**Draft Minutes of the Meeting**

**Of the Whepstead Parish Council on**

**Wednesday February 14th 2018 at 7pm**

Attendees: Councillors N Aitkens - NA

M Morris – MM

A Robertson – AR

S Durrant - SD

L Smith – LS

Clerk D Rix – DR

Borough Councillor M Chester – MC

County Councillor Karen Soons - KS

Members of the Public Harry Edrich

Tom Robinson

Gordon Merrettt

Mo Orange

John Orange

WCA Committee Terry Smith

Richard Gleed

Di Howe

Sara Feakes

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| 1/22  2/23  3/24  4/25  7/26  5/27  & 6/28  7/29  8/30  9/31  10/32  11/33  12/34  13/35  14/36  15/37  16/38  17/39  18/40  19/41  20/42  21/43  22/44 | **Apologies for Absence** Cllrs N Mann and D Till  **Declarations of Interest**  Cllr AR – planning  **Borough Councillor Report**  Cllr Chester said that having ‘called in’ two Nunwick Farm planning applications on February 1st, the Development and Control Committee had supported both.  He said that a new West Suffolk Council would replace Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Councils in 2019 and bring £800,000 in savings and efficiencies. He urged businesses looking to become more energy efficient to seek funding from Business Energy Efficiency Anglia [www.beeanglia.org](http://www.beeanglia.org) and those interested in the NHS to attend the next West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group community engagement meeting on February 19th at St. John’s Community Centre in Mildenhall.  Restaurants will soon have to comply with strict hygiene standards and display their rating (1-5) outside their premises.  Cllr MC said that Westcotec had still not sent a bill for the repair of the VAS machine but he thought the radar had broken again. It was pointed out that it is currently in use in Whepstead, so he will check and report back.  **County Councillor Report**  Cllr Soons had been asked to clarify the BSE Home to School transport document and urged everyone to give their feedback through the consultation survey before the Feb 28th deadline.  She said SCC currently provided 2400 children with free/subsidised travel that it was not legally obliged to provide and proposed to change its policy from September 2019 by either removing free travel to those not attending their nearest school, or by phasing in the changes as a child joins or moves school. Alternatively it would make no changes at all and instead make savings from other services provided by SCC.  She urged those against the proposed changes to join a Facebook petition. She said early modelling showed that £200,000 of savings would be made taking 5 buses off the road. Ickworth school said it would lose around 23% of pupils if the plans went ahead. *(see agenda item 16 for more)*  Regarding potholes, Cllr NA said lots of damage was being done to cars and asked if there was some sort of marker that could be put in the hole to warn motorists while they waited for repairs to be carried out. Cllr Soons to investigate.  She said in future, finger posts that fall down will not be resurrected. DR to include details of how to report a pothole regularly in the newsletter. All agreed that they were expecting more from the Spread Eagle roadworks*. (Cllr KS left the meeting at 7.30pm)*  **Planning Applications** *(Cllr NA brought forward agenda item 7 and Cllr AR declared an interest and left the room.*)  **DC/18/0104/HH** – Kilmorie, Rectory Road – Garage extension.  Councillors voted to support the application for a small garage extension.  **Public Forum and meeting with WCA** *(Cllr NA combined agenda items 5 and 6. Richard Gleed, Sara Feakes and Di Howe arrived)*  Cllr NA welcomed everyone and said that community in the village was important but getting villagers involved in events was proving difficult. Despite asking for helpers and event ideas in the newsletter, no one had come forward. All agreed communication was key and that social media should be employed. RG said the White Horse used Facebook to great effect.  RG said it was a shame that some village groups did not meet in/use the community centre. SF estimated that the facility was only used for 5/6 hours a week and was probably too big for the village’s needs.  RG, who has lived in the village 19 years, had never seen a village Welcome Pack. DR to send him one. Cllr NA suggested it would be good if someone who lived nearby delivered the Welcome Pack and suggested, through it, we should invite newcomers to their first village event for free. He said the WCA would be given more of a chance to speak at the Annual Parish Meeting which attracts up to 30 villagers, compared to just a handful who attend the WCA AGM. Di Howe suggested inviting young families to an afternoon of fun and games at the community centre. As a cost saving measure, WCA and Parish Council to investigate combining insurance cover.  **Planning Applications** *(Cllr NA returned to agenda item 7)*  **DC/18/0266/FUL and DC/18/0267/LB** – Beehive Cottage, Old School Road. Installation of ten pen cattery in rear garden.  Cllr MM said that his concern was that in a very residential road there would be unwelcome lighting, smells and increased traffic.  Cllr NA closed the meeting and invited members of the public to speak. John Orange thanked Cllr NA for the opportunity to air neighbour concerns. He said the cattery would be out of character with the residential road and to his knowledge there was no similar small business in the road. He foresaw a marked increase in traffic on Old School Road which was very narrow and he was concerned that there was little provision for off road parking. In addition, from his property there would be a clear view of the cattery and the noise and disturbance caused when the cattery was cleaned and serviced would impact on his ability to enjoy his garden.  Harry Edrich agreed and said there was no mention in the plans for the removal of waste.  Cllr MM said that there had been a cattery in the village before in Rede Road at an isolated property with a very large garden, surrounded by farm land.  Councillors agreed that in the right location they would not have a problem in supporting the application. But in Old School Road the applicants were fanciful to suggest that the impact on neighbouring properties would be minimal. Cllr MM proposed and all agreed to object to the application. DR to report decision.  **DC/18/0172/LB** – East Barn, Brockley Road – Replacement windows and doors.  Councillors agreed that no historic mullion-type windows were being replaced. The owner simply wanted triple glazing instead of the current single glazing. Cllr MM proposed and it was seconded by Cllr LS that the application be supported.  **Minutes of the meeting held in January**  It was proposed by Cllr LS and seconded by Cllr AR that the minutes were a true record.  **Matters arising from the January meeting**  None  **Clerk’s Report**  DR had submitted the precept and was chasing Robert Silk, a possible APM speaker, from Wattisham Air Base. Di Howe was looking into the noisy committee room heaters. DR has scheduled a meeting with Cllrs DT and NA to discuss the new data protection laws that come into effect in May. DR had received notification from SALC that the course Cllr DT had attended was giving ‘misleading and incorrect’ information in suggesting that the clerk would be able to act as Data Protection Officer.  Cllr MM also to attend on March 1st 7pm at Tuffields. DR is going on a website training course next Tuesday and will then update the new look website. Proscape has asked to quote for the grass cutting contract in the village. DR had reported the potholes in Church Hill and Rectory Road and the fingerpost down opposite Sharpe’s Lane.  **Finance**  Councillors agreed that although higher than normal, the £445 cost for graveyard maintenance in 2017 should be paid. As Parochial Parish Councillors, Cllrs NA and LS declared an interest.  There were 3 invoices for payment:  Vertas grasscutting Jan-Mar £437.90  Whepstead Parochial Parish Council £445  Suffolk Neighbourhood Watch Association £50  Cllr MM proposed and Cllr LS seconded that the bank reconciliations for December and January were correct and the signing of the cheques approved.  **Bank balance to end December 2017**   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Balance in Treasurers Account | £9,854.37 | | Savings account | £10,442.42 | | Total | £20,296.79 | | Less cheques not presented | Nil | | Total | £20,296.79 |   **Bank balance to end January 2018**   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Balance in Treasurers Account | £8,984.14 | | Savings account | £10,442.83 | | Total | £19,426.97 | | Less cheques not presented |  | | Total | £19,426.97 |   **Footpaths, Highways and Byways**  The finger post opposite Sharpe’s Lane is now upright.  Suffolk Highways had produced a Community Self Help survey asking if villages were willing to undertake work that Suffolk Highways does not have the budget to undertake. Councillors completed the survey and commented that they would be interested only if funding was available and it wasn’t about SCC trying to get out of their statutory obligations. DR to submit results and forward survey to Terry Smith to complete with the Doughnut Gang.  **Neighbourhood Watch Scheme**  Cllr LS said arrests had been made following the burglaries in Tuffields Road, She urged caution about approaching burglars, as someone trying to foil a car theft recently had had their jaw broken. Despite numerous attempts, she had still been unable to track down PC Darren Marshall to invite to our APM and setting up a What’s App village notification group was proving impossible, as she has such poor broadband and phone reception.  DR had received a request from Suffolk Neighbourhood Watch Association - which is a voluntary body, managed by an elected committee - asking for a one-off £50 donation to help sustain the support of neighbourhood watch across the county where there are 1036 schemes. Councillors agreed to support. DR to approach for a possible APM speaker if Robert Silk is not available.  **Welcome Pack**  DR had received a few updates for the Welcome Pack and a business requesting inclusion. She would send it out to more people for comment and try and add a few photographs.  **Litter Pick**  DR handed MM a list of over 30 villagers who have committed to help on the day and those who have tidied their ‘patch’ already. Agreed we should go beyond Harram Bottom and litter pick in pairs on the B1066, with one person acting as look out.  **School Travel Proposals**  DR had received a request from Jane Alfred asking the PC to write to Matt Hancock on behalf of parents affected by the proposals to effectively remove free transport for three tier schools.  She said the proposals discriminated against rural children, would increase traffic and pollution and added yet another financial burden, not least to Suffolk schools already lagging behind in national league tables. Thurston estimates it could lose up to 50% of its pupils and County Upper 20%.  Cllr NA said the proposals were perverse charging County Upper (3 tier) pupils and not King Edward’s (2 tier) pupils, which were right next door to one another. The proposed £200,000 savings - which would take 5 buses off the road - were minimal compared to the chaos on the roads that would ensue. They were picking on one style of education over another, which was unfair. How could they make charges when they wouldn’t be incurring any costs?  Cllr MM agreed, saying the whole thing is predicated on catchment areas which could be out of date due to the recent and planned developments in Bury St Edmunds and the surrounding area. The costs of collecting the fares could even outweigh the savings.  **Broadband Update**  Suffolk Better Broadband reported that Tony Deane, who lives next to the pub, is scheduled to benefit from superfast broadband speeds (FTTC) by the end of the year, which councillors assume means a new cabinet will be installed at Three Ways soon.  He said that the best ISP for him was SSE which gives him close to 4mbps and is due to superior technology advantage over BT’s outdated routing at the Horringer exchange.  Unfortunately, Cllr LS’s property at Plumton is not scheduled to be upgraded until 2020. However, her connection will be Fibre to Premises, which should provide faster speeds than FTTC. DR to ask for proposed upgrades for Cllr NA.  **Tuffields Road Post Box**  DR to chase as it must be 12 weeks since we last heard about it.  **Suffolk Association of Local Councils Report**  None  **Whepstead Community Association Report**  Little to report due to absenteeism at the last meeting. The Sausages and Mash event on February 17th is sold out. There is no further news on the RIGS grant application and a joint meeting had been arranged with the PC for this evening. The next meeting is on February 20th.  **Correspondence**  None  **Chairman’s Comments**  None  **Any Other Business**  Cllr SD said the plastic reflector posts at the Hawstead/Lawshall junction at the end of Straight Road had been knocked over. DR to report.  Signed………………………………..Dated……………… |
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