**Draft Minutes of the Meeting**

**Of the Whepstead Parish Council on**

**Wednesday December 6th 2017 at 7pm**

Attendees: Councillors N Aitkens - NA

M Morris – MM

N Mann - NM

A Robertson – AR

S Durrant - SD

L Smith - LS

Clerk D Rix – DR

SCC K Soons – KS

Borough Councillor M Chester - MC

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| 1/171  2/172  3/173  5/174  6/175  7/176  8/177  9/178  10/179  11/180  4/181  12/182  13/183  14/184  15/185  16/186  17/187  18/188  19/189  20/190  21/192 | **Apologies for Absence** Cllr D Till  **Declarations of Interest**  None  **Borough Councillor’s Report** *(circulated before meeting)*  Cllr MC said that fly tipping in Rede Road was still an issue but a suspect had been identified and a vehicle from Hawkedon may be involved.  He said that Whepstead Cricket Club had requested assistance from his Locality Budget in purchasing a major piece of equipment that would benefit not only the club, but the village as well.  The success of the Christmas fayre was discussed as were the organisations – Suffolk Mind and St. Nicholas Hospice Care - recommended for approval for Community Chest grants.  The need to improve pedestrian crossings from the old town to the Arc shopping centre and from the Arc to Waitrose were discussed. Cllr MC said he expected there to be much more pedestrianisation of Bury in the future, which led to discussion about the lacking of parking, especially near the train station.  Initial approval has been given to combine St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath Councils into one West Suffolk Council.  **Public Forum** *(Cllr NA brought forward agenda items 5 and 6)*  None  **Planning Applications**  The Development Control Committee meeting to discuss the Nunwick Farm planning application had been postponed until the new year.  Willow and Lavender Cottages’ applications were both pending a decision.  **Minutes of the meeting held in November**  It was proposed by Cllr AR and seconded by Cllr LS that the minutes were a true record.  **Matters arising from the November meeting**  Cllr NA said that the issues with Nunwick were ongoing and that he was pleased to see the VAS back up and running.  **Clerk’s Report**  DR thanked Cllr MM for “holding the fort” in her absence. She said that Graham O’Dell would start work on the pub noticeboard soon. In the meantime he has washed the war memorial and nearby bench and would oil the bench again in the spring. DR to ask Chris Mortimer for a grass cutting quote and to chase Wattisham air base about sending someone to speak at our APM in April. The PC’s new external auditor would be PKF Little John. The website provider One Suffolk is in the process of upgrading the website and will be offering free refresher courses in the New Year, to which DR would sign up.  **Finance**  There were 3 invoices for payment:  WCA Hall Hire July to December £50  WCA Newsletter contribution £600  SALC 6 month payroll £21.60  DR had circulated a draft precept to all councillors before the last meeting. She said that the tax base for 2018/19 was 214.87. If the PC were to agree the draft precept of £8,410 (up £30 on last year) the cost to villagers would be an extra 21p or 0.54%. It was proposed by Cllr MM and seconded by Cllr SD that the precept be signed. DR would prepare the paperwork for a signature at January’s meeting.  **Bank balance to end October 2017**   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Balance in Treasurers Account | £11,019.27 | | Savings account | £10,441.52 | | Total | £21,460.79 | | Less cheques not presented | nil | | Total | £21,460.79 |   **Bank balance to end November 2017**   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Balance in Treasurers Account | £10,959.27 | | Savings account | £10,441.96 | | Total | £21,401.23 | | Less cheques not presented | £437.90 | | Total | £20,963.33 |   Cllr NM proposed and Cllr LS seconded that the bank reconciliations for October and November were correct and the signing of the cheques approved.  **Footpaths, Highways and Byways**  Cllr NA said that despite assurances from Highways a while ago, they had diverted traffic onto Pages Hill when work was being done on Church Hill which was extremely dangerous for vehicles turning in both directions. DR to write to Highways. Cllr NA reported that the pipes were clear at the bottom of Harram Hill, but that there had not been any significant rainfall.  DR said that a bridge at the bottom of Church Hill now had a hand rail and anti- slip matting after a woman fell there. After reporting poor signage between Brockley Road and Rectory Road on the Bury to Clare walk, the footpath officer said that additional way marking would be carried out soon.  DR to report a pothole on the corner of Martin’s bend and one outside Pera, where Old School Road meets Chedburgh Road.  A manhole cover has collapsed on a telephone duct between Dodds Cottage and Finches Meadow on Tuffields Road. DR to report. The excessive use of traffic on Gypsy Lane – while the Spread Eagle works is ongoing – was discussed.  **County Councillor’s Report** *(Cllr KS arrived and Cllr NA returned to agenda item 4. Report circulated ahead of the meeting)*  Councillors complained that unlike the double roundabout roadworks that were completed quickly and efficiently, the works at the Spread Eagle seemed to be taking an age and were not due for completion until the end of February.  Businesses there are really suffering. The Thai café had closed down, while the butcher reported sales down 30%. Cllr NA said he hoped that the works justified what we were going to get at the end of them.  Cllr KS said that a 1.99% council tax increase had been proposed after a 7 year freeze. Band D householders would pay £1.14 a week. She said a further £27m cuts were needed to balance the budget. Suffolk County Council’s Children’s Services were now in the top 25% of all Local Authorities.  KS to write to Highways regarding Pages Hill being used as a diversion, against recent advice, and again regarding the Spread Eagle works. DR to write too.  **Neighbourhood Watch Scheme**  Following an appeal in December’s newsletter, Cllr LS had been contacted by four villagers wanting to be added to her Neighbourhood Watch Register. Worryingly, the house alarm on one of the burgled homes had been electronically tampered with. There was a suspect for the Tuffields Road burglaries. At a recent meeting she said she felt that Trading Standards were more helpful than the police, who had still not made direct contact with her following the recent spate of burglaries. Cllr NA thanked Cllr LS for all her hard work.  **Welcome Pack**  Cllr NA felt more needed to be done to not only welcome people to the village but to encourage them to join in. He would speak to the WCA about the possibility of offering a free first event for newcomers. DR to look and see what other villages give new arrivals.  **Litter Pick**  DR to order equipment etc. for Sunday February 18th starting at 10am. DR suggested that the road signs are cleaned and any growth around them cut back at the same time. DR to send details to Cllr KS nearer the time and put in newsletter for January and February.  **Bus Shelter - windows**  Cllr NA said that wooden frames were already in place, so there could be no need for planning permission. He had received a quote of £378 + VAT for toughened glass in four windows. DR to check whether we need to get another quote.  **Broadband Update**  Residents at the end of Tuffields Road and around Plumpton are very dissatisfied and frustrated by both the lack of service and the communication they are having with BT and Matt Hancock. DR to write to Jane Storey, cabinet member for Broadband and Rural Issues, asking what more can be done and why BT has managed to fit fibre on poles all the way down Straight Road and Folly Lane, but not in Tuffields Road. CC to Cllrs MM and NA first.  **Suffolk Association of Local Councils Report**  None  **Whepstead Community Association Report**  Cllr AR said Fun, Food and Fireworks raised £672 and thanked all who supported it. The next event is on December 9th at 2pm: A Christmas Carol. On Saturday February 17th, there will be a sausage & mash evening with Charlie Haylock. Tickets £10. The kitchen refurbishment has been delayed because the grant application got lost. The proposed new roadside board to advertise the community centre is expected to be a chevron shape. The next meeting is on January 10th. There is a CPR session on Monday December 11th at 7.30pm.  Cllr NA said it was important that the marketing for an event was circulated at the event before and he thought that roadside signage advertising events should be easier to read.  **Correspondence**  None  **Chairman’s Comments**  None  **Any Other Business**  None  Signed………………………………..Dated……………… |