer for Suffolk Housing has asked if he can come and meet us at our next meeting.  DR said that as we have less than 500 electors (356) our Parish Election costs if contested (where there are more candidates than seats) would be between £333 and £500, if combined with the parliamentary and Borough District Elections. Cllr RM said that five years ago the council incurred no costs despite the election being contested. Cllr GO had read that we would be able to claim the VAT back on any costs like stationery.  DR outlined the new Transparency Code. As our turnover is less than £25,000, from April 2017 we will no longer have to have an external audit. However from April this year, on our website, we must publish the draft minutes not later than one month after all formal meetings and also meeting agendas and associated papers not later than three days before the meeting takes place. From July 1 2015, and every year thereafter, we must publish all items of expenditure over £100, the end of year accounts, an annual governance statement, our internal audit report, and list of councillors and their responsibilities, the location of public land and building assets.  Under the new Right to Report rules SALC recommends that we make it clear to people attending our meetings that they are free to report on them.  Before the meeting, DR had circulated information to councillors regarding new NJC pay terms for Clerks. Cllr RM proposed and Cllr GO seconded that the clerk should receive a pay rise from £8.344 to £8.613 an hour from January 1st until the agreement comes to an end in March 2016.  Cllr RM also proposed that the one off non-consolidated payment of £27 as agreed by SALC and NALC should be paid, but that this is itemised separately on the accounts and another cheque raised. DR said that the WPC’s pension staging date is July 1 2017. Under the new rules, where employees were aged 16 to 74 and earning less than £5,772 a year, the Council is obliged to provide the clerk with information about their right to ‘join’ a pension and must provide one if they ask. But WPC does not have to pay into the scheme themselves, unless they choose to do so. DR to add clerk’s pay to November’s agenda each year.  **Finance**  DR explained that Cllrs GO and EN had signed two cheques to the WCA - one for £42.50 (hall hire Jul-Dec) the other £550 (11 months newsletter printing costs) – on December 16th, as the WCA’s financial year end was at the end of December. (The invoices had not been received by the clerk during the week that the internet in parts of the village went down)  Cllr RM proposed and Cllr AM seconded that the retrospective payment of the cheques be agreed and the cheques listed in the minutes.  Invoices for payment:  Clerk’s pay £909.28  Clerk’s tax £62.80  Clerk’s expenses £205.65  NJC agreed one off non-consolidated payment to Clerk £27  EFMS 2014 grasscutting £1,324.40  The authorisation of payments was proposed by Cllr RM and seconded by Cllr NA and the cheques duly signed. It was proposed by Cllr EN and seconded by Cllr RM that the bank reconciliation for the end of December be approved as correct and signed.  DR thanked Cllr AM for the Locality Budget cheque for £200 earmarked for a new VAS pole and bracket.  DR said she would submit a VAT claim before the March year end.  **Bank balances at 30th December 2014**   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Balance in Treasurers Account | 4,789.16 | | Savings account | 10,426.77 | | Total | 15,215.93 | | Less cheques not presented | Nil | | Total | 15,215.93 |   **Precept**  DR apologised. She thought that the tax base was unchanged from last year but it was in fact 208.35 (212.44). This meant that although our precept was unchanged at £8,045, the extra cost to villagers was £1.55 at £38.61, compared to £37.06 last year.  Cllr RM voiced concerns about the extra costs facing parish council, including the clerk’s pay rise, a sharp rise in grass cutting costs and potential election costs. Cllr NA said the WPC had more than enough in reserves. Cllr RM proposed that council submit the draft precept asking for the same money as last year. All councillors voted to accept Cllr RM’s proposal except Cllr NA. Cllr GO and DR duly signed the Application for Grant and Precept. DR to submit before the January 31st deadline.  **Footpaths, Highways and Byways**  Cllr NA had spoken to Theo Cutting and was meeting him again early next week. In response to Patrick Scrivens question, he said that Mr Cutting would not be happy for the footpath creation to go ahead without the diversion of the existing footpath. DR to write and let Patrick know and also that the project has the parish’s full support and that it is prepared to take on responsibility for the clearing of side growth on the path.  Cllr EN said that there was a drainage problem at the bottom of Cllr AM’s field behind his house. Cllr AM said he will fix it when the weather is drier.  DR to ask for the white lines in Rectory Road to be reinstated. After yet another accident on the bend outside the community centre DR to ask Highways for more chevrons to warn drivers and to mention the adverse camber.  DR to report drainage problem opposite Mickley House as every time there is heavy rain there is a flooding issue.  **Correspondence**  The correspondence file was being circulated.  **Broadband**  There had been conflicting messages regarding the erection of telegraph poles on Long Hill. The poles had subsequently disappeared between Sunday at 6pm and Monday at 7am.  Cllr AM had been informed that they were to carry fibre optic cables to Whepstead as the ducting had collapsed last year. But Jonathan Chown of Suffolk Better Broadband said that would not have been the case. JC said we would not be getting a date for better broadband until the Autumn and so were unlikely to see any improvements until Spring 2016.  **Annual Parish Meeting**  Possible speakers were discussed. Peter Golding from the Royal British Legion could speak about Luke Southgate who was from BSE and had been killed in Afghanistan in 2010 aged 20.  Cllr RM suggested a highly recommended speaker from the Citizen’s Advice Bureau, which was a charity we supported every year.  Cllr EN suggested Mike McConnell from the village who was an historic buildings expert. DR to approach the CAB.  **Litter Pick**  DR has ordered all the equipment necessary from Andrew Harvey and will phone around for volunteers ahead of the event on February 22nd. Cllr AM agreed to use his pick up to collect rubbish bags from pickers. Cllr RM apologised that he was unable to do the picking but would be happy to hand out pickers and hi-viz jackets at the Community Centre. Cllr GO to buy refreshments. Cllr NA suggested the possible recycling of some of the rubbish.  **Speedwatch**  Cllr EN said they were desperate for more volunteers. Jane Alfred was going to get all the volunteers together and ask Tibor Pollerman from Horringer to come and suggest ways of encouraging more support. Cllr SD offered his support and was thanked by Cllr EN who said that the volunteers tended to operate between 7.45-9am and 3.30-4.30am.  Cllr GO said that Claire Starling had ordered an extension post for an existing 30mph signpost so that the VAS could be used at the top of Fern Hill. We would have to order the bracket.  **Trees**  Nothing to report  **Suffolk Association of Local Councils Report**  DR to try and get on an Election Briefing course.  **Whepstead Community Association Report**  Cllr AM thanked the WPC for signing the newsletter and hall hire cheques in December. Forty tickets had been sold for the wine tasting in February. Now the WI had been wound up they had lost Joyce Marsh from the committee. The WCA had bought new chairs, so if anyone wanted to make a donation there were 100 black chairs available. He said that Di Howe wanted to stop organising the fete.  **Chairman’s Comments**  Cllr GO said that the now defunct WI had offered the WPC leftover postcards with the millennium tapestry printed on them. Agreed they could be added to the Welcome Packs.  **Any Other Business**  It was with sadness that Cllr EN announced that she would not be standing at the next election. But she said that she would continue with all the village groups that she organised. She thanked councillors for their support.  Cllr GO has also said that he will be stepping down.  The meeting closed at 9.20pm  Signed………………………………………………..Dated……………………… |